

## Volunteer Handbook

### Welcome to Age Concern Barnstaple and North Devon

First of all, please let me say a big thank you for becoming an Age Concern volunteer. We are delighted that you are joining our team and we look forward to working with you. Our volunteers are the lifeblood of the Charity and provide invaluable support to the North Devon community.

Our Charity has been in existence since 1990. We provide friendship and support to older and vulnerable people in the North Devon community. We aim to reduce loneliness and isolation, improve health and wellbeing and support independent living.

Over the years our services have steadily expanded to meet community need and now include:

- Help Desk and Benefits Service
- Community Transport
- Shopping Support
- Befriending
- Carer Support
- Community Activities and Events
- ShopMobility

This handbook will tell you a little about the services we offer and will provide you with resources and practical information to support your volunteering. Accompanying this handbook is the **Volunteer Policy Booklet** which contains all the policies and procedures needed to keep you and our clients safe; please familiarise yourself with both these documents, which are included in your Induction Training.

Do let your Service Manager know if you require any further training, support or guidance, you can reach us by telephone, email or call in to see us at Boutport Street, our doors are always open.

*The Age Concern Team*

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### **Becoming an Age Concern Volunteer**

Our volunteering roles involve working with older and vulnerable people in the community and for this reason we follow a 'Safe Recruitment Process.' As a new volunteer you will fill in an application form, provide two referees, attend an informal interview and complete an enhanced DBS check. You will then attend Induction Training with the Volunteer Manager.

This training covers an overview of our services, as well as practical issues in relation to your volunteering role, such as how to claim volunteer travel expenses and important policies including Safeguarding and Lone Worker. You will also be given an ACBD ID badge. Your badge is important as people may want to check that you are a genuine Age Concern volunteer, so please do carry this with you. At the end of the Induction Training we will ask you to sign a Volunteer Agreement which summarises the key responsibilities of ACBD and of you as a volunteer. ACBD will also sign this agreement to confirm our commitment to you.

### **Your Commitment**

We hugely appreciate the donation of your time, but please bear in mind that consistency is important to isolated and vulnerable people. Do try to give good notice if you are unable to fulfil your volunteering commitment. We also ask that you do not over-commit yourself. It can be very difficult for our clients if we let them down. You can always increase your volunteering once you have settled in and are sure you have the time.

### Supporting Our Volunteers

All of our volunteers are supported by their Service Manager and the Volunteer Manager. We produce newsletters, offer regular training courses (such as First Aid and Dementia Awareness) and hold regular events which provide an informal setting to meet with other volunteers and clients as well as ACBD staff and trustees. We are keen to keep in touch so we can address any issues as they arise. Please do not wait for a formal meeting if you have any concerns, contact us by telephone, email or pop into the office.

### Communication with Clients and Staff

We will not pass on your telephone number to clients. If you choose to give out your contact number we recommend using your mobile phone number, as this maintains privacy at home. We can also pass messages on for you via the office.

We will be in regular contact to see how your volunteering is progressing, to offer training, events and on-going support. We also keep in touch with clients to make sure they are happy with our services. We undertake regular evaluations of our services to ensure that they develop in the best way to meet needs and also for reporting purposes. We ask you to participate in evaluations so we can learn from your experiences. We also ask you to keep us up to date with any changes in your contact details and circumstances which might affect your volunteering role.

### Insurance

Volunteers are covered by Age Concern Barnstaple and North Devon General Public & Employer's Liability and Personal Accident Insurance. Certificates and policy documents are available in the main office. We also insure volunteer drivers No Claims Bonus when driving for the Charity.

### Stress

Please do contact us if you would like more contact and support. Volunteering can be a difficult job and there may be a need to share. Any volunteers showing signs of stress can receive extra support from their Service Manager and the Volunteer Manager. Volunteers can also be given the opportunity to take a break from volunteering, where regular contact would be maintained and help offered where required. Specific training courses, such as Bereavement Awareness and Well-being, can also help.



## Service Boundaries

Clearly identified volunteer boundaries within this handbook can help volunteers by:

- Providing clarity about what is, and is not, acceptable behaviour and so protecting clients and volunteers.
- Giving volunteers the confidence to deal with difficulties.
- Developing trust with clients who know what to expect of the volunteer and the services. This can reduce feelings of vulnerability, which some of our clients experience.
- Helping volunteers to separate their volunteering role from their private lives.

Please remember, many of our clients are vulnerable. By offering more than our service boundaries allow, you could leave them open to disappointment and make their situation worse. Please contact your Service Manager if you have any concerns or need any advice regarding your client's situation and what you can and cannot offer.



Shopping Support  
Service

## Volunteering Do's and Don'ts

- Recognise your own personal boundaries and avoid getting into situations that could be misunderstood. Think before you say 'yes'.
- Remember the main focus should be the client. Listen and let the client have the space and time to talk.
- Be respectful and sensitive to diversity and remember confidentiality at all times.
- Do tell the client if you are unhappy with the conversation. You do not have to hear anecdotes, views or beliefs that make you uncomfortable.
- You do not have to tell clients anything about your personal life. Do not give out your home telephone number/address.
- Please discuss with your Service Manager if you would like to invite a client to your home for a special occasion.

- Do not undertake any form of personal care (toileting, washing, dressing). You could be putting yourself and the client at risk. You are not insured or trained to carry out these services.
- Do not administer any medication. You do not know what has already been taken and could be putting the client at serious risk. Do not purchase any over the counter medicines, including creams, for clients.
- Do not purchase or provide any alcohol for clients (the Shopping Service has separate arrangements).
- Do not undertake any household chores or move heavy objects.
- Do not become involved in a client's personal or financial affairs or family disputes. Do not give advice regarding money or benefits. If you think a client needs benefit advice, or help with finances, inform your Service Manager who can arrange this support.
- Do not become overly involved emotionally.
- Do not become involved in a romantic/sexual relationship with a client.
- Do not promote your own religious or political beliefs.
- Do not lend or borrow money or goods to/from your client.
- Please do not buy for your client, or accept from them, any high-value gifts (over £25) or any money. Do let ACBD know of any small gifts.
- Do not go anywhere without letting a 'responsible person' know when you will be back (see Lone Worker Policy).
- Carry a mobile phone with you and ensure the office has the number.
- If visiting after dark, carry a torch and maybe an alarm. If possible, park where there is plenty of light and other people around.
- Be aware of your surroundings and make sure you have a clear exit to leave if you feel it may be needed. If you are unhappy when visiting, make your excuses and leave. Do not enter the client's home if you feel uncomfortable in any way.
- Contact your Service Manager if you have any concerns.

### **Volunteer Expenses**

ACBD pays travel expenses (including parking costs) for our volunteers to travel to and from a client's home, to attend training, events and the main office. Driving payments are 45p per mile, (the current HMRC Approved Mileage Rate), or reimbursement is made for public transport costs. Volunteer drivers for the Community Transport Service also receive the HMRC mileage rate of 45p per mile up to 10,000 miles and then 25p per mile thereafter. Please be aware that receiving more than the HMRC Mileage rate can nullify driver's insurance. Income Tax and Benefits are not affected by expense payments. Any other expenses, such as parking costs, can be claimed with a receipt. An expense claim form will be provided by your Service Manager.

### **Risk Management**

Service Managers carry out risk assessments for all home visits which include the client's property. The risk assessment ensures the safety of volunteers, informing volunteers of any risks/hazards prior to any visit (such as steep stairs, poor lighting). If during your volunteering role you notice something that could be a safety risk, please report it to your Service Manager straight away. Transport bookings are risk assessed by the booking operator; any higher need drives are risk assessed by the Service Manager.

### **Service Charges**

Our ethos at Age Concern is to make our services as accessible as possible; however, we do need to make our services sustainable in the long-term and cover costs such as volunteer recruitment and training, DBS checks, insurance and volunteer expenses. Our service charges are therefore very low, and people in receipt of Pension Credits also receive further discounts. Please see our service leaflets for further information about service charges.

### **Service Reporting**

We collect service statistics for reporting purposes. At times, we will contact you to see how your volunteering is progressing, but please report any problems experienced immediately. Age Concern also keeps in touch with clients to gain their opinions and check they are happy with our services. We undertake regular client and volunteer surveys. Feedback from volunteers and clients is used to improve services and provide reporting information.

### **Age Concern Membership—Charity Constitution**

All Age Concern volunteers automatically become Members of the Charity and have voting rights at the Charity Annual General Meeting (AGM). Volunteers are asked to vote on 4 key voting matters at the AGM. This process is part of the Governance of the Charity and is an important aspect of being a volunteer and Charity Member. Age Concern cannot hold an AGM without 20% of Charity Membership being present. It is therefore very important that Members attend the AGM, we really appreciate your support of this annual event.

### **Volunteering Opportunities:**

#### **Volunteering for Help Line**

As we get older there may be times when we need a little advice or information about topics such as benefits and blue badge parking applications, home support and housing, carer respite and support for people living with long-term conditions like dementia and Parkinson's. Signposting for debt, energy and legal issues and help with funeral arrangements and bereavement.

At Age Concern we have staff and volunteers who can provide this information and support. This service is usually provided over the telephone but from time-to-time home visits are needed e.g. to assist people to complete an attendance allowance form. Volunteers are trained and supported by the Service Manager and accompanied on home visits as required.

### **Volunteering for Community Transport**

Our volunteer drivers use their own cars to help older and vulnerable people to access medical appointments and provide transport for practical and social need. Your valuable contribution as a driver makes a big difference to the people living in North Devon who depend on our service to maintain their independence. We are a member of 'Devon Access to Services' and operate as a not-for-profit Community Car Sharing Scheme. People who use the service are Clients, they pay a charge based on mileage and a booking fee, Clients also pay for parking and any other costs such as toll charges. Our **Transport Booking Desk** is open Monday to Friday 9.30am to 3.30pm and will contact you with a journey request. We will try to give you as much notice as possible and you are not obliged to accept any given drive. Once you agree to the drive, the relevant information will be given to you over the phone/via email as preferred. The cost will be confirmed to you and the Client. Your mileage expenses will be paid to you by BACS. The Client may give you more money (or tip) please send this on to the Charity Administrator as anything deemed as profit or earnings will invalidate your insurance as a volunteer.

You will transport the Client to their destination, wait for them and then transport them back home. Each journey includes a wait time of up to two hours. Sometimes, a Client may have a longer appointment time e.g. for day surgery. This is classed as a double journey, where you will transport the Client to their appointment and then return home, collecting them at an agreed time to take them back home. Double journeys are agreed between you, the Transport Booking Desk and the Client. A receipt for a journey should always be offered, these can be obtained from the Charity Office or via email. When transporting Clients to a hospital, the fare can sometimes be reclaimed from the hospital with proof of benefits and the journey receipt. The Transport Office usually has a note on the database if a Client has a **blue badge** which can be used for parking but please check it and make sure it is in date. Age Concern will not pay for any parking tickets, fines, release fees or any other kind of offence. For insurance purposes, volunteer and passenger safety, all journeys must be booked through the Transport Booking Desk. We advise drivers to contact the Client prior to the journey (please see Transporting Vulnerable Adults Policy for exception); occasionally Clients are unable to travel at the last minute, if this happens you will receive expenses for the miles you have already driven.

### **Volunteer Driver Legal Requirements. You must:**

- hold a full driving licence appropriate to the type of vehicle you drive. Notify the Service Manager of any new/pending prosecutions/offences
- have car tax and a current MOT
- Age Concern will undertake licence checks every six months and car tax and MOT annually. This can be done on a Government website while you are present to avoid unnecessary paperwork
- provide a copy of your car insurance to ACBD upon renewal each year, notify your insurance company of your volunteer driving (premium unaffected) and have this noted on your policy; a letter can be provided by ACBD for this purpose
- always wear your Age Concern ID badge when driving for us
- inform Age Concern and the DVLA of any medical conditions / medications that may cause danger when driving
- drive with due care and attention and always in accordance with the Highway Code. Never drive when tired and take appropriate breaks
- never drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- have regular eye tests; it is illegal to drive if you can't read a number plate from 20.5m (67 feet) away
- smoking is not permitted whilst driving for the service and any trace or smell of smoke should be eliminated prior to undertaking drives

### **Vehicles**

Your car must be roadworthy and you are responsible for completing routine checks including tyres, oil, brakes, indicators, windscreen wipers and screen wash, lights, mirrors and seatbelts. Your car must be clean and in a suitable condition for the carriage of Clients. It is your responsibility to make sure all Clients wear seatbelts as it is required by law unless they have a **Medical Exemption Certificate** in their possession to show you. Transport of any **animals** can only be considered upon special request at the time of booking and must be properly authorised and agreed in advance with you. Animals must be safely restrained. If you agree to transport **oxygen** you must follow the guidelines in the Volunteer Driver Policy. All journeys should be planned in advance. You should check and use the most appropriate route, dependent on any diversions, and weather conditions. The use of satellite navigation is recommended as this automatically re-routes you if there are any traffic incidents/road closures. Please leave plenty of time for your journey.

### **Incidents and Accidents**

Any incident or accident involving a Client should be reported to the Charity Office as soon as possible. The Client should be advised to contact their GP, be taken to the nearest emergency department, or an ambulance called, depending on the seriousness of the situation. Any claims for accidents



/damage should be pursued through your own insurance in the normal way. However, volunteer drivers are covered for any losses of their No Claims Bonus if driving for the Charity. Any changes of vehicle must be notified to the Service Manager and all relevant checks undertaken for insurance purposes.



### **Communication**

Whilst driving Clients, best practice is to have a mobile phone located in the vehicle that is fully charged and ready for use in case of an emergency. Do not use mobile phones whilst on the move, even if hands-free. Always wait until you can safely pull over, stop and switch off the engine. We will not pass on your telephone numbers. If you choose to give out a contact number, we recommend the use of a mobile phone number as this allows you to maintain privacy at home. During the Charity Office opening hours, messages can be passed on to drivers and Clients.

All Client details and journey information must be kept in your possession, restricted from general view and if printed out, secured in your vehicle. All documentation should be securely destroyed once the journey has been completed e.g. shredded or returned to the Charity Office for shredding. Failure to comply with this could be a breach of the Data Protection Act.

### **Our Clients**

The high standards and local reputation of the Transport Service is largely set by our drivers who pride themselves on the personalised service they provide to our Clients. Some passengers are anxious, for example, about a hospital appointment, and rely on their driver to be a calm and reassuring presence. Clients should be able to walk and get in/out of the vehicle but there are times when a little assistance is required from the volunteer. Age Concern provides Moving and Handling training/information. If a Client has significant mobility problems, they will need to provide an escort to travel with them. If a Client requires lifting, then they are not suitable for this service and the TraBooking Desk will provide signposting to book a wheelchair transport vehicle.

If a Client becomes unwell during the journey, then stop the vehicle and call for medical assistance. Do not attempt to offer any assistance yourself unless you are properly trained to do so. When transporting Clients to hospitals or clinics, they should be escorted to and from the appointment reception

point, be offered the use of a wheelchair if required and be assisted with any checking-in procedure (but only if it is considered appropriate and at the request of the Client – let them guide you). Please be aware of the needs of the Client who may have long-term health conditions such as dementia or limited mobility. Any notes regarding the Client's needs will be communicated to you by the Transport Booking Desk at the time of booking and drivers should always report any concerns or problems that arise during transportation as soon as possible. A volunteer Passenger Assistant can be provided by Age Concern upon request.

Drivers have the final decision on the suitability or eligibility of the Clients they transport and are empowered to refuse any journey at the point of Client collection if it is not appropriate or safe to continue.

### **Volunteering as a Passenger Assistant**

Age Concern can provide a Passenger Assistant to help any Client who needs additional support during their journey. If you are volunteering as a Passenger Assistant you will be given special training to help you understand and meet the needs of the Clients you support.

### **Volunteering for the Befriending Service**

As we get older, we may struggle to get out and about due to health issues or general frailty. Having a regular visitor can really brighten someone's week and can have a significant impact on health and wellbeing by reducing loneliness and isolation and making people feel cared for and connected to their community. People enjoy chatting about old times, current affairs or family or what is happening in the local community, some people enjoy sharing a board game or jigsaw.

#### **Matching you with a Client**

The Service Manager will match you with a client with shared interests and experiences. Both volunteer and client are told about the potential match to make sure they are comfortable with the idea. You will be accompanied on your first visit to introduce you to your client. This will give you both an opportunity to assess whether you will get on well together before you begin your regular visits. You will be supported with regular contact from your Service Manager during your first few weeks. Once you feel settled in your role, you will feed back to us monthly and we will contact you on a quarterly basis. If additional support is needed, we will be able to support you and the person you befriend more often. You might be provided with a card containing your client's emergency contact details. Please only use this if you have a serious concern about the safety of your client and the Age Concern office is not available. Volunteers must inform the Service Manager as soon as possible if they have had to use this information.

### Volunteering for the Carer Support Service

Our Carer Support service provides regular breaks for carers. It is often difficult for carers to take breaks but without them carers can become ill. Our volunteers befriend the cared-for giving carers time to themselves. During their break, carers may visit family and friends, go shopping, attend their own medical appointments or exercise. Some carers even go to bed to catch up on some much needed sleep. Carers also enjoy chatting to their volunteer and the support of the Service Manager. Some carers attend our community activities, training courses and events.



Volunteer Event

### Matching you with a Client and their Carer

The Service Manager will match you with a client with shared interests and experiences. The volunteer, client and carer are told about the potential match to make sure everyone is comfortable with the idea. You will be accompanied on your first visit to introduce you to the carer and the cared-for. This will give you all an opportunity to assess whether you will get on well together before you begin your visits. You will be supported with regular contact from your Service Manager. Once you feel settled in your role, you will feed back to us monthly and we will contact you on a quarterly basis. If additional support is needed, we will be able to support you and the people you volunteer for more often. If the cared-for person requires personal care during respite breaks, a paid care worker will be arranged.

### Volunteering for the Shopping Service

ACBD offers two types of shopping service. A volunteer can be given a shopping list and the money to pay for a client's shopping and can complete the shop and take the shopping, receipt and any change to the client. Help to put the shopping away is also appreciated by some clients.

The second option is for the client to accompany the volunteer and be supported to undertake their own shopping. This can involve the volunteer driving the client or supporting the client to use public or community transport; assisting with the supermarket trolley and shopping items and helping the client to take their shopping home and put it away if needed.



## Volunteering for Community Activities and Events

Research shows that group activities are particularly effective at alleviating loneliness and isolation and providing peer support. Getting together with friends and neighbours is a vital part of a happy, healthy community.

### Client Registration

If you are a lead volunteer for an activity group, you will need to ask any new clients attending for the first time to complete a Client Registration Form. This ensures that vital details are collected including any health issues and emergency contact information; this also meets insurance conditions.

Hosting an activity is a very important role, especially for new attendees who need to be made to feel welcome and included. Some people find that initial attendance at a club or group can be intimidating and escorts can be provided to help people integrate into a group if they are required. Community Transport can also be provided if needed.

### Attendance Register

All activities/events require an attendance sheet to be completed by the lead volunteer in case of emergency evacuation and for reporting purposes.

### Finance

Lead volunteers running Lunch Clubs or activity groups need to monitor and record all finances. Details should include monies paid by the clients to attend and all costs related to the activity such as refreshments. Income and expenditure sheets will be provided by the Service Manager and should be forwarded to ACBD each month. Where Lunch Clubs are held in pubs and cafes, the lead volunteer collects the agreed lunch payments from the clients and pays them over directly to the venue.



### **In an Emergency**

Lead volunteers are required to make themselves aware of first aid boxes, first aiders, emergency exits and evacuation procedures at any venues being used and should give out information regarding fire drills and meeting points in the event of a fire. The Service Manager will advise you. Any emergency evacuation should be reported back to the Service Manager.

### **Volunteering for Office Administration**

As an office volunteer you will be given full training with respect to the office tasks required of you. Examples would be helping to keep leaflet displays up to date and answering the telephone.

### **Volunteering for Marketing**

As a Marketing volunteer you will cover a geographical area, such as the village you live in, and distribute marketing materials (posters, leaflets) helping us reach the most lonely and isolated members of our community and recruit local volunteers to support them.

### **Community Fundraising**

Community Fundraising volunteers help to organise and support fundraising events and activities such as open gardens, pub quizzes, cake sales, stalls at community events and sponsored events.

### **Volunteer Alumni**

Volunteers who have supported the Charity for 5 years or more are welcome to join the Volunteer Alumni when they retire. Event invitations, Newsletters and staff support are elements of the Alumni programme.



### **Our Volunteer Policies are:**

1. Volunteer
2. Expenses
3. Petty Cash
4. Confidentiality
5. Data Protection
6. Conflict of Interest
7. No Smoking
8. Substance Misuse
9. Code of Conduct
10. Social Media
11. Internet, E-mail and IT
12. Volunteer Complaints
13. Whistleblowing
14. Health and Safety
15. Lone Worker
16. Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults
17. Volunteer Driver
18. Transporting Vulnerable Adults
19. Environmental
20. Infection Prevention and Control

Please ensure you understand and adhere to these policies which are detailed in your **Volunteer Policy Booklet**. Training is provided in the Induction Training with the Volunteer Manager. Further training is available throughout the year with **specialist training courses** such as First Aid, Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding, Lone Worker and Safe Moving And Handling. If you require any additional support please speak to your service Manager.

The **Volunteer Newsletter** will provide information about training and social opportunities. Social events are quarterly and include a Spring Coffee Morning, Summer Afternoon Tea, Autumn Event and Christmas Lunch.

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