



Brighton & Hove Neighbourhood Care Scheme



Guidelines for Volunteers

January 2017

The Aims of the Neighbourhood Care Scheme

The Neighbourhood Care Scheme (NCS) recognises that there are many groups of people who need care and support in the community, and who without support are at risk of social isolation, mental distress, physical illness and accidents. Our aim is to harness the neighbourly good will of people to enable them to support such vulnerable individuals. Currently the scheme supports people aged over sixty, adults with physical and/or sensory disabilities and their carers. There are several special features of the scheme's operation and aims:

- **Neighbourhood focus and community development:** We connect neighbours with neighbours, creating more caring and inclusive communities.
- **Supporting people:** We emphasise supporting people rather than simply undertaking tasks.
- **Prevention:** Practical volunteering reduces physical risks; social support prevents psychological distress and depression.
- **Simplicity and mutuality:** Good neighbourliness is a two-way thing that people understand.
- **Increasing wellbeing:** The relationships between our volunteers and scheme members increase people's wellbeing.
- **Promoting community health and wellbeing:** We are able to provide information and signposting on health matters to scheme members.

Being a Volunteer

Although most of your contact with the NCS will be with the small staff team, the heart of the scheme is really our scheme members and volunteers. The staff team is there to enable our volunteers to support their neighbours in a safe and positive way. The NCS could not exist without your input.

The following guidelines are intended to ensure that volunteering with the scheme is a rewarding and safe experience for all those who are involved with or contribute to our work. Systematic feedback from volunteers over many years has consistently shown that volunteers find their participation in the scheme very rewarding; and likewise we receive very positive responses from our scheme members. We hope that your volunteering experience with us will also be positive.



“It makes me understand how vulnerable we will all be one day. I also understand how the small amount of help I offer makes a big difference to his quality of life. Consequently the experience and the time I have spent with him have made me very grateful and happy.”

Anna and Gwen

The story of Anna and Gwen illustrates the mutual benefits of volunteering to both volunteers and scheme members.

Anna saw our ad for volunteers in the local paper but ignored it as her confidence was so low. It was her mum who encouraged her to give it a go. She thought Anna would get a lot from it, and would have something to contribute. When she came for her interview, Anna was chatty and open, and revealed that she was easily intimidated and didn't like walking down busy streets.

After going through our recruitment and induction process we matched her with Gwen, a local lady in her sixties, who had recently had surgery for the removal of a brain tumour and was making a very slow recovery. Gwen had lost all her confidence and a lot of physical strength. She suffered from vertigo and nausea and was trapped in her home.

Anna and Gwen met each other and chatted easily from the start and have now been meeting every week for five years. In the beginning Anna went round to Gwen's to chat over a cup of tea. As well as being a listening ear, Anna has helped Gwen with practical issues like renewing her spectacles, helping with paperwork, or looking up information for her on the internet. As they have got to know each other Gwen says she trusts Anna, and that she can tell her stuff she can't tell her own family for fear of offending other family members.

Over the months Anna has supported Gwen to build up her confidence in leaving the house, and together they have slowly ventured further afield so that now Gwen is doing her own shopping once a week using buses and taxis. Anna's own confidence has grown at the same time, and she no longer finds busy shopping streets stressful.

Anna says she's learnt that she does have something to give, and that she can put her own problems into perspective now, and even put them to one side if necessary. She feels happier in herself and is more outgoing. She can see that simple achievements can be incredibly significant like the first time Gwen walked down to the bakers with her and chose a cake for herself. Having a sense of purpose is really fulfilling for her. Both of them hope to continue their friendship even when Gwen no longer needs Anna.

Our Responsibilities to You

1. Our Commitment to Equal Opportunities

We are committed to recruiting volunteers from all sections of the community irrespective of age, race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, ethnic or national origin, colour, religion, class, caring commitments or medical conditions that do not affect their voluntary work.

As a volunteer for the scheme, you are not expected to put up with any physical, emotional, verbal, sexual or racial abuse or harassment from any person involved with the scheme, including staff, scheme members and other volunteers. Any incidents should be reported immediately to the Volunteer Co-ordinator using the Incident Report Form. S/he will investigate the matter immediately in accordance with Brighton & Hove Impetus guidelines.

2. Support

All volunteers are assigned a particular Volunteer Co-ordinator, who is responsible for their support. When you are being matched with a scheme member, your Volunteer Co-ordinator will agree a support schedule with you. This may be different for each volunteer, depending on their age, experience and the person they are visiting. If you have any concerns when volunteering, please do not hesitate to contact your Volunteer Co-ordinator (who should be familiar both with you and your scheme member). If the matter is urgent, and your Volunteer Co-ordinator is not available, any member of the NCS staff team will be happy to take your call and help you in the meantime.

As a volunteer, it is important that you are aware that support of our volunteers is a priority for us. You will not be troubling us to bring to our attention what seems like a small worry – this may prevent a crisis further down the line.

3. Training

Following acceptance on the scheme all volunteers attend an Induction session to ensure that they are clear about these guidelines and feel confident in their volunteering. The Induction focuses on certain areas of the guidelines, highlights any current issues or events related to the scheme, such as upcoming training or other projects, and also provides an opportunity for you to ask questions or raise concerns.

If you have a gap of a year or more in volunteering, you will be required to attend a refresher session with a Volunteer Co-ordinator in order to update yourself on any changes in the Scheme before resuming.

There is also a year-round programme of training that promotes community health and wellbeing which all volunteers are welcome to attend.



“I really enjoy her company, she’s very interesting. I feel good for doing something positive in my community and the training offered is interesting and appropriate.”

4. Recruitment and Disclosure and Barring Service Checks

All NCS volunteers undergo the same recruitment process: an interview with two NCS team members, two references and a DBS check.

You must notify the NCS of any change in status in relation to criminal records. Failure to do so will result in your being required to withdraw from the scheme. Please note that a criminal offence does not necessarily preclude volunteering with the NCS; each case is considered separately and a risk assessment is carried out in accordance with the relevant Impetus policy.

5. Confidentiality

All personal information about you given through interviews and references is confidential and will be kept in a locked filing cabinet or password-protected computer database. The Volunteer Co-ordinator may release some information to a potential scheme member on a need-to-know basis so that they have some

familiarity with you. Once matched with a scheme member we ask you to complete a pen-picture of yourself which we give to the scheme member before your first visit.

DBS checks will also be kept in a locked filing cabinet in a secure office environment and this information will be shared only between NCS members of staff involved in the decision-making process when recruiting new volunteers. Once a volunteer is 'accepted' on to the Scheme, the DBS document will be destroyed in line with the Impetus policy on this.



"I found out about the scheme through the hostel where I worked. When a colleague told me he had started volunteering, it gave me the kick-start I needed! I visit a local lady and this story is definitely a success. After 8 months of visiting, we have developed a firm relationship. It may be an unlikely friendship to some people – she's in her 80's and I'm in my 20's, but we have a lot in common. I have taken her to vote and have visited her over Christmas."

Records of your volunteering activities and other correspondence will be kept whilst you are volunteering with the scheme. These will be similarly kept in a locked filing cabinet or password-protected database. The NCS will keep these records for two years beyond the point when a volunteer ceases to volunteer, for the purposes of information processing, references and statistic gathering. After two years the records will be destroyed. If you do not wish your records to be kept after you leave the Scheme please inform the Volunteer Co-ordinator at your exit review.

6. Expenses

We reimburse any travel expenses incurred whilst carrying out voluntary work for the scheme, as long as they are for journeys within the city of Brighton and Hove. If your scheme member wishes to travel beyond the city, they will need to pay for travel themselves. We also reimburse your expenses for making phone calls in connection with your volunteering. Other expenses may be claimed by agreement with the Volunteer Co-ordinator.

Please claim using a Volunteer Expenses Form every quarter and send this to the Administrator, with appropriate receipts, including bus tickets for bus travel. If you use your phone for bus tickets, you will need to download the receipts for us. The current mileage rate for fuel claims for use of your car is 45 pence per mile. Expenses will be reimbursed by bank payment. If you wish to be reimbursed in cash please let the administrator know when you submit the claim.

7. References

Once you've volunteered with the Scheme for more than six months the Volunteer Co-ordinator may be able to give you a reference. If you would like a reference, please approach the Co-ordinator first. We can only comment on those aspects of your life which relate to volunteering.

8. Comments and Feedback

As a volunteer, your experience 'out in the field' is invaluable and your feedback is vital if the NCS is to grow and learn as an organisation. If you have a problem concerning your voluntary work or any other aspect of the scheme, please try to resolve it with the Volunteer Co-ordinator first. If this doesn't resolve the issue, please pursue this issue with Sean, the Project Manager. The Impetus complaints procedure may be implemented if requested or appropriate. We also welcome positive feedback to help us understand what we do well.

Your Responsibilities as a Volunteer

1. Reliability

Reliability is essential when volunteering for the NCS. Once you have made an arrangement to visit a scheme member, please stick to it. If you are unable to visit at a planned time, inform the scheme member as soon as possible and make an alternative arrangement. You may be the only visitor a scheme member has and as such, your not turning up can be very difficult for them to deal with.

Give your scheme member plenty of notice when you go away on holiday; bear in mind many of our members have memory impairments, so leave a written reminder to reassure them during your absence.



"I look forward to meeting just as much as she does - having just moved here and living on my own, it is a valuable social contact for me too."

2. Realistic Commitment

Do not take on more volunteering than you have the capacity for. It is easier to increase your volunteering than to reduce it. If you are doing social visiting and are keen to visit more than one scheme member we advise that initially you are just matched with one person. If later you still want to be matched with a second person we can arrange this.

If your circumstances change and you find that you have taken on too much, please be honest about this and contact the Co-ordinator at the earliest opportunity. Although you may feel guilty about having to withdraw your help, the sooner the Volunteer Co-ordinator knows of your intentions the quicker they can provide you with reassurance, offer an explanation to the scheme member and set about finding alternative volunteer support for them.

3. Record Keeping

You will need to keep a brief record of your contacts (number of visits and total time spent visiting, things you have done to promote health and wellbeing) using a Record of Visits form that we will post/email you quarterly. It is essential that you return this to us or call the office promptly with your figures. The figures are vital as they provide core information that is essential to the continuation of the NCS as it is used for monitoring purposes, in reports and in preparing funding bids. Each quarter we spend many hours ringing round asking for people's late forms, so please return these as soon as you can.

4. Courtesy and Respect

While volunteering, please remember that you are a guest in the home of the scheme member and act accordingly. Volunteers are expected to behave with courtesy and appropriate respect for scheme members at all times.

5. Your role as a befriender/volunteer visitor

We visit every Scheme Member prior to volunteer involvement to discuss and agree the nature of the support needed. Once matched, you will be asked to offer specific support that you feel willing and competent to do. Please stick to those areas of support and do not take on additional tasks without discussing it first with the Volunteer Co-ordinator.

If the scheme member asks you to undertake personal care (e.g. helping someone wash, dress, use the toilet/shower/bath), or to carry out cleaning, or do regular food shopping, please politely decline and let the Volunteer Co-ordinator know as soon as possible. At the Induction we will address what to do if you find that your scheme member needs this kind of personal assistance (see section 12).

6. Confidentiality

Trust is an essential basis for positive relationships between people. As a volunteer, you must treat all personal information about scheme members as confidential.

You may discuss the people you visit with the Volunteer Co-ordinator, but do not discuss their personal circumstances with your friends or relatives. When you are with other volunteers (for example, at training events) do not reveal information that might identify your scheme member.

Despite the need for confidentiality, being an NCS volunteer is not a secret activity. Many of our volunteers have joined us because their friends have volunteered and spoken positively about their experience. Our good reputation is an important asset in enabling us to continue our work. So please, when talking about your volunteering, or in your behaviour as a volunteer, be aware of the positive or negative impact that your comments or actions may have.

7. Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

If a scheme member divulges information to you in confidence that you feel puts them, others or yourself at risk you **must** relay this information to the Volunteer Co-ordinator. This information will be acted on accordingly, which may or may not include discussion with the scheme member first. This will be covered in further detail at your volunteer Induction.

8. Alcohol and Drugs

Please do not visit your scheme member whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs. We ask you not to drink alcohol with your scheme member, nor take drugs with them. Aside from the legal aspect of drug taking there is an issue of boundaries and safety. Please let us know if you feel concerned that your scheme member is alcohol or drug dependent.

9. Keys

Never take or keep a key, or a key-safe number, for the house of any scheme member whom you visit without discussing this first with the Volunteer Co-ordinator. Doing so could have serious repercussions if the person's house was broken into at a later date. Likewise, DIY tasks relating to changing access locks are not advised.

If your scheme member can no longer get to the door to let you in, tell the Volunteer Co-ordinator as soon as possible, as there is a procedure to hold their keys if needed.

10. Money/Financial Issues

At times you may handle a scheme member's money for running small errands, or purchasing materials to carry out a task. For all sums of money the NCS receipt book must be used; this will be demonstrated at your Induction. In **exceptional** circumstances a volunteer may collect a scheme member's pension using this receipt system. However, volunteers should not commit to collecting a scheme member's pension on a regular basis.

Do not take a scheme member's bank account details or PIN (Personal Identity Number) for you to get money for them or make purchases (either in shops or on line), and if they want to tell you, explain to them that it is not appropriate for you to have this information.

It is extremely important that you do not give financial advice to a scheme member. If financial advice is sought then contact the Volunteer Co-ordinator, who will contact the scheme member and, if possible, re-direct them to appropriate sources of advice/information.

11. Payments and Gifts

The services of NCS volunteers are completely free of charge and under no circumstances should you accept payment for providing these services. To do so

would be a breach of trust with respect to both the NCS and the scheme member themselves. Technically, the Department of Work and Pensions would interpret this as an action between employer and employee.

Scheme Members sometimes like to show their appreciation by offering gifts. Non-cash gifts of a value of under £10 (such as a box of chocolates/bottle of wine) or a non new item of low financial value, which are given willingly as a token of friendship or thanks on special occasions (e.g. birthdays or Christmas) and not through any result of confusion on the scheme member's part may be accepted – but please always inform the Volunteer Co-ordinator of any such gifts accepted.



“My scheme member said to me: ‘Going out with you makes me feel like I’m part of the community.’ I enjoy having a meaningful task in my spare time!”

If you are offered a cash gift of ANY amount then, on ALL occasions, please explain sensitively that you are unable to accept it and notify the Co-ordinator immediately.

If a Scheme Member talks about leaving you something in their Will, you should explain that this is unnecessary and let the Volunteer Co-ordinator know immediately. Should you in fact later receive a bequest, this will help to protect you from possible accusations of exerting undue influence on that person.

It is very important that no-one receiving support from a volunteer should feel that making some kind of payment is a condition for the support they receive.

12. Getting Extra Help

If you feel concerned that someone needs more help than they are getting, contact the Volunteer Co-ordinator and s/he can pass this information onto the appropriate agencies. Do not put yourself or the scheme member at risk by taking on roles that should be covered by trained staff.

There are many organisations that provide support services available to older people, adults with physical disabilities and carers. Again, let the Volunteer Co-ordinator know if you think the person you visit could benefit from such support.

It is important to reflect on the fact that, as a NCS volunteer, you may be the only person someone sees who is not paid to see them - this makes the volunteer/scheme member relationship both special and unique. Therefore, as a volunteer, you are not expected to resolve all the needs or problems of the people you visit and we would encourage you to pass on any concerns you may have to us here at the office.

13. Volunteering with Family, Friends and Children

Because we work with a vulnerable client group, the NCS has a thorough recruitment process in place. Please do not bring friends, family or children with you on a visit without prior consent from the Volunteer Co-ordinator and the scheme member themselves. In most circumstances we will ask that an accompanying adult goes through the same recruitment formalities as required of all NCS volunteers.

If you wish to bring your child with you on visits, you must first inform the Volunteer Co-ordinator, who will seek permission from the scheme member. If accompanied visits do go ahead, you should then be aware that:

- a. Your first duty of care is to the person you are visiting.
- b. You will have to take full responsibility for the safety and welfare of your children. The NCS can take no responsibility for the safety of your children during the visits.



“As a result of volunteering, I believe I have developed a more patient approach in life and visiting my NCS friend is a truly fun and joyful experience.”

14. Identity Cards

Always take your ID card with you when you visit scheme members, so that they can be confident about receiving you into their homes. This card is also important in identifying yourself to relatives, friends or other parties who may be present when you visit. If you stop volunteering with the scheme altogether or go on 'hold' for six months or more we will ask you to return your identification card to the NCS.

15. Visiting with Carers

It may be the case that as a volunteer you will be supporting a carer (a spouse or son/daughter) who is looking after someone else; or helping an individual who lives with a carer. In these situations the Volunteer Co-ordinator will help you to clarify your role.

In most cases, in supporting a carer you are also indirectly supporting the person they care for, and vice-versa. In some cases you will be entering a pre-existing relationship in which there might be difficulties and tensions. The Co-ordinator will help you to negotiate any difficulties and so ensure that your volunteering is a support to both parties.

16. Keeping in Touch

As a volunteer for the NCS you are directly responsible to a Volunteer Co-ordinator so if you have any problems please contact them immediately. Please also keep the Volunteer Co-ordinator informed of any changes to your address, telephone number or availability - before they occur where possible. You may also be the first to know of any changes to the circumstances of your scheme member (health, contact details, etc.) so do keep us informed.

17. Equal Opportunities

We are committed to supporting people eligible for our services regardless of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, ethnic or national origin, colour, class, medical condition or religion. As a volunteer with us you are expected to abide by this commitment by offering help freely to all eligible applicants, unless there is a medical condition or religious/cultural factor that prevents you from doing so. If you feel this may apply to you, please discuss it with your Volunteer Co-ordinator first.

18. Motor Insurance

If you take a scheme member out in your car, you must ensure that your motor insurance provides adequate cover for this activity. At your Induction we will provide you with a supplementary form for your insurance company to complete, which we will then need for our records at the NCS. Please do not drive a scheme member in your car until we have this copy. There is usually no extra charge to you.

19. Paid Work for a Scheme Member

If you offer to take on paid work for your scheme member, please make it clear to the person you are doing the work for, that this is a private arrangement and not part of your voluntary work for the NCS.

Please also inform your Volunteer Co-ordinator that you have offered to do this work. The scheme has no responsibility for any private arrangements you make with the members of the scheme and you would not be covered by our insurance for such activities.

In such cases, we ask the volunteer to resign as a volunteer with that person so as to avoid role confusions and potential conflicts of interest. They may, however, continue as a volunteer with another scheme member.

20. Legalities of Volunteering

Volunteers claiming benefits from social services, such as Jobseekers Allowance, are obliged to declare their voluntary work to an advisor at the Job Centre and are responsible for doing so themselves.

Volunteers must also not accept payment for providing services as this could compromise their 'volunteer' status. Any payment would be regarded by the Inland Revenue as taxable income.

Your Personal Safety while Volunteering

1. Your Privacy

Please do not give your address or phone number to the people you visit. Once you get to know them, you may choose to release this information at your own discretion. However, remember to consider whether you are genuinely happy for them to contact you at home and whether you are prepared for any

eventualities such as frequent calls, late calls or someone calling you when you are no longer visiting them.



“As well as the general feel good factor, I’ve found that volunteering with the NCS has really increased my confidence in social and work situations when meeting new people”

2. Accidents / Incidents

As a volunteer your responsibility in an emergency situation is to contact the appropriate people and/or services and to keep yourself safe. You are not under obligation by the NCS to provide first aid or other emergency intervention in which you are not trained or competent. Please report any accidents, incidents or hazards that you notice when visiting members of the Scheme to the Co-ordinator by phone and fill in an Accident/Incident/Hazard form at the earliest opportunity. See back page for emergency numbers. We offer First Aid training so contact the office if you are interested.

3. Let Someone Know Where You Are

Our Lone Worker Policy recommends that, without discussing personal details related to your scheme member, you give their address or phone number to a close friend or relative, in case any difficulties arise. You can see a copy of the policy on our website or at the office.

4. Sensitivity

You may find that some of the people you visit feel angry, unhappy or frustrated about not being able to do things for themselves or being isolated from their families or the community. Please be sensitive and patient when people express these feelings - a listening ear is usually all that is required and you are not expected to provide answers to these frustrations. Remember, too, that many of our scheme members will be suffering chronic pain as a result of illness or disability.

It may also be that people express views different to your own and use language that may now be considered inappropriate. Please try to be accepting of what may be generational differences and non-dogmatic in expressing your views. However, if you feel that someone is expressing views that are offensive, or if frustration and anger is aimed directly at yourself, please inform the Volunteer Co-ordinator, who will address the situation.

5. Feeling Unsafe

The Volunteer Co-ordinator will have visited and carried out a risk assessment on every scheme member prior to a volunteer visit. This risk assessment looks at the environment and the scheme member themselves. Any notable points from this risk assessment will be made clear to you before you visit.

However, if you feel uncomfortable or threatened during a visit due to an incident of harassment or abuse from any source, please leave immediately. You should then report what has occurred over the phone to the Volunteer Co-ordinator and complete an Accident/Incident/Hazard form as soon as possible.

6. Insurance

Whilst volunteering with the NCS you are covered by our Public Liability and Employer's Liability Insurance for all non-hazardous volunteering activities. Where the volunteer is confident and competent in the skills required and so chooses, it is possible to carry out volunteering tasks outside of this definition (e.g. using an electric power tool to put up shelves). However the volunteer would then be carrying out these activities under their own liability.

The Volunteer Co-ordinator will assess any task for risk and accept or decline the task on the basis of this assessment. Where the task has an element of risk (such as working on a ladder) the volunteer will be informed of this and appropriate safety measures will be advised/organised accordingly. However, it is important to note that under no circumstances are volunteers 'expected' to perform tasks that carry a risk (of any degree).

7. Infections

Older people and those with certain medical conditions may be more vulnerable to catching infections and the ensuing effects may be more serious. If you have come into contact with an infectious illness, including colds, then postponing your visit to a member of the scheme is a sensible precaution. The scheme

member should be made aware of the cancellation and another visit re-scheduled as appropriate.

8. Monitoring

Volunteers may find that there is a period of adjustment when first visiting someone and the Volunteer Co-ordinator will contact you following the initial few visits to see how things are going, and then again after 6 months. Volunteers are very welcome to ring or email the Co-ordinator and provide feedback at any time and can also relay general information on their record of visits form.

Whilst every reasonable effort is made to find a harmonious match for volunteers, if you feel unhappy please let your Volunteer Co-ordinator know immediately and they will then enable you to withdraw gracefully and sensitively.



“Volunteering with the NCS makes me feel a part of my community and enables me to meet new and interesting people I would not normally have mixed with otherwise.”

9. Dealing with Problems

If a scheme member makes a complaint to the Volunteer Co-ordinator against a volunteer, then the volunteer will be asked not to visit the scheme member while the Volunteer Co-ordinator investigates the complaint. If the complaint proves to be justified, then depending on its severity and nature, the following action may be taken:

- After consultations, the volunteer may resume visiting the scheme member.
- The volunteer may be asked to stop visiting the member, but be kept on the scheme, with the possibility of being rematched.
- The volunteer may be required to withdraw from the scheme and surrender their identity card.

- The complaint may be referred to the appropriate authorities (Social Services, Independent Safeguarding Authority or the Police)

Emergency Contacts

If you are seriously concerned about a person's welfare then:

- Contact the office immediately - **01273 775888**. If no one is available, ring the emergency contact person stated on your 'visiting details' form.
- Ask neighbours if they have seen the person.
- If necessary, contact the appropriate emergency services: e.g. Paramedics or Police on 999 (101 for non-emergencies).
- Call Age UK Crisis Line on 01273 328555 (9am -5pm) who can provide carers for urgent personal care.

Further emergency numbers will be provided at your Induction.

We can be contacted at:

Brighton & Hove Neighbourhood Care Scheme
1st Floor, Intergen House,
65-67 Western Road,
Hove BN3 2JQ

Tel. 01273 775888 E-mail: ncs@bh-impetus.org www.bh-impetus.org

The Neighbourhood Care Scheme is a project of Brighton and Hove Impetus.
A company limited by guarantee no. 03895574 registered in England and Wales.
Registered office: 1st Floor Intergen House, 65-67 Western Road, Hove BN3 2JQ.
Registered Charity no. 1083390.