

## Woodford Halse Good Neighbours Scheme

# Health and Safety Policy

This policy was agreed by the Woodford Halse Good Neighbours Scheme Steering Group on

\_\_\_\_\_ (date)

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (chair)

Date of Review \_\_\_\_\_

# Woodford Halse Good Neighbours Scheme

## Health and Safety Policy

### 1.0 Introduction

The Woodford Halse Good Neighbours Scheme is committed to ensuring the welfare of volunteers and clients and although legally not required to have a written Health and Safety Policy believe that it is good practice to do so.

This policy should be read alongside the Woodford Halse Good Neighbours Scheme Lone Working Policy and the Woodford Halse Good Neighbours Safeguarding Policy. In this policy “base office” refers to the volunteer manning the dedicated telephone line.

### 2.0 Health and Safety of Volunteers

Our volunteers may be asked to undertake a number of different tasks and the nature of these tasks may not be clear until the volunteer arrives at the home of the client. The volunteer should have regard to the general risk assessment of activities (appendix one of this policy) and the general lone worker risk assessment (appendix one of the lone working policy) but should also carry out their own unwritten assessment of the risks involved in the task to avoid any accidents. If the volunteer is uncertain about the safety of any task, they should not carry out the task but discuss their concerns with the Volunteer Co-ordinator.

If, as part of undertaking a task for a client, volunteers decide to use electrical or power equipment, e.g. for gardening or simple household tasks, it is important that they are confident that the equipment is in good and safe working order and a power breaker is either installed in the property or plugged in when using electrical equipment. They should use any protective clothing recommended by the manufacturer of the equipment and ensure that the client is suitably protected if they are standing close-by.

If, as part of undertaking a task for a client, volunteers decide to use any substances that are covered by COSHH regulations (this includes chemicals such as weed killers, cleaners and pest controls, fumes and dusts, e.g. from MDF), this decision should be agreed jointly by the Volunteer, the Volunteer Co-ordinator and the Client as many of these tasks would be considered the remit of a professional. In cases where the use of these substances is agreed, manufacturers’ instructions should always be followed and the appropriate COSHH guidance should be read and followed.

If, as part of undertaking a task for a client, volunteers need to work in a potentially hazardous context, e.g. at height, or lifting heavy objects, the appropriate Health and Safety Executive guidance should be read. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/mostpopular.htm> . If the Base Office is aware that the task to be performed is a potentially hazardous context, two Volunteers will be

# Woodford Halse Good Neighbours Scheme Health and Safety Policy

---

assigned to the task, however, there will be times when the context of the task is not clear and only one Volunteer will be sent to the client's house. Volunteers should never feel guilty about asking the Base Office for a second volunteer to assist them.

Volunteers are asked to give feedback to the Volunteer Co-ordinator on a regular basis. As part of this feedback, we request that volunteers report any "near miss accidents" in order to ensure that our risk assessments take the context of these into account.

There may be times when a volunteer needs emotional support, e.g. following the death of a client. In circumstances such as this, the Volunteer Co-ordinator will check on the welfare of volunteers. Stress is seen as a common and natural reaction to circumstances, but high levels of stress can have a negative impact on physical and mental health. Volunteers should arrange to see their Doctor if they feel undue stress as a result of their involvement with the scheme.

## **3.0 Health and Safety of Clients**

Whilst the aim of the scheme is to support clients, it is recognised that at times clients might be tempted to assist the volunteer with a task. The volunteer should assess whether the client is putting themselves at risk by assisting and refuse assistance if this is likely.

While the volunteer is in the home of a client, they may notice things that are a health and safety risk, e.g. an unsafe wire on an electrical appliance. The volunteer should draw the attention of the client to this risk and report any concerns they have to the Volunteer Co-ordinator or Designated Safeguarding Person as appropriate.

On occasions, clients will be transported by volunteers. All volunteers have agreed to notify their insurers of their voluntary role if using their car for the scheme. Volunteers will ensure that clients are safely strapped into the vehicle and that the vehicle is in a roadworthy condition.

Feedback will be sought from clients after a task has been completed. This feedback will include whether they felt safe during the visit and whether they were happy with the approach to ensuring health and safety during the visit.

## **4.0 Insurance**

The Woodford Halse Good Neighbours Scheme has current insurance providing Employers' Liability Insurance (which covers volunteers) and Public Liability Insurance (which covers Clients). A copy of the insurance certificate is available for inspection on request to the Treasurer.

## **5.0 Risk Assessments**

A general risk assessment has been carried out and is included as Appendix One of this policy.

## **6.0 Training**

Appropriate training will be given during the induction of volunteers and as part of an ongoing programme of training.

# Woodford Halse Good Neighbours Scheme Health and Safety Policy

---

## **7.0 Roles and Responsibilities**

### **7.1 Chairperson**

- Shall have overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with Health and Safety legislation.
- Shall ensure that this policy is reviewed annually and in the light of any failure of the system and/or changes in statutory legislation.
- Shall ensure that adequate resources are made available to implement the policy and carry out any remedial action or amendments to this policy.

### **7.2 The Volunteer Co-ordinator**

- Shall ensure that risk assessments are carried out as necessary and arrangements implemented to reduce the risks.
- Shall review operations to identify situations where volunteers may be exposed to foreseeable risks.
- Shall review the effectiveness of Risk Assessments at intervals not exceeding 12 months or when a significant change in circumstances occurs and following any incident.
- Shall, when planning changes in service provision, take account of possible risks to safety and make arrangements for their avoidance or control.
- Shall monitor report incidents or near-misses to ensure that correct action is taken to prevent a recurrence.
- Shall ensure volunteers receive appropriate training.

### **7.3 Volunteers**

- Shall consider the potential risks associated with tasks and are required to follow any specified procedures;
- Shall report to the base office any health and safety problems;
- Shall take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work and co-operate with the organising committee in meeting their obligations;
- Shall be personally accountable for their actions and responsible for ensuring they comply with the agreed procedure;
- Shall ensure all Health and Safety incidents and near misses are reported to Volunteer Co-ordinator and recorded.

# Woodford Halse Good Neighbours Scheme Health and Safety Policy

---

## Appendix 1: General Health and Safety Risk Assessment

Volunteers should always carry a mobile phone when carrying out tasks for WHGNS

Potential Risk	Likelihood of occurrence (1-3) 1=unlikely 2=likely 3=very likely	Severity of consequences (1-3) 1=mild 2=moderate 3=severe	Actions for Volunteer to take to reduce risk
Volunteer has an accident whilst carrying out a task for a client.	1	3	Know your own limitations. Don't undertake any potentially hazardous work unless the Client or another volunteer is present. Ensure the correct equipment for a job is used, e.g. use stable steps when changing a lightbulb. Ensure any equipment is safe and manufacturers' instructions are followed regarding protective clothing. Ensure power breakers are installed in property or plugged in for electrical equipment. Ensure Client is aware of actions to take if an accident occurs.
Incorrect use of COSHH substance causes physical harm.	1	2	Do not use COSHH substances without prior agreement with Volunteer Co-ordinator and Client. Ensure manufacturers' instructions are followed and COSHH guidelines are adhered to.
Client is involved in an accident through trying to help with a task.	2	2	Assess each situation and refuse help from the client if it is potentially hazardous.
Client and volunteer are involved in a car accident on the way to or from an appointment.	1	2	Ensure your car is road-worthy and your insurance company is aware that you are driving as a volunteer. Ensure client is correctly wearing a seatbelt. If the client is distracting you, e.g. by talking too much, ask them to stop until you have reached the destination. Know the route to the destination well, or use a SAT NAV. Do not rely on instructions from the client that could be distracting.

This Risk Assessment will be added to if there are any foreseeable risks associated with any clients, volunteers or tasks.