



LIVERPOOL CARES

Any questions? Get in touch with our Love Your Neighbour programme coordinator, Alice, at alice.taylor@liverpoolcares.org.uk - or call 0151 659 1789 (option 3).

Referral Guidance for Love Your Neighbour

What is Love Your Neighbour?

Love Your Neighbour is our one-to-one friendship matching programme, which pairs up older and younger neighbours for company and conversation through weekly visits or phone calls. We try to match based on factors such as location, shared interests and personality type.

We aim to create mutual, long-lasting friendships, supporting both older and younger people in Liverpool to feel less isolated and more connected to their community.

Who are our older neighbours?

Older neighbours referred to Liverpool Cares **must be over the age of 65 and live in Liverpool**. For Love Your Neighbour, we look for older neighbours who are interested in getting to know a younger person through building a friendship, and who are able to hold a mutual, two-way conversation.

Who are our younger neighbours?

Younger neighbours on the Love Your Neighbour programme are **under 65 and live or work in Liverpool**, who sign up to us as volunteers. Many of our younger neighbours are between 20-45.

While our younger neighbours are kind and empathetic listeners, **they are not trained in counselling or first aid**, and so the programme should not be used as a substitute for adequate physical and mental health support. They are also unable to provide any practical support that a carer, cleaner or support worker might do,.

Are there any referrals you cannot accept?



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While we try to be as inclusive as possible, there are cases where Love Your Neighbour may not be the best fit for an older neighbour. Therefore, we cannot accept the following circumstances:

- **Older neighbours with a diagnosis of dementia or memory issues.** Younger neighbours are not trained to support older neighbours with significant memory challenges and we've found visits can end up causing distress or confusion for both parties.
- **Older neighbours with an unmanaged or complex mental/physical health condition.** We would classify a health condition as 'unmanaged' when there is evidence of inadequate support being in place, and the older neighbour is unwilling to pursue support with or without aid. Examples include, unmanaged schizophrenia or alcohol/drug dependency.
- **Older neighbours who are very unwell or in receipt of palliative care.** We've often found older neighbours struggle to build a friendship with a younger neighbour during periods of severe ill health, and our younger neighbours aren't trained to support older neighbours receiving end-of-life care, with the emotional and practical implications this has.
- **Older neighbours who speak little or no English, or have a severe hearing impairment.** We want our older neighbours have a full understanding of the programme, and we also need to keep in touch with them during their match for safeguarding reasons. Communication barriers such as language or hearing would make this unfeasible when speaking on the phone and in person. If the neighbour has support in place for this – such as an interpreter – please speak to the team.



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- **Older neighbours who do not have a phone number we can contact them on independently.** All our initial communication is conducted over the phone, and younger neighbours ring older neighbours to organise when they can see one another next. Please do not list family members' numbers in place of this.
- **Older neighbours who don't follow our anti-racism and inclusion policy.** All our neighbours must agree to follow our anti-racism and inclusion policy before being matched so that we can ensure our network remains a safe and welcoming place, where everyone can be themselves. You can read more about our policy [here](#).
- **Older neighbours with an unsuitable home environment.** Older neighbours' homes need to be a suitable place for a younger neighbour to visit. The home should be safe, clean and in good repair and there must be somewhere to sit comfortably. If older neighbours live with another person, we'll also need to meet them before matching for safeguarding purposes.
- **Older neighbours living in care homes.** We're not usually able to match older neighbours living in care homes. From experience, we've found that it's difficult for matches to build a mutual, one-to-one friendship in this environment, and limited visiting hours often don't align with our younger neighbours' schedules.

Who can make a referral?

Anyone – as long as they have consent from the older neighbour to share their information. Older neighbours are also able to self-refer to all of our programmes via the Get Involved form on our website.

What sort of information is it useful to include in my referral?



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It's great to hear more about an older neighbour's background and interests, as well as their motivations for getting involved in the programme. It's also useful to mention any medical conditions, communication, mobility or accessibility needs that might impact their involvement in the programme or how we get in touch with them. If you can, provide information about anything our staff might need to know before visiting them in their home e.g. if they live with someone else, have pets or have a key safe.

What happens after I make a referral?

We aim to contact the older neighbour within 7 working days to introduce ourselves, explain the programme and confirm their interest. If they would like to get involved we then put them on the waiting list for a home assessment. When we are in their area we book in to visit them and conduct the assessment to make sure their home is suitable for visitors and they are suitable for the programme. If this is successful they are then put on the waiting list for a match.

How quickly will the older neighbour I've referred be matched up?

The time it takes for an older neighbour to be introduced to a younger neighbour depends on a number of different factors, including the number of younger neighbours available in their area, whether they have any specific requests for a match, and the outcome of the assessment visit and whether they'll need any extra support prior to being matched. We do not have an official timeframe we can offer as it ranges on a case-by-case basis from anywhere from two to twelve months.

Who should I contact if I have any updates on the older neighbour I've referred?

If you have any updates on the neighbour referred, for instance, a change of address, contact details or circumstances, or something you'd like to add to the referral information provided, then email our Love Your Neighbour Programme Coordinator, Alice, at alice.taylor@liverpoolcares.org.uk, or call us on 0151 659 1789 (option 3).