

WOODCOTE VOLUNTEERS



MANAGING VOLUNTEERS POLICY

Our Policy

The Woodcote Volunteers is established to undertake voluntary charitable activities for those in need. We provide transport for the elderly, disabled, people with financial hardship or other disadvantaged person, who do not have the resources themselves to places including the following:

- Hospitals
- Clinics
- Other Health Providers
- Other activities that have proven beneficial effect on health

We provide activities that aim to promote social interaction, such as a monthly Tea Party for clients, coffee mornings for the community in general and Summer and Winter get togethers for our volunteers. We also help clients apply for a Blue Badge.

The charity is run by volunteers only, known as “members”. There are no paid staff. Within Woodcote Volunteers, volunteers are involved in:

- The Management Committee
- The running of the office and
- Driving clients to various locations
- Helping with our social events
- Helping clients to apply for Blue Badges

Woodcote Volunteers aims to have a supportive and mutually beneficial relationship within our team of volunteers, with everyone’s involvement informing and developing the work and aims of the organisation.

The tasks to be performed by volunteers are clearly defined within the role descriptions, so that everyone is sure of their respective roles and responsibilities.

The organisation will comply with the Data Protection Act in the use of data held on all volunteers and clients.

Volunteers will be provided with regular opportunities to share ideas/concerns with a member of the committee.

All existing and future policies will be checked as to how they affect volunteers.

1. Roles and Responsibilities

Each volunteer will be supported by a designated member of staff within the organisation. The designated staff member will provide guidance, support and training to the volunteer to ensure that the volunteering experience is a positive and rewarding one.

The volunteer role is based on trust and mutual understanding. There is no contractual obligation for the volunteer to attend or to undertake particular tasks. However, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability and a reciprocal set of expectations:

Volunteers can expect:

- To have clear information about what is and is not expected of them
- To receive adequate support and training
- To be covered by Woodcote Volunteers' public liability insurance. A copy of the policy is available on request.
- To volunteer in a safe environment
- To be treated with respect and in a non-discriminatory manner
- To receive reimbursement for their expenses
- To have opportunities for personal development
- To be recognised and appreciated
- To be able to say 'no' to anything which they consider to be unrealistic or unreasonable
- To know what to do if something goes wrong
- To have their privacy upheld. A copy of our Privacy Policy is provided at the start of the volunteering journey and circulated by email when it is updated.

The organisation expects volunteers:

- To be reliable, open and honest
- To respect client confidentiality
- To uphold the organisation's values (as defined by our policies)
- To comply with our policies (which are available on our website and from the office)
- To make the most of opportunities given, e.g. for training
- To contribute positively to the aims of the organisation and avoid bringing the organisation into disrepute
- To carry out tasks within agreed guidelines

2. Recruitment and Selection

Woodcote Volunteers respect equalities and diversity law when recruiting and selecting volunteers. All potential volunteers will be asked to complete a volunteer's application/registration form. Written role descriptions outline time, commitment, necessary skills and actual duties. As there is a requirement for a Disclosure and Barring Service check, this is highlighted as part of the recruitment

process. Where individuals cannot be placed, we will endeavour to refer them to another agency who can support them to find a volunteering opportunity.

3. Support and Supervision

All volunteers will have an induction to their volunteering which will involve an overview of the relevant policies and procedures and shadowing of other volunteers. New drivers will meet our Driver Representative and new office members will be introduced to our Office Supervisor. Following induction, volunteers can talk informally with either of these or the volunteer co-ordinator, to identify areas for development, or to discuss any issues. Volunteers are encouraged to contact the volunteer co-ordinator at any time if they would like a meeting.

Where volunteers have holidays or other commitments which mean that they cannot attend their normal volunteering, they should advise a member of the office team by phoning the office number, to ensure that we can arrange alternative cover. If volunteers require a longer break from their volunteering, they should discuss this with the volunteer co-ordinator. Woodcote Volunteers will endeavour to be as flexible as possible to accommodate the needs of volunteers.

Volunteers can access learning and development opportunities which are relevant to their volunteering role throughout their time with Woodcote Volunteers. We require our volunteer drivers to undertake basic training in safeguarding awareness and offer first aid if this is something a volunteer would like, although not essential. Please let us know if there is further training needed.

4. Problem Solving

Woodcote Volunteers is a small organisation run entirely by volunteers. If a problem experienced by a driver or office helper arises, we very much hope that in the first instance, we can resolve the matter informally. Please email the volunteer co-ordinator, who will arrange a meeting or you can discuss the matter on the phone, whichever is appropriate.

If informal resolution is not possible, please write to the Chair of the Trustees, c/o The Community Centre, Reading Road, Woodcote, RG8 0QY. The Chair will report the matter to the Trustees, who will decide on any further steps to resolve the situation. The member has the right to be heard by the trustees before any decision is made and can be accompanied by a friend.

A written response will be provided and the decision of the Trustees will be final.

The trustees may remove a person's membership if they believe it is in the best interests of the charity.

There has never been, in the writer's knowledge, a complaint made against a driver by one of our clients but if it were, we would follow the procedure outlined in our External Complaints Policy and the problem solving procedure above. The volunteer co-ordinator would discuss the complaint with the client and driver to see if the matter could be resolved informally. We would hope that an apology is all that is needed. If informal resolution is not possible, then we would take the further steps as described in the External Complaints Policy, asking the client to put their complaint in writing to the Secretary of the Trustees.

5. Confidentiality

All volunteers are bound by requirements for confidentiality as laid down in our Confidentiality Agreement. Volunteers who will have access to confidential information are asked to sign our confidentiality agreement. Breach of confidentiality is taken very seriously and may result in us asking the volunteer to leave.

We are bound by the Data Protection Act to ensure that we treat volunteer and client information with respect. Only staff who need to see information for purposes related to volunteer involvement will be able to access it. We will not pass information on without permission.

6. Recognition

Volunteers will be given the opportunity to share their views and opinions of their experiences of volunteering with us. We will also recognise their contribution through social media, through the use of certificates, newsletters and by saying thank you.

7. Expenses

Volunteer drivers are reimbursed their car expenses directly from the client they are driving at the rate of 45p per mile (the current tax free rate allowed by HMRC). There is a flat payment of £1.50 for a drive within Woodcote. If the client cannot or is unable to pay, Volunteers should let the Treasurer know and the cost will be reimbursed by the organisation.

Other volunteers are paid any reasonable expenses after consultation with a committee member, (such as for purchasing stationery items). A receipt should be given to the Treasurer who will arrange payment to them.

8. Health and Safety

Woodcote Volunteers appreciates that all volunteers have the right to work in a safe environment. Therefore, all volunteers must carry out their duties in line with Woodcote Volunteers' policies relating to Health and Safety. Woodcote Volunteers carries out regular risk assessments in relation to all aspects of our work and these are distributed to all volunteers.

Volunteers are covered by Woodcote Volunteers' Public Liability Insurance, a copy of which is available on request.

Volunteer drivers are required to notify their car insurance company that they are volunteer drivers prior to starting to drive with us. No volunteer has yet been charged for this.

9. Responsibility

Overall responsibility for the implementations, monitoring and review of this policy and procedures lies with the Management Committee. Implementation and adherence to this policy is the responsibility of all volunteers within the organisation.

Adopted: February 2022

Reviewed: March 2025

Next review: March 2027 (or sooner if circumstances dictate)