

**VOLUNTEER REMINDERS** (as on the back of your identity card)**Enjoy your jobs!**

- Be fully informed about the job and the client before you set out
- Don't take on **ANY** job beyond your capabilities
- **Always** tell your "buddy" **where** you're going, **how long** you'll be, the address you will be visiting and **when** you're home (if you don't have the address before you set out let your buddy know as soon as you have it)
- Take a switched-on and fully-charged mobile
- Remember the client may be worried, stressed or ill
- Check out the surroundings and exit routes
- Keep yourself and the client safe, stay alert and aware
- Leave the situation if you feel threatened (park car for easy departure)
- Any immediate danger to self or client - dial 999
- Urgent safeguarding issue - alert police and or adult social care
- Possible abuse – discuss with GNS safeguarding team on **GNS mobile 07561 890 100**

**Introduction**

We very much appreciate you volunteering your time and energy to the Good Neighbour Scheme and are keen that everyone should get as much as they can both from volunteering and being assisted. These guidelines are necessary as most of you will be "working" alone and your safety and welfare and that of your client are of paramount importance to us.

A few precautions can further reduce the risk of any incidents occurring. We are an entirely voluntary service and are **not** here to replace the statutory or emergency services. If a job is better suited to those agencies we should not be undertaking it and potential clients can be informed of this if necessary. If you have any immediate worries about the safety of your client or possible abuse, please contact the police or Adult Social Care urgently (see *Section 4 Vulnerable persons safeguarding guidelines*).

These guidelines are aimed at reducing any risk to you by

- identifying some of the associated risks and
- giving you practical advice and clear guidance on how to anticipate, avoid and manage these risks.

If you experience any "incidents" or "near misses" **please** do report them to the telephone coordinator on the GNS mobile 07561 890 100. They will pass it on to the GNS steering group, as we may be able to help avoid recurrences on future occasions.

If you think any activity is unsafe or you have any concerns, the GNS steering group would be pleased to hear from you to explore these further.

This document is intended for use as a reference guide only, the advice it contains is not exhaustive.

### What is lone working?

Lone working describes any situation where someone is not working alongside or near to others whom they know.

Due to the nature of GNS volunteering, there may be frequent occasions when you will be working alone and, if there are any problems or there is an accident, without easy access to others who could help.

### Basic requirements for all lone workers

- take care of your own safety and that of others affected by your actions or inactions
- report any incidents or concerns to one of the GNS steering group for further review
- always carry a switched-on, fully-charged, mobile phone and for a pay-as-you-go phone ensure you have sufficient credit. Remember not to use your phone whilst driving unless you have hands-free.

### The "buddy" system

Please make sure that a family member or friend (or, if necessary, ask the Telephone Co-ordinator to act as your buddy) is aware that:

- you are going out on a volunteering job
- where you are going
- who you are meeting
- what you are doing (generally only, e.g. driving to Loughborough Hospital)
- when you are going
- how long you expect to be
- they must be told when you return after volunteering
- if you are delayed, let your buddy know.

It may be worth having a "trigger word" for your buddy to alert them, if you are in trouble or personal danger, for them to get you out of the situation urgently. If you find yourself in a difficult situation and want to be "rescued" and if you are unable to speak freely, you should emphasise that you are expected to make a phone call and that, if you don't, the alarm will be raised. Then make the phone call to your buddy using the "trigger word".

If you do not check back with your nominated buddy and they cannot get directly in contact with you they will need to pursue matters to ensure that you are safe and well.

Please remember that these procedures are there to protect you.

### **Assessing the risks and preparing for your tasks**

Remember that many of the clients with whom you are so kindly volunteering will be anxious, stressed, unwell and vulnerable so they may not be "at their best" or able to show their appreciation and the manners they might usually display.

Think about where you will be going and what you will be doing:

- consider whether there are particular risks relating to that location or activity (eg an isolated farm, adverse weather conditions for driving, an unknown dog to walk etc)
- do you know what relevant information you will need to obtain from the client when you meet them in order to complete the job?
- wherever possible arrange volunteering so that it is completed during daylight hours
- **we recommend that you do not give your personal phone number or address to the client unless you wish to personally befriend them outside the Good Neighbour Scheme**

If you have any particular anxieties, before you undertake a job, discuss them with the Telephone Co-ordinator and your buddy (see "buddy system" above) before setting off. The Good Neighbour Scheme is a voluntary service and we don't want you to undertake any job at risk to yourself or others.

### **Falls**

If a client has a fall while you are there and is unable to get up by himself/herself, do not attempt to lift or move them. Make the client as comfortable as possible and call 999. Paramedics are trained to check for injuries and to lift people correctly.

### **Accidents**

If you or the client has an accident or a significant problem while you are volunteering, you must inform the Telephone Co-ordinator by phoning the GNS mobile 07561 890 100 initially and in writing as soon as possible.

### Visiting clients in their own homes – always show your identity card to the client

- note the name, address and contact number where you are going, carry your identity card
- don't enter if the person you are visiting is absent and an unknown person invites you in
- remember you are visiting someone else's home, wait to be asked in, invited to sit, etc
- remain polite, friendly or neutral as much as possible. If you feel you might lose your temper, for any reason, if necessary excuse yourself and leave
- familiarise yourself with the surroundings and exits in case you need to leave quickly
- don't block the other person's line of exit, but make sure your own isn't blocked
- let the other person enter a room first and make sure you have a clear line of escape
- do not stand too close to the person you are visiting
- if you feel threatened by dogs etc, ask politely if they can be moved

### **Physical or verbal assault, aggression or any abusive behaviour**

This may be the result of dementia, alcohol, drugs, etc and may not be deliberate or in fact directed personally against you, but **you must leave the situation as soon as you can.**

- try to stay calm and appear relaxed, don't become rooted to one spot
- never be aggressive back, this is how anger can escalate into violence
- to reduce frustration respond promptly, show that you care and don't be patronising
- pay attention, listen and hear clients out, even if you have heard it all before
- carry a personal alarm (if you have one) in an easy place to access and practise using it
- phone the police if appropriate. If you do this then make a written, dated and signed record
- access support for yourself if you have had a difficult experience.

Please let the GNS steering group and Telephone Co-ordinator know by phoning the GNS mobile 07561 890 100 and in writing of **any** such incidents **as soon as possible**.

### **Travelling by car**

If you are giving a lift under the Good Neighbour Scheme, see **Section 8 Driving and giving lifts**.

### **Travelling by public transport e.g. bus**

- plan your route including walking to your destination from the bus stop - know where you are going so you don't have to ask for directions and accidentally end up lost
- you are safest where there are other people, and where it is well lit. If you are at a bus station, try to wait in a busy area
- if you are on the bus sit close to the driver
- if you are being made to feel uncomfortable or feel threatened by someone, move your seat

### **Dogs/animals**

- if you are allergic to animals ensure that the Telephone Co-ordinator is aware of this
- do not enter a home if an unfamiliar dog is aggressive towards you
- if a dog or cat etc causes you to feel uncomfortable, politely ask a client to remove it
- before you walk a dog check you know how to attach its lead or harness and any behavioural problems / quirks that the dog might have. As a general rule do not let the dog off the lead during your walk.

**EVERYONE involved MUST maintain the confidentiality of the clients within the Good Neighbour Scheme unless statutory agencies require any information.**

The Woodhouse and Woodhouse Eaves Good Neighbour Scheme recognises the need to consider the safety and welfare of all its volunteers and clients. You need to take reasonable care of yourself and those affected by your work as a volunteer. Therefore:

### You should

- look after your own health and welfare and that of the client, as far as possible
- be sure you are healthy and easily able to undertake the requested task
- let the Telephone Co-ordinator and your buddy know of any changes to the agreed task or timings etc
- have your buddy contact number with you as well as that of the Telephone Co-ordinator
- try to always carry a switched-on and fully-charged mobile phone
- report "incidents" / concerns directly to the steering group or to the Telephone Co-ordinator
- understand the need to follow any guidance offered by the steering group.

### The GNS steering group will always consider the following points in relation to welfare and safety decisions regarding volunteers

- remember that GNS volunteers nearly always work alone
- consider if tasks may require one or more volunteers eg handling any required equipment such as managing a personal wheelchair (in rare situations the use of personal wheelchairs may be difficult)
- are female/male or younger/older volunteers more or less suitable for certain jobs
- is there adequate supervision of and support for volunteers, and when might it be required
- whether the information or training given to volunteers is adequate
- are systems in place if a volunteer becomes ill, has an accident or if there is an emergency.