

### In this issue:

- Befriender Programme
- Christmas Hampers
- Get involved

## Befriender Programme Pilot and Volunteering

We are delighted to report that the pilot of our Befriender Programme was a great success. Some of the highlights from our report are detailed below.

Also, we're looking for more volunteers for specific roles, contact us if you could commit to giving regular time to our work.

### Befriender Programme review

The UK Independent Anti Slavery Commissioner's recent report highlighted the fact that long term support is key in the recovery process for survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking.

Evidence shows that social relationships affect physical and mental health, social inequality, and isolation. *We are aware there are no other services that can offer this level of informal support to survivors of exploitation in Oxfordshire, and we have identified and are seeking to fill the gap in provision that will help enable a better recovery in the long term.*

#### Aims of the programme:

- ◇ To provide an extra layer of support to survivors of MS/HT
- ◇ To improve their health and wellbeing outcomes through building social networks
- ◇ To reduce their sense of isolation and help them better integrate into society
- ◇ To increase their self-confidence
- ◇ To help to mitigate the risk of them being exploited again
- ◇ To link individuals to social and learning activities

#### Other potential outcomes:

- ◇ we are able to pick up tasks that caseworkers don't have capacity for
- ◇ we can save public money and we can help prevent crime

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#### Vacancies for volunteers:

- Secretary to the Board
- Volunteer Engagement Lead
- Fundraiser

### Testimonial

Feedback from a male, survivor of forced marriage and forced labour, a non-UK national

The support VFSS was offering, in the form of accessing benefits and housing, wasn't needed in this case but the one-to-one support offered by the ASIOX Befriender enabled him to find someone who has helped with learning English. It had been difficult to find a course because they are over-subscribed and difficult to access in lockdown. Learning English was key to the individual making progress, he was very determined to find a better job so that he could support himself. He did not want to be dependent on benefits. Our volunteer has been key in helping him work toward a better and brighter future and he has grown in confidence along the way. He has very much valued the conversations and input he has received from our Befriender and they have chosen to keep in touch.

### Testimonial

Feedback from a female survivor of financial exploitation, a UK national

'She is enjoying having someone who has time to listen to her and says the most important thing she needs is someone who is a good listener and is patient. Her experience is that other service providers haven't been able to provide the time she needs.'

Our service will provide continuity in relationship through times of change as she exits statutory services, thereby providing some stability for her. She and her Befriender have chosen to keep in touch

If you can't give time but would like to support our work with a regular or one off donation, please email us for bank details or find them on our

### Christmas Hampers



This year we are creating hampers for individuals who have experienced modern slavery. If you would like to contribute, please let us know. Contact info above.