

Resources

Borders Buddies FAQs guide



FAQs

Borders Buddies supports people to return to doing things they enjoyed before but which, either due to the pandemic, ill health or other factors, they have stopped doing.

It will enable them to reconnect with other people in the community, reducing isolation and building individual and community resilience.



Who can be a Buddy?

Anyone over 16 – or could be eg a 14-yr-old with a teacher etc.

Is it a home visiting service?

No, it's more about supporting a person to regain their confidence.

Does it cost money to have a Buddy?

No, this is a completely free project, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. Reasonable expenses can also be reimbursed.

Do you have a bank of volunteers?

No, volunteers are found on a case-by-case basis, we try to match people with similar interests.

How does it work?

When someone gets in touch with us about someone needing a buddy, we ask them to get permission to pass on the contact details for the person they think would benefit from having a buddy. One of the OTB team then arranges to go along and meet the person for a chat to find out a bit more about them and what they would like to do. We then go off to find a buddy. When we have a buddy, we arrange a time when we can all get together for introductions and then we take it from there with the pair working out when they would like to meet, how often and what they are going to do.

Will Buddies get training?

If appropriate, yes, e.g. dementia awareness.

Can a Buddy push a wheelchair?

Yes, if necessary, and training can be provided if required
– this is decided on a case-by-case basis.

Will everyone need PVG?

Only if appropriate. It only covers Buddies, not the people who are supported.

How do you get 'referrals'?

We usually have an informal introduction to a person wanting support, we meet each person separately then introduce the Buddy pair.

Is there a timescale for the support?

No, but we usually find that after a while people don't need us in the background – and sometimes don't need their Buddy any longer.

Whose insurance is it covered by?

OTB have PLI, safeguarding policies and carry out all appropriate risk assessments including PVG as necessary.

Can a Buddy give a lift in their car?

Yes, as 'friends'.

No.

Do you offer personal care?

Is it only for old people?

No, it's for anyone over 16 who might need a bit of support to rebuild their confidence and social connections.

Do people need a formal 'referral'?

No, a relative or the person themselves who requires a Buddy can get in touch direct.

We would get PVG for the Buddy.

What do you do if the client is deemed 'vulnerable'?

Do you get PVG for the supported person?

No, we can only get PVG for a Buddy volunteer. All our project staff also have PVG.

How do we refer someone who might benefit from Buddy support?

Chat to us – drop us an email or phone, ruth.n@otbds.org (07711 210431) or christine@otbds.org (07936 330765).

How do you engage with outlying areas?

Via Community councils, village halls, personal contacts, networks, Facebook groups and postcards/posters.

What do I do about holidays?

The Buddying arrangement is very flexible, to suit both people in a Buddy pair. Holidays etc are part of life, as are appointments and unforeseen events – you arrange directly with your Buddy and make plans together to suit you both.

What expenses can I claim?

You can claim reasonable expenses e.g. car (45p/mile), bus/train travel, coffees and snacks, attendance at local groups. You can claim up to £20 per 3 months towards phone costs if appropriate. You can also claim for a one-off taster or 'special' outing, e.g. to the theatre in Edinburgh. You can buy small resources e.g. pack of cards, art materials. No alcohol. Ask your OTB contact for an expenses form, or if in doubt about whether you can claim something.

What about risk assessments?

Like the Buddy pairs, these are adapted to suit individuals. This might be a risk assessment for visiting someone in their home, supporting someone to walk, or keeping both of you safe in other situations. Again, your OTB contact can support you to develop a suitable risk assessment for you and your Buddy.

Can I have a Buddy of the same gender as me?

We try to pair people with someone with similar interests, and if you would like a Buddy of the same gender or a similar age, we can arrange that.

How long will it take to find a Buddy?

It can take a while as we need to try to find someone with similar interests, we don't have a bank of volunteers waiting. We ask around and through our networks and other contacts, which is why it's important for us to have workers with knowledge of the local area.

What if I'm not happy with my Buddy?

Both of you can try meeting a few times and see if you get on. If not, or if your circumstances change, there is no commitment, and you can change your mind at any point.

Can I bring my wee one along on Buddy visits?

We suggest you get to know your Buddy on your own first, but once you are both comfortable there is no reason why you could not take your child along if you are both happy with that.

Where should we meet?

We suggest meeting in a public place, at least to begin with and till you get to know one another. If you have to meet in the person's home, we suggest having another person there for the first couple of times.

What if a person has serious medical issues?

We decide on an individual basis, and occasionally the support required by a person may just be too much for a volunteer Buddy to cope with. In this case we would try to signpost to more appropriate services.

Doesn't the Council have a service like this already?

We are finding that we are getting referrals from different departments within the Council, for example where a worker has been supporting a person for a while but does not have the capacity to carry on with one-to-one support long-term.

Do the pairings continue to get support from OTB?

Yes, your OTB contact will keep in touch regularly with you to check in and see how things are going.

If you are in the Tweeddale or Hawick areas of the Scottish Borders and would like some support, or if you know someone who might benefit, get in touch with ruth.n@otbds.org or christine@otbds.org

Equally, if you would like to volunteer to become a 'buddy', please get in touch.

