



Westbourne

Parish Council

Westbourne Help Supportive Listening Call Guidelines for Volunteers

NB if anything during your call gives safeguarding or other causes for concern refer to West Sussex County Council on 033 022 27980.

To start

Check that the person on the phone is the person who has contacted the service - "Hello, is that?..." - to avoid any confusion.

Introduce yourself clearly and slowly, stating where you are calling from first and then stating your name. "I'm calling from Westbourne Help and my name is..." - be prepared to repeat this information if they don't hear it.

Double check with the person that they contacted the service and that they asked to be called "You contacted/responded to Westbourne Help and I gather you asked to be telephoned as you are living alone/feeling isolated? (Pause/listen - it may be that they are not isolated and made a mistake or it may be that they begin to tell you their story).

The main things to hold in mind once the conversation has started is to...

During:

- Be curious - everyone has a story to tell and you will be in the privileged position of sharing it.
- Listen more, talk less, ask questions and don't give advice or share personal information.
- Think of yourself as more of an interested friend, than a counsellor.
- If you are at all concerned by the person's mental health, explain to them that although everything they say is held in confidentiality you have a duty to share any concerns you have about them with professionals who may be able to help. Do not talk about them to professionals without telling them first.
- Mostly importantly treat everyone as you would wish to be treated yourself, with respect and dignity, empathy, not sympathy.
- Maintain boundaries: do not give out your phone number or offer to see them.
- Offer supportive listening:
 - Be non-judgemental
 - Clarify and reflect back
 - Use verbal affirmations
 - Demonstrate concern
 - Paraphrase to show concern



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- Ask open ended questions
- Think carefully before offering your own experience
- Keep the call focussed on the caller

End call:

- When natural breaks occur
- Ask what they will do after the call
- Be aware the caller may find it difficult to end the call
- Reassure the caller, especially if there is a regular call being set up.