

**Friend in Deed**

CREATING FRIENDSHIP ACROSS GENERATIONS  
Charity number 1180725



# LITTLE VISITOR SESSIONS Handbook

For Parents and Carers



# SO, YOU'RE INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING WITH FRIEND IN DEED?

Thank you for supporting the work that we do,  
and for helping us to create friendship across generations.

## WHAT WE DO:

Friend in Deed is a registered charity that helps create friendships across generations through intergenerational projects that aim to enrich the lives of others and promote kindness.

## OUR GOAL:

Our aim is to focus on improving the mental and physical health of older people within care, including those living with dementia, who can so often feel forgotten about or no longer a part of their local community.

We run activities and events to bring babies and children of all ages into care homes, helping to break down the barriers between generations, reduce loneliness and transform our perception of age to create lasting change in years to come.

As a part of Friend in Deed, you are helping to create a more caring and inclusive society and we are so pleased that you are part of this exciting journey.



# WHAT TO EXPECT FROM A LITTLE VISITOR SESSION

## FEEL WELCOME!

If it is your first visit, introduce yourself to the members of staff. Sign yourself and your Little Visitors in. Ask where the toilets are, and for anything you need to feel comfortable.



## RELAX AND DON'T FEEL PRESSURED

Little Visitor sessions are relaxed events which involve a group of babies, toddlers and children of any age going into a care home with a grown-up to engage with residents. Some residents will want to engage directly with you and your Little Visitor, others will get enjoyment from just observing.

## BE REASSURED - THE RESIDENTS LOVE TO SEE YOU

Some residents may struggle to communicate if they are living with dementia or other conditions. Don't be disheartened if you don't get a response. The residents love to see you and enjoy you being there.



## THE STAFF ARE THERE TO SUPPORT THE RESIDENTS

If a resident asks for any help (e.g. to be moved, to be given a drink, or other assistance) please explain that you are not in a position to help them, and ask a member of staff - some older people can't drink fluids without thickeners, for example.

## JUST LIKE US, OLDER PEOPLE HAVE A VARIETY OF NEEDS.

In a care home, you can expect to meet older people with a variety of needs.

Some residents may be hard of hearing, so it is useful to face people when speaking to them, talk loudly and clearly, and don't be afraid to repeat yourself.





# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## What do we need to prepare for the sessions?

Some sessions will have a theme or activity planned, and others are just free 'stay and play' style. Bringing along some familiar toys, books or games can help Little Visitors to feel comfortable and encourage a resident to engage in play. Care homes are often warm environments, so we recommend dressing your Little Visitor in layers which can be removed.

## What do I do if me or my Little Visitor are unwell?

Older people can be more vulnerable to illness so please do not attend sessions if you or your Little Visitor are unwell. If you are unsure, please call the care home directly to check. It is also advisable to wash your hands before and after Little Visitor sessions.

## I'm worried my child is too energetic for the sessions...

The sessions are not quiet and still. They are for children to behave like children and have fun! There is no expectation for you to stay for the whole hour if this doesn't suit your child's needs. We ask that grown-ups remain present and responsible for their Little Visitor throughout the session, and respectful of staff, residents and other Little Visitors. We want you to enjoy the session but homes must remain safe.

## Will Friend in Deed be at the sessions?

A member of the Friend in Deed team will be at the first session at a new care home, and will drop in from time to time. We are at the end of the phone/email whenever you need us and try to attend special sessions/events. Grown-ups must always be present with their children at all times during the session.

## What are care homes like - I've never been inside one!

Care homes have improved greatly, but are obviously all different. They are busy environments with staff who are there doing a wonderful job caring for their residents.

Be aware of equipment, wheelchairs, walkers, hot drinks and staff helping residents move around.

## Am I able to take and share photos from the sessions?

It is ok of you to take photos of yourself and your own child in sessions, as long as other Little Visitors (unless they are your friend and give consent) and residents are not visible. We give Care homes responsibility for taking and sharing photos from sessions. It is your responsibility to let care staff know your photo sharing preferences.

# SHARING THE IMPACT OF LITTLE VISITORS

We encourage care homes to take photos and videos for sharing on social media.

If you or your Little Visitor do not give consent, you are responsible for letting the care home staff know and making sure no photographs are taken.



## SHARE THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF THE SESSIONS WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY

We love to see our Little Visitors bring along their own friends to sessions – please help us spread the word by taking a selfie by the sign at the care home you visit and tag us on socials!

## SHARE WITH US WHAT YOU GET OUT OF THE SESSIONS

We know that grown-ups get just as much out of the sessions as the Little Visitors, and we would love to hear your stories or any ideas you have for the sessions. Your sharing helps us to promote what we do and find more Little Visitors and organisations to work with.

# USEFUL CONTACT INFORMATION

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