



## **Befriending arrangements involving travel**

A befriending arrangement may involve supporting a beneficiary to go to local facilities and activities e.g. shops, the library or social groups.

If someone needs transport to get to local facilities then a volunteer befriender may be asked, by the coordinator, to drive as part of the befriending arrangement. The coordinator is responsible for all travel arrangements and will plan exactly how much travel support will be offered to the person we are befriending.

If a volunteer is using their own car as part of the volunteering scheme to escort beneficiaries, then the vehicle must be insured for business use and copies of the insurance certificate, MOT and driving license must be given to the coordinator in advance.

Community Connections has a budget for volunteer travel expenses but we have to explain to our funders (the Big Lottery) exactly how we use this money. We have to prove that costs for travel are necessary and appropriate and that we are aiming to keep costs to a minimum.

Expense claim forms are available for volunteers to submit at the end of each month. These must be approved by the project coordinator and manager. If travel involves train, bus or taxi journeys, volunteers must include receipts / tickets with their expenses claim form.



# Volunteer Drivers' Guidelines

## Documents you will need.

As a volunteer driver you will be asked to produce all current car documents which will be inspected annually.

(i) Licenses

A full clean driver's license is required to have been held for a minimum of two years. Any endorsements incurred subsequently should be notified to the scheme. Licences will be checked annually.

(ii) MOT/Maintenance

A current MOT certificate must be held. Although it will not be necessary to supply evidence of regular garage maintenance, you will be asked how the vehicle is maintained and inspection may be carried out for obvious defects and also to assess the suitability to carry disabled passengers.

(iii) Insurance

- The legal basis for operation of volunteer drivers is car sharing legislation as set down in the Public Passenger Vehicles act 1981, Section 1(4) etc. (a) and (b) which states that a journey will not be treated as made in the course of business if the expenses only cover running costs.
- You should be aware of any tax liabilities you may incur through receiving expenses. It is important that you do not exceed the tax free mileage allowances as this may invalidate your insurance cover and the legal basis for the scheme.
- In legal terms only third party insurance is required for drivers. You will be given a letter (if required) to inform the insurance company that you are taking part in the scheme
- Any changes to vehicles or to your health or your fitness to drive should be notified both to the insurance company and Community Connections.



(iv) Tax

- The vehicle must have a current tax disc.

## **Personal Requirements**

(i) Health

As well as noting any health and medical problems that may affect your ability to drive you should inform the scheme of any temporary condition/medications that may affect your ability to drive.

(ii) Sight Problems

The Highway Code states that a driver must be able to read a number plate from a distance of 20.5 metres (about 5 car lengths) in good daylight. From September, 2001 a driver must be able to read a new style number plate from a distance of 20 metres (66 feet), you may be asked to do this as part of an assessment. If drivers need to wear glasses (or contact lenses) to do this, they must be worn at all times whilst driving.

(iii) Disability

You will be expected to report any disability which may permanently or temporarily affect your ability to drive or assist passengers.

(iv) Smoking

It is the policy of the scheme that there should be no smoking by volunteer drivers or clients due to personal comfort and fire safety. Any changes in legislation should also be considered and adhered to.

(v) Drinking/Illegal Drugs

Drivers should not drive under the influence of alcohol/or illegal drugs and should take into consideration that alcohol stays in the system for several hours even into the next day.

(vi) Illness/Fatigue

When using prescribed or “over the counter” drugs follow the medical advice given by your GP or Pharmacist when driving.



(vii) Mobile Phones and Other Equipment

It is illegal to use a hand held mobile phone while driving. The use of Sat Nav's is becoming more common. Routes should be set before the journey starts and any adjustments, or to input new information, should only be done when stopped in a safe place.

Safe driving needs concentration, avoid unnecessary distractions.

(viii) Confidentiality

It is important to respect confidentiality at all times if you are given information that you feel needs to be passed on (i.e. if the client lives alone or is obviously in distress) please consult your coordinator.

## Procedures

(i) Daily Vehicle Checks

It is your responsibility to carry out regular checks on your car as set out in Annexe 6 of the Highway Code (revised 2004): these should include:-

Lights, brakes, tyres (including spare); seatbelts; clean windscreens, washers, windows, lights, indicators, mirrors and correct adjustment of seat, seatbelts, head restraints and mirrors.

(ii) Identification

As part of the induction process you will be given an identification card which you should carry at all times. It should be shown to clients when meeting for the first time or on request.

(iii) Time-Keeping

- If for any reason a journey cannot be made, your coordinator should be informed and will inform the beneficiary.
- It is recommended that you take a rest of at least 15 minutes every 2 hours whether within a particular journey or between journeys, and you should take a rest at any



time if you feel sleepy. The car should be well ventilated to prevent this.

(iv) Parking

you will be reimbursed for any parking expenses incurred, please retain any receipts. You are expected to obey all parking restrictions. But given the nature of the client, it may be necessary to set down passengers in a restricted area. Please ensure that you do not cause an obstruction or danger to other traffic. Community Connections does not take responsibility for any penalty fines and will not reimburse the cost.

(v) Record Keeping

- It is essential for the smooth running of the scheme that drivers fill in their record sheets fully and correctly, particularly with regard to mileage.
- The scheme will keep a record of all volunteer expenses paid as this may have an implication for tax.

(vi) Tipping

Tipping in cash or kind infringes the car sharing legislation and is therefore prohibited.

(vii) Complaints

There is a standard complaints procedure which will be followed for both drivers and clients. (Form enclosed)

## **Passenger Comfort and Safety**

(i) Fitness to drive

- Drivers are expected to report any illness, which might put a passenger at risk, and/or medication that affects their ability to drive.
- Fatigue. - Consider whether you are likely to be drowsy or sleepy while driving. Tired drivers are more likely to crash.

(ii) Passenger Comfort

If carrying luggage or shopping, you must ensure that this is safely stored in the car to prevent discomfort to the passenger, or injury in an emergency stop.

Do not lift any heavy items of shopping or luggage or equipment to carry disabled passengers unless you have been specifically asked and trained to do so.



(iii) Seatbelts

You should be aware of current legislation which makes seatbelt wearing compulsory in both front and rear seats on all cars with an unladen weight of less than 2540Kg. You are not responsible for seatbelt wearing by adults, but you are when carrying children under 14. People who are exempt from wearing seatbelts will have a medical exemption certificate. Even in the later stages of pregnancy women should wear a belt, with the lap strap fitted under the abdomen.

(iv) Carrying Disabled People

The beneficiary will have been asked before you visit them whether they have any special needs so you will already be aware of any special equipment and/or escort etc. You should ensure that people with a disability will be comfortable and safe before starting the journey.

If you have any doubts about the safety and comfort of the passengers, the coordinator must be contacted before going ahead with the journey. You should not feel under any obligation to carry passengers with whom you do not feel trained to deal.

(v) Behaviour

If a beneficiary behaves in any way that causes concern to you, Please note this in your diary and discuss this in confidence with your coordinator/ project manager.

## Emergencies

(i) Accidents

If an accident occurs owing to the presence of the volunteer drivers car on the road and this causes damage or injury to any other person, or other vehicle, or any animal not in the vehicle, or roadside property you must:-

- Stop, and priority must be given to the welfare and safety of passengers.
- Give your own or the vehicles owner's name and address and the registration number of the vehicle



to anyone having reasonable grounds for requiring them or to the police within 24 hours.

- Request the vehicle owner's name and address and the registration number of the vehicle if you have reasonable grounds to do so.
- On no account express any admission of liability. Do not enter into any argument with the third party. If necessary call for emergency services.
- All accidents should be notified to the Project manager and your diary should contain a contact number for the beneficiary.
- Use your mobile telephone to contact the police and your coordinator as appropriate (if no network coverage emergency calls can still be made via 999 or 112)

(ii) Serious emergencies

Where life may be at risk, use your mobile to dial 999 or 112 emergency systems.

(iii) Breakdowns

- In the event of a breakdown, you should try to move the vehicle off the main carriage-way or use hazard warning lights or warning triangle.
- If practicable, passengers should be moved away from the vehicle.
- When going for help you should remember to let any emergency service know of any of the special needs of the passenger you are carrying.
- Use your mobile phone to contact emergency services and your scheme as necessary.
- You are recommended to read the relevant sections in the Highway Code on accidents and emergencies.

