



WHO ARE WE

The Elder Tree Support and Befriending Service is an innovative partnership with Plymouth City Council. The Elder Tree builds on an existing and extensive support network for vulnerable people over the age of 50 across all six neighbourhoods of the city.

WHAT DO WE DO

The Elder Tree also offers support to small independent groups which befriend older people and encourages them to affiliate and benefit from pooling ideas, resources and opportunities.

The Elder Tree are supported by a committed and trained group of volunteers and they work closely with a wide range of statutory and third sector partners. Their core activity is providing 'one to one' friendship to older people who are socially isolated and vulnerable.

They also offer an extensive range of weekly activities in various locations across the city that includes:

- Lunch and Supper Clubs
- Coffee and Advice 'Drop Ins'
- Access to Silver Surfer IT Classes
- Exercise and Movement Classes
- Tai Chi Classes
- Cardio Fitness Classes
- Singing Group
- Active Minds Activities

CONTACTING US

To access the referral process or discuss any of the services provided by the Elder Tree contact us at:

The Elder Tree
3 Tresillian Street
Cattedown
PLYMOUTH PL4 0QP
Telephone: 01752 227447
e-mail: eldertreereferrals@yahoo.co.uk
website: www.eldertreeplymouth.co.uk

MAKING A REFERRAL

The Elder Tree accepts referrals from Statutory Bodies and Voluntary organisations operating in Plymouth. It also considers direct self referrals and referrals from family and friends of older people who live in the city.

The Referral Path

The referral path is a key element of our work and it is managed proactively to ensure a timely conclusion to the review procedure and a thorough assessment of any inherent or developing issues that need to be considered. The Referral Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that each referral is formally logged, initiating the individual Client Support Documentation and monitoring and reporting the weekly status of ongoing referrals.

The Referral Process

On receipt of a request for support, the Project Manager will make an initial assessment as to whether the needs of the person concerned are appropriate to the services and support that we are capable of providing. In a very small number of cases, the referral will be rejected at this stage as the needs, risks or services required are judged to be beyond the resources and activities that we deliver. Requests that are accepted at this stage are formally logged and the Individual Client Support Documentation is initiated and the case allocated to the Referral Coordinator who will contact the organisation or individual who has made the referral to complete an in depth background check that will include:

- a thorough check to confirm suitability against the Elder Tree age criteria, location and identified needs
- which services are required by the client, any special contact requirements and confirm that the client is aware and has agreed to the referral

- early identification of potential risk to our staff, our volunteers or the client that we should be made aware of (see specific guidance in Risk Assessment and Lone Worker Policy)
- and if judged necessary, arrange a joint visit if there are any doubts raised during the discussion concerning the suitability of the referral

The Referral Coordinator will then make initial contact with the client to introduce our service and to arrange a visit at a convenient time for both.

The Visit and Needs Assessment

On the day prior to the visit, the Referral Coordinator will confirm with the client that the arrangements made still stand – this will also serve to remind the client that someone new will be visiting them the next day.

Upon arrival, the Referral Coordinator will:

- Provide a photo identity to the client before entering the home
- Will emphasise from the outset that the plan belongs to the client and any agreed outcome and will be based on the clients views and wishes.
- Will ensure that the client understands that they have the final say on any agreement reached and they can amend or withdraw from this agreement at any time.
- Will foremost consider the view and wishes of the client and will not pre judge any possible outcome to the clients specific needs – in this case, the client will normally have a very good idea of what they need and what will work for them.
- Explain what the Elder Tree is and the services and support we provide.
- Explain the various documents that we need to maintain and support the client to complete the Client Record Sheet and the standard Consent Form
- Agree appropriate support or activity and complete the Support Plan getting all the documentation signed where relevant. Ensure that the client support pack is complete and a copy is available on request.
- On occasions it will be necessary and appropriate for the client to complete the documentation with the support of a friend, relative or a carer present and the process may have to be conducted over a series of visits – the Support Plan is a living document that will be reviewed with the client annually but can be reviewed at any time to reflect the emerging needs of the client.

We will ensure that the client will be treated professionally and their dignity respected at all times. This assessment is to be completed at a pace that the client is comfortable with and if necessary, the assessment can be completed over a period time to suit the client.

Assessment for Staff and Volunteers and the Client.

During the visit, the Referral Coordinator will conduct a risk assessment against our safety criteria that addresses potential aspects of risk that are relevant to the Elder Tree staff, volunteers and the client as set out in Policy No 4. The Referral Coordinator must take the time to explain the relevance and importance of this assessment in ensuring that visits are conducted in a safe and healthy environment that is hazard free and reassure the client that we will ensure that effective plans are in place that will allow subsequent visits and befriending to take place.

Client Adoption

If the client wishes to accept our services, and is judged by the Referral Coordinator to be suitable the following actions are taken:

- The client's personal details and agreed support plan activities are entered on the central data base and the personal documents are placed in accordance to Data Protection guidelines.
- On occasions, the client may have to wait until a befriender or a place at a specific activity becomes available – in this instance the allocated Project Worker will explain this and will contact the client weekly to update progress.
- The Referral Coordinator will advise who the allocated Project Worker will be.

One to One Befriending

Some of our more isolated and frail clients will be allocated a volunteer 'one to one' befriender who will be Enhanced Disclosure and Barring checked and be fully appraised of our policies, professional boundaries and code of conduct in practise at the Elder Tree. On the first visit to a new client, the volunteer will be accompanied by the allocated Project Worker. If this visit goes well, the volunteer will be in a position to visit unaccompanied. If either the volunteer or the client is unwilling for the arrangement to proceed due to there mutual incompatibility, the placement will be put on hold until another volunteer is identified.

GENERAL GUIDANCE AND PRIORITIES FOR ACCESS TO OUR SERVICES

The Elder Tree works in Partnership with Plymouth City Council to provide access to Social Activities and where assessed appropriate 'One to One' non domiciliary Befriending Support. Our organisation relies heavily on volunteers and has a finite resource in both people and infrastructure to deliver the various programmes under management.

The Elder Tree operates mainly in the Central and East End areas of Plymouth and will take and process referrals from these areas. Other referrals received will be administered by the Befriending Consortium. There may be occasions when we are unable to offer immediate access to our services to newly referred clients and we have policies and procedures in place that will ensure that new clients are updated weekly of their situation. In the unlikely event that we need to prioritise our services due to an influx of new referrals for 'One to One' Befriending, the Elder Tree Project Manager will prioritise as follows:

Clients living alone in their own home and who has been assessed post referral, to be socially isolated, will be given the highest priority.

Clients Living Independently at Home

- **Priority One.** The client is isolated, house bound with limited or no contact.
- **Priority Two.** The client is isolated with occasional family visits.
- **Priority Three.** The Client is isolated but is in contact with friends, family or other support agencies on a weekly basis.

Clients living in Sheltered Housing will be assessed against a similar criteria that will also be dependent on the 'in house' support available where they reside.

These guidelines are not hard and fast and there will be instances when the particular circumstances of the client outweighs their domestic situation.

On the occasions that there is a delay in client placement to one of our Social Activities, places will normally be allocated on a time weighted criteria. However, there will be occasions when the Project Manager may judge that a particular client's outlook will be better met if they are placed at the earliest opportunity.