



# Maidenhead Care

Good Neighbour Scheme

[www.maidenheadcare.org.uk](http://www.maidenheadcare.org.uk)

**Volunteer Information Booklet**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Thank you for volunteering with Maidenhead Care. The following notes have been compiled to help you and to answer some of the queries most frequently raised by drivers. We all have a responsibility to minimise the risk to both volunteers and clients in our work, and the updated content is part of our duty of care to all involved. As in previous editions, we have attempted to distinguish between what is now the law and must be complied with, and what is good practice. We hope you will find these notes comprehensive and useful but if you have any further points please do not hesitate to contact the Duty Officer.

All jobs are initiated by the client contacting the Duty Officer. The Duty Officer can assess if the request is a job that, in principle,

Care will be able to undertake subject to volunteer availability. When a volunteer is found the job is logged into our database.

Occasionally a client may ask the volunteer if a further job can be arranged. It is incumbent upon the volunteer to report this to the Duty Officer. At this point it becomes a formal Care job.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION FOR DRIVERS**

Please try to arrive a few minutes early to collect clients. They are usually ready and waiting before the agreed pick-up time!

You should always carry and produce your membership card and display your “Volunteer on Duty” card when parking at all times.

Remember to take your collecting box, and do not be nervous about asking clients for their contributions; but see page 11. Many of them give more than the suggested amount, but please put the box out of sight if you leave the car.

The seat belt law should be always observed. Special rules regarding children are outlined on page 4.

## **SEAT BELTS**

Seat belts must be worn unless the passenger can provide a “Certificate of Exemption from Compulsory Seat Belt Wearing”. You are also only allowed one person in each seat fitted with a seat belt.

You must make sure that any children in the vehicle you are driving are:

- In the correct car seat for their height or weight until they reach 135 centimetres tall or their 12th birthday, whichever is first.
- Wearing a seat belt if they’re 12 or 13 years old, or younger and over 135cm tall.

It is illegal for a baby to be in a carrier in the front seat if the car is fitted with a passenger airbag that cannot be made inoperative.

## **INSURANCE**

### **Personal Car Insurance**

All car insurance policies cover injury to passengers. Car insurance is not covered by the Maidenhead Care policy. Under the 1978 Transport Act car owners are allowed to participate in car sharing arrangements for social or other similar purposes which will not be regarded as constituting the carriage of passenger for hire or reward, PROVIDING:

- a) The insured car cannot carry more than 8 passengers.
- b) The passengers are not being carried as part of a business.
- c) The total contributions, or donations, received for the journey do not involve profit making.

The Association of British Insurers (ABI) publish a list of their members where you will see any conditions around volunteer

driving that your insurer might have<sup>1</sup>. Some insurers want you to contact them to let them know if you do volunteer, however there should be no extra charge for this.

## **Indemnity**

Insurance policies are held in the name of Maidenhead Care as follows:

- a) Personal accident - to provide a benefit against the possibility of death or injury to a volunteer whilst performing duties for Care.
- b) Public liability - to provide an indemnity for death or bodily injury to any person or damage to property caused by the fault or negligence (other than in connection with a motor vehicle) of a volunteer whilst performing duties for Care.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

When a new client is interviewed for the first time, an assessment is made to establish if our scheme can assist. This judgement is based on three things.

- Is the service provided appropriate for the potential client's needs?
- Is the volunteer at risk by dealing with the potential client?
- Is the request within the capacity of Care to undertake?

Questions that are asked include:

- Does passenger need assistance walking from their front door?
- Does passenger need assistance getting into the car?
- Does passenger need to sit in the front seat of the car?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.abi.org.uk/products-and-issues/choosing-the-rightinsurance/motor-insurance/volunteer-drivers/>

- Does passenger use a wheelchair?
- Does the passenger have a blue badge?
- Has the passenger got any health problems that Care should be aware of?

When you are asked to undertake a journey the Duty Officer will have all this information to hand with which to brief you.

On leaving home it is helpful if you could check with the client:

- Is their property secure and do they have their keys?
- Have they all that they require for the trip including any medication they need and/or paperwork?
- Ask them to confirm their destination by checking their appointment letter.

And on returning home:

- Does the client need help to their door?
- Are they happy and safe to be left?

Always notify the Duty Officer if you have any concerns.

If there is no reply when collecting a client, ring the Duty Officer to check the appointment details. They will have an emergency contact number.

These notes have been provided to enable volunteers to safely help those clients who need some assistance. The first rule is: "IF IN DOUBT - DON'T DO IT"

The utmost priority must be given to YOUR safety. To avoid any accident or injury to yourself, you must be aware of your limitations and work well within them. Most people tend to OVER estimate their capabilities, and in an emergency situation may put themselves at risk.

With a little preparation, practise at simple helping techniques, and awareness of dangerous situations, we can make life a little easier and a lot safer for clients and volunteers alike.

### **Capabilities and Limitations**

Remember, you are a VOLUNTEER, so never take on a client that you think you may not be able to handle or are worried about in any way. Question the Duty Officer closely if in doubt - they should have all the information you need.

If you find a client needs more help than expected, then report back immediately to the Duty Officer so that this can be noted.

Bear in mind YOUR age, physical fitness and/or disabilities - Yes, we all have them - poor eyesight, poor hearing, a bad back, wonky knees, etc. etc. Only accept clients that you can manage.



## THE LAW AND THE VOLUNTEER DRIVER

As with everyday motoring, volunteer drivers need to comply with all legal requirements and comply with all laws and regulations concerning driving, including laws pertaining to the use of seat belts, child safety seats, mobile phone use, and speed limits.

The vehicle must: -

- Be properly taxed
- Be properly insured.
- If over three years from first registration, have a valid MOT certificate.

Drivers must: -

- Hold a valid full driving licence.
- Have their eyes tested regularly and ensure any necessary eyewear is worn.
- Ensure they are physically fit to drive.
- Not drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs (Drugs which could affect the ability to drive can include over the counter or prescription medicines.)

## **PREPARATION - YOU AND YOUR CAR**

- 1) Travel light yourself-your client may have a bag, sticks, a frame, trolley or wheelchair.
- 2) Wear safe shoes to preserve your balance when helping clients in and out of the car.
- 3) Move the passenger seat back to give the client enough leg room and to help them get in and out of the car.
- 4) Make sure you are clear about your pick-up address and destination, the correct donation, and take a map if necessary.
- 5) Take some small change with you; the client may not have the exact donation.
- 6) Take your Maidenhead Care Volunteer card and your "Volunteer on Duty" card with you to use whenever you park, even in the road.
- 7) Take the blue Disabled Parking badge and time disc if these have been provided. If you are using a child seat, practise fitting it before setting off
- 8) At the start and finish of your journey note the mileage for your expenses claim form.

**NOTE** We recommend that you carry this booklet in the car with you.

## **PARKING**

At many hospitals parking is free for organisations such as Care which provide voluntary transport services. In some cases this involves simply placing your Maidenhead Care "Volunteer Driver on Duty" badge on the dashboard, whereas in others you will need to obtain a parking ticket and take it to a Cash Office to have it activated so that it will open the barrier. Please see the Care website under the tab "Information for Volunteers" for detailed information.

## **DEALING WITH EMERGENCIES**

Please carry a mobile phone.

In case of an emergency:

Make sure you have the telephone number of the Duty Officer:

**07538 418 448**

They will have the emergency contacts and information for the client.

If you find on pick up at their home, the client is unwell:

- Ask if they would like the doctor to be called.
- Ask if they would like neighbours or relatives informed.
- Inform the Hospital/Surgery where they were expected.

## FINANCE

### Voluntary Contribution

All clients and drivers will be informed of the suggested donation by the Duty Officer when a job is arranged. Money should be given to you by each client, e.g. each person when taking several clients to the shops together. However, family friends travel free of charge when acting as escort to the client, or children, as this is often very helpful for the driver.

Note: due to several generous donations, gifts, and legacies over a number of years, and in view of the current pressure on household finances, from 1st May to 31st December 2023 clients may freely choose to make a smaller or even no donation.

### Clients on Benefit

When providing transport to hospital you will be advised by the Duty Officer if your client is on any form of benefit which entitles them to claim a refund of their transport costs. This refund is payable in cash from the hospital cashier. The client will need to show:

- 1) A letter from the DWP showing their current benefit status.
- 2) A voucher from the clinic to confirm their attendance.
- 3) A receipt from the driver showing the total donation.

Please give a completed receipt to the client when you drop them at the hospital **BEFORE** actually receiving the donation so that they will be in a position to pay you when you collect them. Some clients experience difficulty with the formalities of the system; please be prepared to help them. Receipt forms are available from the Treasurer or can be downloaded and printed from the Care website under the tab “Information for Volunteers”.

## Mileage and Expense Claims

You should note the mileage, from leaving home to returning home, for all Care jobs. A mileage form is enclosed with your joining pack; further forms can be downloaded from the Care website. The preferred procedure is for the driver to open the collecting box at home at regular intervals, count and retain the contents, and:

- If you bank online, transfer donations direct to the Maidenhead Care bank account (the preferred action) and email a copy of the claim form to the Treasurer at [treasurer@maidenheadcare.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@maidenheadcare.org.uk)
- Or write a cheque for the amount collected, payable to Maidenhead Care. Send the cheque and completed claim form to the Treasurer.

In either case, if this is done regularly, it helps our cash flow.

Please do not be embarrassed to claim for all mileage undertaken for Care, even if the sum claimed exceeds the donations collected.  
**London Congestion and Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) Charges**

If you agree to drive to a hospital or other location within the London area there could be one or two charges to pay:

- The ULEZ covers the area within the North and South Circular roads and is payable if your vehicle does not meet the latest emissions targets. It applies 24 hours a day every day of the year and is currently £12.50.
- The Congestion Charge covers central London and is currently £15.00.

Drivers are responsible for determining if these charges apply (see <https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/>) and paying them. They should then reclaim them via their mileage/expense claim form.

Clients will have been told to include these charges in the suggested voluntary donation.

## **SOCIAL EVENTS AND COMMISSIONING SERVICE**

Do come to our social events and the annual Commissioning Service. We do like to see you and it's a good chance to put names to faces and meet other volunteers.

## **GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS (GDPR)**

All the personal data held by Maidenhead Care for clients (and volunteers) is covered by the GDPR regulations which define how we can collect, store, manage and use this information. Care's Data Protection Policy & Procedures is available on our website which explains how this should be achieved. To enable Care to provide a service to our clients, it is necessary for personal data to be disclosed to the volunteer. It is essential that volunteers treat this information in accordance with Care's policy.

## **LATEST INFORMATION**

Periodic changes to Care's policy, advice or procedures that affect the content of this booklet will be posted on our website at [www.maidenheadcare.org.uk](http://www.maidenheadcare.org.uk), where the latest booklet will always be available.

## **SUGGESTED DONATIONS FOR JOURNEYS**

These are as given in the table on page 14, where a single journey is when we only take the passenger one way or where the **planned** duration of appointment is greater than 3 hours, in which case it is doubled up if we bring the client back.



