

## **Camberley Care Volunteer Drivers Information Sheet**

When involving volunteers as drivers there are several issues that organisations must consider.

This information sheet looks at general good practice issues for drivers, insurance and the safety of volunteer drivers and their passengers.

It is important to note that the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act (2007) introduced an offence for prosecuting organisations for gross failures in Health & Safety which leads to death.

### **1.0 General Good Practice**

Volunteer drivers should have a full driving license. It is also preferable that volunteers do not have any endorsements on their license. Organisations should ask volunteers to keep them updated on any changes in relation to sanctions on their licence.

You may want to set a requirement for minimum driving experience. However, be aware of discrimination.

While age discrimination legislation does not apply to volunteers, who have no contract of employment, good practice in volunteer management would recommend that all volunteers should be treated equally regardless of age.

The amount of driving experience should be considered against the type of voluntary work offered i.e. longer journey times given to those who have experience of driving on long journey's etc.

Volunteer drivers should be asked to tell you about any illness or disability, which may affect their ability to drive. However, do not assume that a disability will automatically stop people from becoming a volunteer driver.

While disability discrimination legislation does not apply to volunteers, who have no contract of employment, good practice in volunteer management would recommend that all volunteers should be treated equally regardless of disability, and that where possible reasonable adjustments should be made.

As with all volunteers you should follow good practice for recruitment and selection and ask for the contact details of two people who can act as referees and make sure you follow them up.

You will also need to ensure that you follow good practice in relation to safeguarding and where appropriate, DBS checks and supervision procedures are in place.

Your organisation needs to be reasonably sure that the vehicle the volunteer is using is safe. You should ask to see an MOT certificate for cars four years and older.

## **Camberley Care Volunteer Drivers Information Sheet**

As an organisation, asking volunteers to carry passengers / clients as part of their role, it is your responsibility to ensure that volunteers have an up-to-date driving licence and that their car is roadworthy. If an accident occurs when a volunteer is transporting a passenger, the organisation may be held liable and therefore will need to show the steps they had taken to ensure the health and safety of clients to courts or their insurance company.

In practical terms this will require organisations to keep track of renewal dates of relevant documents i.e. driving licence, MOT, Tax and insurance.

For organisations which have a large number of volunteer drivers, it may only be practical to take a random sample of cars on an annual basis. However, it is important for organisations to be able to evidence the reason(s) why this position was taken.

Cars must have front and rear seatbelts which must be worn at all times by the driver and all passengers during driving. It is the driver who will be prosecuted (3 penalty points + fine).

Volunteers who provide transport in their own car should be advised smoking is not permitted in the vehicle while transport is being delivered.

Volunteers should be provided with guidance stating other people or animals, apart from guide dogs, should not be transported along with your passengers during trips.

### **2.0 Insurance**

Volunteers will be using their own car during their volunteering and therefore it is essential that they are covered by motor insurance.

Organisations should record evidence of this on the volunteer's file. It is the organisation's responsibility to ensure that volunteers have valid and appropriate motor insurance when transporting passengers as part of their volunteering role.

Drivers should inform their insurance company that they are using their car for voluntary work. Organisations may wish to assist volunteers by providing them with a sample letter that they can adapt and send to their insurance company.

The letter should state that the car is being used in the course of voluntary work and will not be used for business. The letter should make it clear that the volunteer is not being paid for the activity and will receive only out of pocket expenses.

In many cases, a volunteer's insurance premium will not be affected if they are using their car for volunteering and volunteers should challenge any proposed increase in the premium.

## Camberley Care Volunteer Drivers Information Sheet

### 3.0 Safety of Volunteer Drivers and Clients

The safety of volunteer drivers and clients should be a primary concern for all volunteer organisations.

Drivers should ensure that all vehicles are safe by checking fuel, oil, windscreen wash and tyres, especially before a long journey.

Ensure CCT know where volunteer drivers are and the route they take to arrive at their destination.

Ensure clients know who their driver is and approximately what time the volunteer is expected to arrive. Ask them to provide a “Blue Badge” if applicable.

Ensure volunteers carry their mobile phones in the case of emergency, making sure the batteries are charged before they set off.

Volunteers should be aware that it is illegal to drive a vehicle while using a hand-held mobile phone or a similar.

In addition, hands-free phones can also be a distraction and volunteers risk prosecution for not having proper control of the vehicle when using one.

Organisations should provide emergency out of hours contact information for all volunteer drivers so should an emergency arise, contact is available.

Provide volunteers with photo identification with the contact details of CCT.

Provide Health and Safety guidance and / or equipment i.e. luminous vests for getting in and out of vehicles during times of poor visibility.

#### **Volunteer Drivers should:**

Keep the doors locked and the windows closed as much as possible, especially in built-up areas and slow-moving traffic.

Keep alert so that you know where you are.

Never pick up hitchhikers.

Take breaks on long journey if applicable

Plan your route considering local traffic congestion to ensure arrival at the destination for the agreed time

Take warm clothes in case of breakdown or bad weather.

## **Camberley Care Volunteer Drivers Information Sheet**

Keep valuables out of sight.

Carry a mobile phone for emergency use.

Carry a torch at night.

Not to stop if they see an incident, unless it is safe to do so; it may be safer to drive on and summon help.

### **4.0 Road rage**

Unfortunately, this type of situation is becoming more common. If at any time they are confronted by this situation, it is important that they do nothing to escalate it further.

Do not stop to confront the third party.

If a car pulls in front of your vehicle and you are approached, stay in your vehicle with the doors locked and the windows closed; keep the engine running and drive away as soon as possible.

If they cannot get away, make as much noise and fuss as you can; sound the horn, flash headlights, etc., to gain attention.

### **5.0 Breakdown on a motorway or dual carriageway**

Park as near as possible to an emergency phone and put on high visibility clothing if possible.

Leave the car by the passenger door.

When making an emergency call, face oncoming traffic, so you can see if another vehicle is approaching.

Tell the operator you are a Volunteer Driver and have elderly/disabled/vulnerable passenger/s.

Never cross the carriageway.

Wait behind the barrier, beside your vehicle if this is safe.

Ask for I.D. from uniformed persons to ensure they are bona fide.

#### **(Vince Ayers Disclaimer Nov 2024)**

Reasonable care has been taken to ensure information in this publication is accurate. However it is not intended to be legally comprehensive; it is designed to provide guidance in good faith without accepting liability.