

# AGE concern

Barnstaple & North Devon | Supporting Independent Living

## Volunteer Policy Booklet

### Welcome to Age Concern Barnstaple and North Devon

Age Concern Barnstaple and North Devon (ACBND) was founded in Barnstaple in 1990 and has strong community support providing vital services to older and vulnerable people, many of whom depend on our services to manage their day to day lives. Our services reduce loneliness and isolation, improve health and wellbeing and support independent living. There is growing need in North Devon and we are very grateful that you are joining our volunteer team to help us deliver these essential community services, we will do everything we can to make your volunteering experience as rewarding and enjoyable as possible.

This Volunteer Policy Booklet sets out the policies and procedures that volunteers need to be aware of. Whilst we appreciate that volunteering is not employment we ask you to adhere to these policies at all times as they are designed to keep you, our clients and the Charity safe. From time to time our policies and procedures are updated, to ensure we continue to work to best practice standards, and you will receive a policy update. If you have any questions please contact your Service Manager, or the Volunteer Manager, who will be pleased to help you.



We offer our volunteers quarterly events, regular training opportunities, excellent staff support and pay volunteering expenses.

**Our volunteers are proud to be part of Age Concern Barnstaple and North Devon**

Charity Number 1201835

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## **Volunteer Policy**

ACBND offers volunteers the opportunity to become actively involved in their local community by offering a wide range of voluntary roles. We are committed to helping volunteers find a role that suits their aims, skills and interests. We want to be an inclusive organisation and welcome diversity.

Volunteers are recruited using the 'Safe Recruitment Method' they complete an application form, attend an informal interview, provide 2 suitable referees, complete an enhanced DBS check and attend Induction Training where the Volunteer Handbook and Policy Booklet are provided. Volunteers are added to the Newsletter mailing list for social and training opportunities. Prospective volunteers with a criminal conviction are not automatically unsuitable to become a volunteer; ACBND follows the DBS Code of Practice.

Once a volunteer has chosen their service they are supported by their Service Manager, this is their main point of contact. At any time volunteers can contact their Service Manager via email or telephone or by calling into the office. ACBND recognises the work of its volunteers as extremely valuable. Volunteers are respected and appreciated on a daily basis. In addition, volunteers receive Long Service Recognition Rewards. A Volunteer Alumni is available for retired volunteers.

Volunteers are covered by employer's liability and public liability insurance. Volunteer Drivers for the Transport Service have their No Claims Bonus protected should they have an accident while driving for the Charity.

Please be aware that ACBND is not able to insure volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage. All volunteers are issued with a ACBND identity badge which must be worn when volunteering. Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Training must be completed every 3 years.

### **Expenses Policy**

Volunteers working for ACBND will not be out of pocket. Approved expenses will be paid and do not affect benefits or have any legal or tax implications. Expenses paid will be the cost incurred and receipts are required. Approved expenses are: travel to the main office, training venues, to/from the place where the volunteering activity takes place, postage, stationery and telephone costs, other approved expenses as agreed with your Service Manager. Travel expenses will be reimbursed as HMRC guidelines so that income tax and benefits are not affected. To claim expenses, complete the Volunteer Expense Claim form available from your Service Manager, and submit by the 10th of the following month. Expenses are processed monthly.

### **Petty Cash Policy**

This policy ensures that proper security is maintained in handling cash and protects volunteers from unnecessary allegations. Lunch Club payments are collected by the Lead Volunteer and passed on to the venue. Community Activities attendees pay a fee for refreshments and activities. These funds are held and controlled by the Lead Volunteer via spreadsheets and used to provide refreshments and materials as required. Funds can be held up to a maximum of £100, any excess balance should be returned to ACBND for banking. After each activity the relevant cash values are balanced. Receipts for all expenditure are kept and returned to ACBND monthly to be reconciled by the Charity Administrator. A minimum float of £40.00 is maintained for all activities. People above the age of 75 should not transport cash for the Charity, they are not insured to do so.

### **Confidentiality Policy**

ACBND clients are required to fill in forms that hold confidential information such as contact details, medical information and emergency contacts. These documents will be fully respected at all times and will not be shared with those whom it does not concern. All information must be stored securely and password protected if on a computer. Volunteers should not discuss any information about clients outside of the services unless it is to safeguard a vulnerable adult from immediate danger (see Safeguarding policy). Confidential information is transported and destroyed securely when no longer needed, for example shredded. Relevant information received by volunteers, e.g. from client family members, should be shared with the Service Manager and recorded appropriately. Client permission is needed before discussing information regarding clients with other professionals and agencies, unless it is felt the client is at risk, and this will be managed by the Service Manager. When discussing a client, volunteers must ensure that the conversation happens in an appropriate place and in a sensitive manner. If someone telephones and asks for information regarding a client, the call should be referred to the Service Manager. Volunteers should not disclose any personal or confidential information about any client including to friends or family members. Social Media must be used appropriately (see Social Media and Email Policy).

### **Data Protection Policy**

From 25th May 2018 Data Protection legislation enforced in the United Kingdom is the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Everyone has rights with regards to how their personal information is handled. During the course of activities ACBND will collect, store and process personal data for a specific purpose only. Data will be securely destroyed if it is no longer needed. The data, which may be held on paper, computer or other media, is subject to legal safeguards. Volunteers have the right to see any information that ACBND keeps about them and to ask for changes to any information that is inaccurate. ACBND will maintain an appropriate level of security to protect all information held about volunteers. The Charity operates a 'clear desk policy' and locked storage cabinets and password protected files are used. Staff and volunteers working off-site must store and transport data securely, not have confidential data on personal computers, and be sensitive about discussing/using data in public, ensuring that confidential data cannot be seen/heard by others. Only essential confidential data should be transported and should be locked in the boot of the car or transported in a locked bag. In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to break the basic rules of confidentiality, if the safety and rights of a person may be seriously at risk. Any decisions made, and the reasons for them, should be properly discussed and recorded. Any decision to break confidentiality will not be taken lightly. If confidential information is divulged without consent, except where it might result in harm to someone, the Service Manager should be informed as soon as possible. Breaches of confidentiality may result in volunteers losing their volunteer registration at the decision of the CEO. In accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, any breach of confidentiality may result in legal proceedings being brought against an individual, ACBND or the Trustees.

### **Conflict of Interest Policy**

Volunteers will strive to avoid any conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, between the interests of the organisation and personal, professional/business interests. ACBND must be informed if a conflict of interest arises, especially if a volunteer stands to gain financially. This will be added to the Register of Interests which will be reviewed by the CEO. Any decision regarding the client/volunteer relationship will be made on a case-by-case basis. Any breaches of this policy may result in the loss of volunteer registration at the decision of the CEO.

### **No-Smoking Policy**

ACBND is committed to protecting volunteers' health, safety and welfare by providing a safe place of work and protecting volunteers from exposure to

smoke. Workplaces, venues, events and cars used for voluntary purposes are smoke-free. Volunteers will not be asked to visit a client who smokes, unless they agree to this at their own risk, and this is recorded on the risk assessment. Clients and volunteers must not smoke during visits. This policy applies to anything that can be smoked including cigarettes, pipes, cigars, herbal and E-Cigarettes. Smoking in smoke-free premises is a criminal offence and may result in a fine/prosecution.

### **Substance Misuse Policy**

ACBND is committed to providing a safe, healthy and productive working environment including ensuring that all volunteers are fit to carry out their volunteering roles safely and effectively in a working environment which is free from alcohol and drug misuse. Volunteers will be deemed to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs where that is the reasonable opinion of a Service Manager. Any incidents will be taken seriously, this may lead to reporting to the Police or relevant authority. Volunteers must inform the Service Manager of any medication that may influence their ability to carry out their roles safely. All instructions given by the Service Manager must subsequently be followed. Under Health and Safety legislation volunteers have a duty to take care of their own, and colleagues, health and safety including raising with the Service Manager any concerns about alcohol/drug abuse by a colleague.

### **Code of Conduct Policy**

This policy is to provide volunteers with clear guidelines as to the standard of behaviour and responsibilities expected by those representing ACBND. Volunteers are expected to act honestly, conscientiously and reasonably at all times with regard to their responsibilities and the welfare of clients, volunteers and staff. ACBND should be informed of any gifts received and will register the details. Gifts should not be accepted if they are of high value (e.g. more than £25), regular gifts or cash. Volunteers have an obligation to: be respectful of client privacy, needs and feelings, maintain a good understanding of the values and principles of ACBND, be committed and punctual. If unable to visit due to illness/personal reasons, as much notice as possible should be given. Dress should be appropriate (clean, neat and tidy) and volunteers should comply with policies, procedures and volunteer agreements. Failure to comply with this policy can result in the loss of a volunteer's registration at the decision of the CEO.

### **Social Media Policy**

Social media and online opportunities are important and can have a positive impact on the organisation. ACBND Facebook pages create networks for volunteers to share ideas and become more engaged with each other and the

organisation. However, there are also risks that social media could be used inappropriately, causing potential harm to the organisation. All social media pages will be monitored by ACBND to ensure that our volunteers, clients and the organisation are protected. Please remember that nothing is private and it cannot always be deleted. Do not put any personal information about clients, volunteers or staff on any social media. Every post could be the only information used to judge ACBND and could cause a vulnerable person, to decide not to contact the organisation, losing the help they may need. Sadly, some people feel that they have a right to post comments that could be hurtful, disrespectful or abusive. Anyone found to post these types of comments will face the loss of their volunteer registration at the decision of the CEO.

### **Internet, Email and IT Policy**

Only approved data and software licenced by ACBND are allowed on the organisation's computers. Volunteers are only allowed access to those parts of the systems which are required to carry out their normal duties. Volunteers must comply with procedures to ensure that software is virus-free and must adhere to the Data Protection Policy. Passwords must always be used and changed regularly. Computers and E-mails can not be used for personal use. Email messages on the organisation's equipment are the property of ACBND and should be treated as permanent written records which may be read by other people and which could result in personal or organisation liability. Do not assume that an email sent has been read/acted upon, and do not retrieve or read emails not marked for your attention. Information under copyright must not be used/shared without permission. Volunteers must alert the Service Manager if any inappropriate emails/files are received. Internet sites visited must not contain content that may be considered illegal, offensive or disruptive, such as pornographic images. ACBND recognises the legitimate expectation that private lives are private, and thus monitoring internet day to day activity is not undertaken. However, audit history is available on the systems and will be reviewed if deemed appropriate by ACBND. Misuse of computers is serious misconduct which could result in the loss of the volunteer's registration at the decision of the CEO. Misuse amounting to criminal conduct will be reported to the relevant authorities.

### **Volunteer Complaints Policy**

ACBND tries to get things right but occasionally we fall short of volunteers' expectations. ACBND therefore welcomes comments on how volunteering with ACBND can be improved. However, if something is not satisfactorily resolved, the volunteer has the right to complain. Volunteer complaints will be dealt with as quickly as possible, investigated and handled fairly and politely. Your Service Manager will normally be able to resolve any volunteer complaint. If

you are not satisfied with the result of this informal process, you should put your complaint in writing and submit it to the Volunteer Manager within ten working days. If your complaint concerns the Volunteer Manager, you may submit it to the CEO. The written complaint should set out the nature of the complaint, including any relevant facts, dates and names of individuals involved so that the Volunteer Manager / CEO can investigate it. If you are still not satisfied the complaint will be dealt with by the CEO in conjunction with a member of the Board of Trustees, who will carry out an investigation and provide a response within 28 working days. Their findings will be presented to the Board of Trustees and their response will be final.

**Whistleblowing Policy** (reporting of malpractice/illegal acts).

ACBND is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity, and accountability. It expects people, who have serious concerns about the Charity's work, to come forward and voice those concerns. The Public Interest and Disclosure Act 1998 makes it clear that all volunteers/employees can report their concerns without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. The law provides protection for volunteers/employees who raise legitimate concerns about 'qualifying disclosures' that are made in the public interest by a person who has a reasonable belief that a criminal offence, miscarriage of justice, a risk to health and safety, damage to the environment, or a breach of legal obligation is happening, has happened, or is likely to happen. ACBND will investigate any concerns. We hope that you will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. Completely anonymous disclosures are difficult to investigate. If you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will make every effort to keep your identity secret and only reveal it where necessary to those involved in investigating your concern.

If a volunteer/employee makes an allegation which they reasonably believe to be true, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against them. However, if they make an allegation frivolously, maliciously, or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against them/they may lose their volunteer registration.

Whenever possible you should raise your concern with your Service Manager, the CEO or the Chair of Trustees. The action taken will depend on the nature of the concern, there may be an internal investigation, reporting to the Police, an External Auditor, or an independent inquiry. Initial enquiries will be made to decide what course of action should be taken. If urgent action is required this will be taken before any investigation is conducted. You will be written to within ten working days acknowledging the concern and indicating how the Charity proposes to deal with the matter, with timescales, any initial outcomes and if no action is to be taken, why not. When any meeting is arranged you have the right to be accompanied by a colleague who is not involved in the

area of work to which the concern relates. ACBD will support your involvement in the process e.g. by arranging for you to have advice about procedure. Subject to legal constraints you will be provided with information about the outcomes of any investigations. It is highly unlikely but if you are not satisfied, and feel it is right to take the matter further, the following are possible contacts: Protect, the Audit Commission, the Police, the Health and Safety Executive, HM Revenue and Customs. If a matter is taken outside ACBD, you must take all reasonable steps to ensure that confidential or privileged information is not disclosed. If in doubt, check with the CEO the Chair of Trustees.

### **Health and Safety Policy**

ACBND is committed to ensuring the health and safety of volunteers and to providing a safe environment for all those attending our premises. ACBND will consult with volunteers and employees and provide appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision and take steps to prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health. ACBND is responsible for assessing risks to health and safety and identifying ways to overcome them, including emergency procedures for use when needed, safe equipment and appropriate protective clothing as needed. ACBD will regularly monitor and review the management of health and safety and make any necessary changes.

Volunteers must also recognise that everyone shares responsibility for achieving healthy and safe working conditions. Volunteers and employees must consider the health and safety implications of their acts and/or omissions and take reasonable care for their health and safety and that of others. Any health and safety concerns should be reported to your Service Manager who will consult with the Charity Administrator and CEO if necessary.

A first aid box and an appointed First Aider are available within the office/venue. The lead volunteer at any Community Activity should make themselves aware of the location of the First Aid box and any First Aider on the premises, your Service Manager will advise you.

If any first aid is required the volunteer must deal with this appropriately, calling on the services of the GP or Emergency services if required. Any injury to a client or volunteer must be reported to your Service Manager who will record it in the Accident book. Near misses should also be reported and recorded. Lead volunteers should take a register of attendees in case of any incidents, such as a fire, and they should make themselves aware of the fire procedures and meeting points at any premises, your Service Manager will advise you. The lead volunteer will notify the Service Manager of any incidents as soon as possible, and they will be recorded; any emergency evacuation should be reported back to the CEO at the earliest opportunity. Any volunteers showing signs of stress will receive extra support from their Service Manager. They will also be given the opportunity to take a break from volunteer-



ng where regular contact would be maintained and help offered where identified. Volunteers should speak to their Service Manager if additional support is required.

In the event of an epidemic or pandemic alert ACBND will organise charity operations and provide advice on steps to be taken by volunteers, in accordance with official guidance, to reduce the risk of infection as far as possible. Any questions should be referred to the CEO. It is important for the health and safety of all that volunteers comply with instructions issued in these circumstances.

### **Lone Worker Policy**

ACBND has an obligation under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all volunteers. This policy is to ensure that there are adequate systems in place to ensure the health, safety and welfare of lone workers, to reduce the risks as far as reasonably possible and practicable.

The definition of a lone worker is someone who works by themselves, out of sight of staff and without close or direct supervision. For some of ACBND services our volunteers will be required to visit or transport clients or work in the community on their own. Risk assessments will be carried out prior to any volunteer visiting a client's home alone. All first visits will be carried out by a member of staff. During subsequent visits volunteers should use their own judgement and should not proceed with any visit if they feel that they may be at risk or feel uncomfortable in any way. This should be reported back to the Service Manager at the earliest opportunity. Risk Assessments include the building/environment, animals, parking and any potential violence or aggression. This list is not exhaustive and other risks may be identified during the assessment process.

Community Transport risks are assessed for volunteer drivers by Booking Desk Operators who ask Members questions about pick up and drop off points, the reason for the journey, Member mobility issues, or any additional support that may be needed such as Members with advanced dementia who may require an escort to travel with them. This information is passed on to the driver so they are fully informed of any issues prior to a drive. If a driver encounters any problems when transporting a Member, such as more severe mobility problems than expected requiring a higher level of support, then this information is fed back to the Booking Operators who update the records for future reference. Drivers are empowered to refuse any journey at the point of collection if they do not feel comfortable or safe transporting the Member. Where Members are considered to be higher risk, or risks are unclear, the Service Manager undertakes a client visit and risk assessment before any bookings are taken. People who are not able to use the service safely do not be-

come Members. If Member health deteriorates so they are no longer safe to transport they are referred on to e.g. wheelchair transport services.

Where volunteer drivers are reported to be driving unsafely by Members then the Service Manager investigates and undertakes an observed drive if necessary. Drivers who are not driving safely lose their volunteer driver registration.

Marketing Volunteers are often working alone in the community distributing posters and leaflets. Following the 'responsible person' procedure below, carrying a charged mobile phone and being cognisant of their own health and safety is important.

From time to time volunteers may give a client a lift to an activity or event. In these cases the person they are transporting must be known to them, or the organisation, and this must be discussed with the Service Manager in advance so all risks can be assessed. They must inform a 'responsible person' when they are expected back and be aware of their own health and safety, following all recommended procedures, including carrying a charged mobile phone in case of emergencies.

**Lone working volunteers must follow the following procedure at all times:**

Volunteers must understand the risks affecting them and not take unnecessary risks, raising any issues or concerns with your Service Manager. Volunteers undertaking lone working must be able to cope (physically and mentally) with unforeseen emergencies; experience, training and being informed of risks and how to mitigate them will prepare volunteers for their lone working roles. Volunteers must inform a family member, neighbour or friend - a 'responsible person' - when they are lone working. Tell their 'responsible person' when they expect to return and make sure the 'responsible person' has their contact details, knows their planned whereabouts and knows how to raise the alarm if the volunteer is not back within 2 hours of the agreed return time, including contacting the police. If volunteers do not have a 'responsible person' volunteering must take place at a time when an ACBND staff member can undertake that role.

Volunteers must know what to do if they feel unsafe or are threatened verbally or physically. If feeling unsafe a volunteer must make an excuse, such as forgotten paperwork in the car, and leave immediately, reporting this to their Service Manager as soon as possible so that appropriate action can be taken. Unsafe clients can not receive ACBD services and are referred on to Social Services. If threatened, and the volunteer is in a position to do so, they must get out/away as quickly as possible. If that is not possible withdraw to a room, barricade themselves in, smash a window, raise FIRE alarm. Do not feel embarrassed about causing a scene, do attract attention. Call 999 on your mobile and remember to tell them your address. If possible, dial 999 again on a landline as the call will be traced automatically. Although these incidents

are incredibly rare knowing what to do is important. Any incidents, however small, must be reported to your Service Manager so that appropriate action can be taken. Unsafe clients can not receive ACBD services and are referred on to Social Services.

### **Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy**

Adult safeguarding is the process of protecting adults with care and support needs (referred to in this policy as 'vulnerable adults') from abuse or neglect. ACBND is committed to ensuring that adults who use our services are not exploited or abused and that working practices minimise the risk of abuse. If abuse is reported to us or volunteers recognise abuse, this policy outlines what to do. This policy is based on the Care Act of 2014 and uses Government and Devon's Safeguarding Adults Partnership guidance.

Examples of vulnerable adults include: an older person, a person with a physical disability, a learning difficulty, a sensory impairment, someone with mental health needs (including dementia and personality disorders), a person with a long-term health condition, someone who misuses substances or alcohol to the extent that it affects their ability to manage day-to-day living, someone who is socially isolated and does not have support networks. This is not an exhaustive list. Abuse is the violation of an individual's human and civil rights by someone else. It can result from action or inaction. Abuse might be unintentional; the important factor is whether the vulnerable person is harmed or not. Different types of abuse may happen at the same time. It can happen in any setting. Abuse can be: physical, sexual, psychological or emotional, financial, neglect (including self-neglect), discriminatory, institutional, modern slavery, and radicalisation. There are a number of signs and symptoms of abuse, for example: frequent injuries or bruising, depression, neglected appearance or poor hygiene, weight loss, lack of money, fear of a person. All volunteers have a duty to be vigilant to signs that all is not well with a vulnerable adult. There is a duty to respond to any allegation or suspicion by following the reporting procedures. Not all concerns about vulnerable adults relate to abuse, there may well be other explanations. It is important to keep an open mind. If any person has concerns it is not their responsibility to decide if it is abuse, it is their responsibility to act on any concerns following this procedure. They must confidentially discuss the matter with, Natasha Harvey, the Safeguarding Lead for ACBND, or their Service Manager. The facts will be checked and the person who is the subject of the concerns will be made aware of the process. The CEO will be informed. The following information must be obtained when abuse is suspected: name and age, where they live and with whom, which organisations are providing them with help/services, why you are concerned, details of the person(s) who may be abusing the vulnerable adult.

The Service Manager or Safeguarding Lead will then contact Social Services. If the abuse is violent or a vulnerable adult is in immediate physical danger the Service Manager or Safeguarding Lead will contact the police. Records of all reports of concerns or incidents will be kept in a confidential file.

All cases of possible abuse are treated very seriously. Social Services will arrange for a team manager to investigate the case. The team manager will talk to other people and organisations, including the police and should make a decision about how to proceed within 24 hours. They will decide if no further action is needed, or arrange a meeting for organisations involved with the adult. This meeting will share information and agree how to proceed. The Team Manager will make sure any action agreed at the meeting and any follow up meetings take place. Actions might include: taking immediate action to protect the adult, interviewing the person and other people, deciding how to support the adult, decisions about possible criminal investigation or disciplinary action and producing a protection plan to make sure the adult stays safe. The person reporting the suspected abuse will be told what happens.

**If the ACBND office is closed Social Services or the Police can be contacted directly:**

**Call Care Direct on 0345 1551 007 (Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm and Saturday 9am to 1pm)**

**Call the Emergency Duty Service on 0345 6000 388 (outside of the hours above or on bank holidays)**

**Email [csc.caredirect@devon.gov.uk](mailto:csc.caredirect@devon.gov.uk)**

**The police need to be involved if it is an emergency situation and the vulnerable adult is at immediate risk of serious harm. Telephone: 101 or 999**

The volunteer must inform the ACBND Service Manager or Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible if suspected abuse has been reported to any agency.

Though ACBND has a duty to ensure confidentiality, it must be stressed that where abuse is suspected confidentiality can be broken. All volunteers who work directly with vulnerable adults will receive training in safeguarding and will attend refresher training/information every 3 years. Volunteers must avoid unnecessary physical contact with clients. Unless circumstances make it impossible to comply, do not take adults with support needs to the toilet unless another adult is present or aware. Do not make suggestive or inappropriate remarks to clients, even in fun. If a client accuses a volunteer or member of staff of abuse or inappropriate behaviour, the volunteer should report this immediately to their Service Manager who will inform the CEO. The duty to report applies equally to complaints/accusations of historic abuse.

### **Volunteer Driver Policy**

This policy details the rules (legal and procedural) for volunteers who drive for

ACBND. Any breach of this policy may result in the volunteer losing their volunteer registration at the decision of the CEO.

**There are 2 types of volunteer driver, registered drivers of the Transport Service and occasional drivers who drive their clients or other volunteers** e.g. to an event. Critically both types of volunteer driver must inform their insurance company that they are using their car for voluntary purposes. All drivers must have a valid driving licence and follow the rules of the Highway Code, many of which are legal requirements. All drivers must inform the Transport Manager of any conviction or caution (including impending) of their driving licence. The Service Manager will review the implications. The maximum age for driving is governed by the individual's ability to reach the health and capability requirements of the DVLA. The Health and Safety policy applies. All drivers must advise the DVLA and ACBND of the onset/worsening of any health condition, medication, illness or injury which may affect their driving. All vehicles must be clean and in suitable condition with seat belts. The maximum number of passengers must not exceed manufacturers specification and seatbelt availability. Seatbelts must be worn unless a valid exemption certificate is present. The Transporting Vulnerable Adults policy applies. A vehicle check is necessary before any ACBND drive (tyres, washers/wipers, lights etc.) The No Smoking policy applies. The Lone Worker policy applies.

**Drivers for the Community Transport Service must also follow the following procedures.** Transport Service drivers have driving licence (six monthly) car insurance, MOT and car tax (annual) checks. Volunteers set the days/times when they are available and are responsible for taking breaks and not driving while tired. All drives must be booked through the Booking Desk who risk assess each drive escalating to the Service Manager for higher risk clients/situations. All relevant information is passed to the driver. The Booking Desk contacts the nearest driver and continue until they find someone to take the drive. The Member is contacted to confirm the drive and cost. Members are informed that they are responsible for other charges such as parking. The booking is confirmed with an email, if the driver does not have email they write the details down. Journey costs are based on HMRC Car Sharing Legislation which have been translated into Zone charges. ACBND currently pays volunteers 45p per mile. If drivers drive above 10,000 miles per annum mileage payments reduce. Drivers are responsible for any parking tickets, fines, release fees etc. If at point of pick up the client decides they do not want to undertake the journey, the volunteer will be paid for the costs incurred up to that point. Please inform the Booking Desk. All drivers must follow the Confidentiality, Data Protection and Safeguarding Policies. All drivers are asked to confirm the booking with the Member before transport (see exception for vulnerable adults in the Vulnerable Adults Policy). The most appropriate route

(which should be checked in advance) given road conditions and circumstances should be used. The ACBND Transport Service is well known for the kindness and consideration of the volunteer drivers and for many clients this reputation gives them comfort and the confidence to use the Service. Many clients need additional support to access vehicles, find the correct hospital waiting room, be waited with and taken safely back to their own home, or even their own armchair. All drivers are provided with the training and support needed to allow them to provide this level of service. Any passenger **Blue Badge** must be displayed clearly on the front dashboard with the parking disc showing the time of arrival. As soon as the passenger journey is complete the Blue Badge must be returned; failure to do this can result in a significant fine for both driver and Blue Badge holder. The driver is responsible for deciding where the Blue Badge can be used and is responsible for any fines. Drivers must make sure that all luggage/walking aids are secure, ideally in the boot. Moving and handling training is provided. Any request to **transport oxygen** must be made through the Booking Desk and agreed with the driver who should inform their insurance company. The cylinder must be safely secured within the vehicle and a warning sign displayed in the offside rear window. This sign should be removed as soon as the oxygen has left the vehicle, it is an offence not to do so. Two windows should be partially open for additional ventilation and the no smoking policy must be strictly enforced, fuel stations cannot be used. If the cylinder is damaged or 'hissing' do not transport it, do not attempt repairs. Do not leave a cylinder unattended.

**Animals** can only be transported by driver consent and when booked in via the Booking Office. The correct animal restraint must be used. **Drivers have the final decision** on whether to transport passengers on the point of collection and can refuse any journey if circumstances dictate. Keep the Booking Desk informed. Where possible drivers should carry a charged mobile phone in case of emergency situations. Drivers must stop in a safe place before making phone calls. If there is an **accident/incident** involving the passenger the passenger should either be advised to contact their GP, taken to the nearest Emergency Department, or an ambulance should be called depending on the seriousness of the incident or injury. Any accident/incident involving a passenger in the care of a volunteer should be reported to ACBND as soon as possible/practicable. Any claim for accident/damage should be pursued through the individual's insurance in the normal way. ACBND provides insurance to protect driver's 'No Claims Bonus' should they have an accident while they are driving for the Charity. Notify the Service Manager should this be needed. Any change of vehicle must be notified to ACBND, only vehicles registered with the Service can be used.

### **Transporting Vulnerable Adults**

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy also applies. An assessment of the risks will be undertaken by the Booking Desk/Transport Manager before asking a driver to transport any vulnerable adult. Drivers can refuse any drive.

If relevant drivers must be accompanied by an escort/Passenger Assistant as this significantly reduces risks. Drivers should avoid using personal mobile phones to contact vulnerable adults to maintain appropriate professional boundaries, communication should be arranged through the Booking Desk.

Specific consideration should be given for long journeys, eg. over 20 miles where the vulnerable adult is unfamiliar with the volunteer driver and/or the passenger assistant. Family or guardian must give permission through a Transportation Consent Form for vulnerable adults to use the Transport Service. If consent is not obtained, then transportation will not be permitted. Vulnerable adults must behave appropriately while travelling in the volunteer's vehicle. If there are any concerns during the journey, an assessment of the risks should be undertaken immediately, and appropriate action taken to complete the journey safely. If there is a medical condition that requires support/medication, then a copy of the Care Plan, or sufficient information on medical requirements, plus the appropriate medication, must be available and a carer should accompany the vulnerable adult in the vehicle. Vulnerable adults should never be left in the vehicle unattended. A doctor can issue an exemption certificate if a vulnerable adult is unable to use a seat belt because of their condition, this must be shown to the driver.

### **Environmental Policy**

ACBND recognise the importance of the impact of our activities on the environment and that we need to conserve energy/minimise waste. We aim to have a positive impact on our environment and we will meet or exceed compliance with environmental legislation and code of practice. We aim to integrate the consideration of environmental impact into all our decision making and activities, promote environmental awareness and working practice among staff/volunteers, reduce energy and material consumption wherever possible and minimise waste through re-use and recycling, purchase and use environmentally responsible products and continually improve our environmental performance. ACBND currently recycles paper, cardboard, printer ink cartridge, batteries, glass, cans and plastics. We adopt the 'only turn on when using' approach to services and only use LED lightbulbs.

ACBND has embarked on a carbon net zero project using both emission reduction and mitigation and adaptation strategies. All staff are now using the search engine Ecosia which plants a tree for every 45 searches undertaken.

## Infection Prevention and Control Policy

ACBND aims to prevent, reduce and control infectious diseases, and educate and inform staff/volunteers/clients about infectious diseases and how to prevent spread. This policy is important because of the vulnerability of Age Concern clients, and some volunteers, by age and underlying health conditions. Infectious diseases commonly spread through person to person contact, through small particles in the air, for example after someone coughs/sneezes, and from touching contaminated surfaces. Common infectious diseases are flu and Covid 19. The best way to protect yourself is to be vaccinated, vaccinations are available for both flu and Covid 19. If you have symptoms, such as a cough, high temperature, loss of taste/smell, please self-isolate and in the case of Covid 19, test. Tests are available in shops/pharmacies. If you do not have a test Age Concern can deliver tests to you. Please continue to isolate until you are symptom free, and in the case of Covid 19, until you test negative. Typically this can take 7-10 days.

**To help prevent infection please follow these procedures:** wash your hands often for 20 seconds using soap and water or use hand sanitiser, after coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose, before you eat or handle food, when you enter a premises, including your own home. When you cough/sneeze cover your mouth with a disposable tissue and dispose of it safely in a rubbish bag. If you do not have a tissue use the crook of your elbow, not your hand. Immediately wash/sanitise your hands. You are encouraged to wear a face covering in enclosed public spaces where you are unable to maintain social distance (6 feet apart) and keep spaces well ventilated with fresh air. Please inform us as soon as possible if you have contracted a contagious disease. Age Concern provides PPE including face masks, hand sanitiser and wipes. Please let your Service Manager know if you would like any PPE.

**Volunteer Manager**  
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