

## **Information and Advice**

### Telephone Policy and Practice

#### 1. Priority

This organisation is committed to supporting older people living in a sparsely populated rural area. It is recognised that after emails the telephone and voicemail is the most important method of contact with this organisation.

It is our aim to answer emails and texts within 2 hours, voicemail and web enquiries within 24 hours and all telephone calls within 4 rings.

#### 2. Pressure

We have found that the telephone and sometimes the increasingly complex nature of calls and requests for help require precise recording and can become a source of tension and stress. Arriving emails are opened on receipt, replied to and filed if possible in order to create a break.

When a volunteer(s) are not in the centre telephone calls can be diverted to them or saved to voicemail. Most enquirers will be called back within an hour. This is important when an I & A surgery appointment is being held.

Incoming calls can be diverted to an answer phone message, when only one person is running the centre, which asks for a message and promises a response as soon as possible.

#### 3. Emergency number.

Out of centre hours calls can be diverted to a mobile phone.

#### 4. Privacy.

If information of a confidential nature needs to be discussed on the telephone arrangements are made to ring enquirers back if there are other people in the centre who could overhear the conversation.