



# Friends & Places Together

## Who we are

Friends and Places Together is a small, Southend based charity helping vulnerable, young people to see their friends or make new friendships outside of school and college. We give the opportunity for young people to socialise independently with other young people. Our charity motto is "everyone has the right to have friends and a social life."

## What we do

We support people in the community rather than in their homes. We have a venue at the Victoria Shopping Centre with cooking and leisure space. We give young people the opportunity to go out, make friends and have a social life with other young people with similar interests. Staff help and encourage clients to make informed choices on how they want to use their support time. The list of activities is endless, just a few examples include football, bowling, cooking, shopping, go karting, cinema, gym, beauty, walking, gaming, swimming, snooker, pubs, crazy golf, adventure island, base jump & many more. We even arrange day trips for our Under 18's and holidays for our Over 18's, anything from Butlins and Centre Parcs to Spain, Turkey, Disney Paris/Florida, Ibiza, and cruises. Supporting a healthy social life helps build confidence and self-esteem. Our young people get the opportunity to learn to build basic everyday life skills.

Every young person will have a Support Plan which outlines the support they need. We also have a Personal Development Plan (PDP) for each client, this reflects their personal journey with the charity. The young people are encouraged to be involved in updating their PDP, so we can monitor, and they can see their achievements and outcomes. This resource is available for when clients have reviews with other professionals and services.

- Under 18's - Teenspirits is for young people between the ages of 16-19 to meet each week at the Centre or in the community, in friendship groups between 6-8. Between the ages of 18-19 we help them transition into the over 18's group.
- Over 18's - This service is for clients between the ages of 18-25 in smaller friendship groups between 2- 4.

Our service is available throughout the year including school holidays. During school holidays, however we do close over the Christmas period.

## Staff

We listen to what young people want and we respond quickly to what is being asked. All events/holidays originate from client requests. We are flexible and creative in our approach, and we work with both the person and their families. All our staff are DBS Checked and attend regular training/supervisions and ongoing support. Staff will communicate directly with the clients and family. All support hours are organised on our online rota, Rotacloud. Staff use this platform to complete shift notes to record an account of the support time given. Staff will confirm in advance arranged support times.

We employ young staff where possible, so the young people feel free and independent, but while being supervised to keep them safe. All staff work with a person-centered approach, with clear boundaries.

## Cost of Service

We heavily rely on fundraising, donations, trusts and grants to operate the service. At least half of our income comes from fundraising.

**(A Direct Payment (DP) is funding from your local authority, to help you pay for the cost of the services you want to access. The DP Rate changes yearly.)**

**Hourly staffing rate for Under 18's: 2hrs - £10 Cash & DP  
3hrs - £15 Cash & DP  
4hrs - £20 Cash & DP**

This covers staffing cost only, food, transport and activity cost are extra. The cost for each meet-up is paid weekly unless you are in receipt of a Direct Payment (DP) then you will be invoiced monthly for the staffing cost only. We do not provide less than 2hrs, or more than 4hrs of support at each meet-up, but we may provide longer for a day trip during school holidays.

**Hourly Staffing rate for Over 18's: £13.40**

This covers staffing cost only. Expenses for food, transport and activities are an additional cost charged separately. Staffing costs for cash and Direct Payment (DP) clients will be invoiced each month.


**If a support shift is cancelled by the client, with less than 24hrs notice, we still charge for the support booked, as staff still have to be paid for that shift.**

Invoices are sent out via email every month. Attached to the invoice is a copy of the shift notes written by staff on Rotacloud and used as backing evidence. Once the invoice and backing sheets have been viewed, they must be approved for payment by sending them to either Vibrance (Southend) or Purple (Essex). The 2 backing sheets must be attached to the approving email.

## Paying for activities, food, and transport Over 18's & Under 18's

COVID-19 has moved us to operate a cashless payment system whenever possible.

The young people are prompted and encouraged to pay for food and activities independently, with support from staff when using cash or card. Sometimes it is helpful for clients to have a bank 'cashcard' to use when out with the support workers where parents and careers have transferred a set spending amount.

Costs for food and activities for young people that need the additional support with understanding money & cost, are charged via  sumup\* on the day of the activity. A charge is made by sending out a payment link to a mobile phone or using a card reader. Staff have access to a Sumup cashcard to pay for food and activities during the support time.

There are a number of discount schemes in the area that can help bring down the cost of activities. (Advantage card for southend leisure and CEA card for cinema/theaters) Please ask a staff member about how to apply.

## Transport & Travel

Our aim is for young people to be as independent as possible when travelling. Young people who have a bus pass with a companion entitlement, will be encouraged to use this during their support times. We will meet the client and support travel training to build confidence and experience. In some circumstances we may be able to provide transport in private cars. All staff using private cars are fully insured to take clients. Costs for this start from when the young person is picked up and dropped back home again and is charged at a rate of 45p per mile. If the charity vehicle is used the cost is calculated according to how many clients are being transported.

If a client has a mobility car, we would request that this is made available.

## Conduct

We want everyone to feel free and safe to be themselves, to feel included and part of the Friends & Places family. We will not tolerate deliberate negative behavior that affects others. We ask for involvement when needed from parents and careers to resolve any conflict or misunderstanding between friendships and relationships.

## T.H.I.N.K

- T - is it true
- H - is it helpful
- I - is it inspiring
- N - is it necessary
- K - is it kind

**Use of staff telephone numbers:** Clients will be given the telephone numbers of the staff that are supporting them and the coordinators. This is to organise, confirm or make changes to shifts that were not made during their previous support time. Contact outside of support time should be minimal. Any young person repeatedly trying to make contact, will be asked to delete the staff members number and communicate with the coordinator instead. Staff will block clients that are persistent in calling or texting during their personal time. Staff will support and prompt clients to follow these guidelines.

**Social media:** Clients should not have contact details of staff's personal social media accounts; staff can create a separate work Facebook account if they want to interact with clients through the charity's Facebook page, but it is not compulsory for staff.

Clients are encouraged to communicate via text, and to keep phone calls to a minimum.

If clients have any concerns, they can email Michelle, the coordinator at: [michelle@friendsandplacetogether.org.uk](mailto:michelle@friendsandplacetogether.org.uk) or Text on 07904271027 **Please complete the attached referral form and retain this sheet for reference.**