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[**www.befriendafamily.co.uk**](http://www.befriendafamily.co.uk/)

**Registered Charity No. 1082452**

**Company Limited by Guarantee No. 4002287**

**Registered in England and Wales.  Registered office: 18 Buckingham Palace Road, SW1W 0QP**

 **Referrers Guide for Broadening Horizons**

WBAF is a family befriending organisation working with disadvantaged families in Westminster. It was established in 1989. Befriending focuses on working with the whole family in a holistic manner to enable positive changes in social interaction in and outside the family and more awareness of community organisations via appropriate signposting.

Broadening Horizons is a new activity of the charity that is a response to feedback gained from our Service Review. BH works with young people aged 13+ to support them in their education and enable them to explore future education and work opportunities.

Trained and supervised volunteer mentors work weekly for 2 hours with a young person, normally for two terms or for six months.

**What young people can we work with?**

* We work with vulnerable, socially isolated and economically disadvantaged young people in the 13-18 age range.
* We cannot work with a family where any member is resistant to a volunteer being involved.
* All families need to be resident in the Borough of Westminster.

**Who can refer?**

We accept referrals from any agency which knows a young person / family and feels that they would benefit from the service, e.g. schools, youth services, social services, independent service providers. There is no charge for our service. We ask for a written referral form to be completed and the WBAF Family Befriending Co-ordinator will then contact the referrer to discuss.

**After a referral is received:**

Unless the family of the young person is already known to WBAF:

* The Befriending Co-ordinator reviews the referral and contacts referrer if necessary.
* Befriending Co-ordinator then conducts an assessment with the young person and carer/s.
* If appropriate, the young person is matched with a suitable Mentor.
* Befriending Co-ordinator visits the young person and family with the Mentor.
* Mentor then begins weekly visits to the young person and follows a work plan that is mutually determined.
* We are keen on having a constant dialogue with the referrers, so they would be able to offer their feedback about the service and raise issues of concern.
* After six months, a review is held with the Mentor, Co-ordinator and family. Future plans are made at this visit with regard to sessions ending or continuing for up to six additional months based on requirement.
* If the mentoring stops after the 6 month review the young person is signposted to any additional support services and the referrer is informed that the engagement has ceased.
* If the mentoring continues for an additional six months a final review is held at the end of the period with the mentor, family and befriending co-ordinator.
* At the end of the befriending referrer is informed.

**What mentors offer?**

* Mentors develop a trusting and supportive relationship with the young person.
* Mentors may help with homework, assignments and revision techniques.
* Mentors will encourage consideration of future options and assist in developing strategies for attainment of aspirations.
* Mentors will ensure that parents/carers are engaged in understanding and sharing aspirations and the pathways to their achievement.
* Mentors may be able to organise and accompany young people and parents, where appropriate, to university campuses, employment venues, training fairs etc.

All mentors are DBS cleared, have received training and will be supported through weekly reporting and monthly supervision. All mentors will have access to support whenever needed, including emergency support.

Meetings may take place in the family home, a public venue such as a library or a combination of both.

**Exclusions**

* WBAF cannot work with young people whose families have current Child Protection issues, current domestic violence issues, drug and alcohol addictions, serious mental health issues.
* The safety of mentors and of young people is paramount. We will not work in any context where there is any risk of physical or emotional abuse.
* Mentors will only work on matters that directly relate to the educational attainment and aspirations of the young person. Mentors cannot input to any other matters affecting the family or any of its members, however urgent. Mentors are not trained to signpost to other family agencies other than emergency services.
* We cannot provide mentors to undertake a monitoring role on behalf of any other agency.

* Mentors are instructed not to share personal details, mobile numbers or social media contact in order to safeguard both parties and to ensure the boundaries of the mentor/mentee relationship are observed.

**Westminster Befriend a Family reserves the right to refuse support to a family or to withdraw the service.**

**For further information and sending referrals please contact:**

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