GUIDANCE FOR VOLUNTEER DRIVER SCHEMES DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

There are many people who do not have access to their own transport, and their normal support structure may not be in place but still need to get to urgent or emergency appointments. Volunteer drivers can help with this, however, during the coronavirus pandemic, this activity needs to be properly risk assessed, as it will break social distancing rules and put both drivers and passengers at greater risk of catching coronavirus.

Recruitment and retention of volunteer drivers

* Volunteers should be aged under 70, and confirm that they have no underlying health conditions that they are aware of which make them vulnerable to coronavirus
* Ask volunteers to complete an application form and check their I.D
* Ensure that you take up references, ideally 2, mentioning the role that the volunteer will be doing
* Check these references carefully, ensuring that names and dates of birth correlate with the information you were originally given
* Check that ID matches the person – through video call or a ‘selfie’ holding the ID, check that the address correlates with that on the application form
* Ensure that you see the volunteer’s drivers licenses to check it is valid
* Ask prospective volunteers to declare any unspent convictions
* Ask volunteers to sign a volunteer agreement before starting
* Provide volunteers with a ‘line manager’ who has regular phone calls with them to offer support and guidance
* Be clear about what volunteer expenses will be paid, i.e. mileage and parking out of pocket expenses

Vehicle Checks

* Ask volunteers to confirm they have adequate insurance in place and ask to see their insurance certificate.
* Check that the vehicle is roadworthy – look up the number plate on <https://www.gov.uk/check-mot-history>

Infection control

* Vehicles should be wiped down inside before use with a suitable cleaning fluid
* A clean plastic seat protector should be used for each passenger (try approaching local garages for donations of these)
* Drivers must wash their hands before they start their journey
* Drivers and passengers must both confirm that they have no signs of coronavirus before the journey is planned
* If the passenger shows any signs of coronavirus, the driver can refuse to take them
* Passengers must sit in the passenger side, rear seat. Only one passenger at a time
* After the passenger has left the vehicle, the seat protector must be thrown away and the car wiped down with a suitable cleaning fluid
* Once the car has been cleaned down, the driver must wash their hands or use hand sanitiser if a sink is not available

Data Protection

* Ensure that drivers only have the information that they need – i.e address, a phone number and the person’s first name. Drivers should not ask for any further details from the person they are supporting
* This information should be kept as securely as possible, for example in a password protected spreadsheet

Suggested code of conduct for drivers

**Drivers should NOT:**

* Share their personal telephone number(s) - always dial 141 before the passenger’s number
* Share their full name (volunteers should just use their first name) nor any personal details including their email address
* Accept any gifts, gratuities or bequests from their passenger or their friends and family
* Telephone when driving
* Drive under the influence of non-prescription drugs, alcohol, when feeling unwell or when sleep deprived
* Drive over the speed limit, or any other dangerous driving
* Attend the appointment with the passenger
* Telephone when driving

**Drivers should:**

* Respect their passenger’s confidentiality by not discussing them at all with friends or family.
* Ensure that they, and their passenger wear a seatbelt
* Show respect and not use inappropriate language or behaviour including discrimination
* Make the organisation aware if their passenger tries to give them any of their personal details or contact them in anyway
* Pass on useful information and signpost to other support
* Have a mobile phone, bottled water and hand sanitiser available in their car
* Arrange a pick up location and time for their passenger as necessary. It may be necessary for the passenger to have the driver’s phone number in order to arrange a different time if the appointment is running late.

Safeguarding

* All volunteers should be asked to share any safeguarding (welfare) concerns about the individual they are supporting with the organisation they are volunteering for. A Safeguarding Lead should be appointed and their contact details given to the volunteer. It is the Safeguarding Lead’s role to determine whether to act on any of the concerns raised.
* Share your Safeguarding Policy for Adults and Children before volunteering commences and the volunteer asked to sign to confirm that they have read and understood the policies.
* Ensure that the volunteers know not to share any personal or financial information with or about their passenger

Ideas for conversation starters for drivers

After introducing yourself, you could consider asking:

* How are you today?
* How is your day so far?
* How are you feeling?

As the conversation progresses

* What have you been doing today?
* It is good to ask questions about their welfare. Are you eating properly? Do you have enough food? Do you have the medication you need for now?
* Share information that you have about things that are happening locally and any other sources of support
* You could ask them to share their ‘story’ with you – ask about their occupation, interests, and pets. You could ask them about family but remember not everyone may be in contact with them or may not have any close family members.
* A good topic is what someone has been watching on TV or Do you have a garden – have you had any fresh air today?
* You could discuss Coronavirus if they raise it or you feel it is appropriate. Try not to add to any anxiety they may already have about this.
* You can share your own story if you feel willing to do so, but don’t share worries or tales of woe!
* Be aware that the passenger may have received bad news at their appointment, be sensitive to this and signpost to further support

In the case of an incident

If you are involved in a road traffic accident or an incident which results in damage to your vehicle, loss or damage to property or injury to any people you must notify your volunteer manager.

All incidents and accidents must be recorded and reported in accordance with the organisation’s policies.

* Volunteer drivers should have a working mobile phone with them for all journeys

# In the case of an accident

* Use hazard warning lights and switch off your engine.
* Ask your passenger to get out of the vehicle to a place of safety
* Do not move injured passengers unless they are in immediate danger of further injury from other vehicles or from fire or explosion
* Call the emergency services immediately; provide them with information about the situation
* Determine the extent of and damage to both vehicles and/or property
* Do not under any circumstances apologise, admit blame or accept liability
* Record as far as you are able, the details of the accident
* Exchange insurance and contact information with others involved
* If possible take photographs of the incident, and obtain statements from any independent witnesses
* Report the accident/incident immediately to your volunteer manager.

# In the case of a vehicle breakdown

* Use hazard warning lights and switch off your engine.
* Ask your passenger to get out of the vehicle to a place of safety
* Contact your breakdown service
* Contact your volunteer manager to arrange alternative transport for your passenger.