

# **FiSH Volunteer Information Pack**

FiSH, Barnes Green Social Centre, Church Road, Barnes SW13 9HE  
Tel: FiSH Office 020 8876 3335, FiSH Helpline 020 8876 3414,  
Email: [Jenny@fishhelp.org.uk](mailto:Jenny@fishhelp.org.uk) Web: [www.fishhelp.org.uk](http://www.fishhelp.org.uk)

WELCOME to the FiSH neighbourhood care scheme covering Barnes, Mortlake and East Sheen. We are very pleased that you have joined us as a volunteer and hope that you will enjoy working with us. FiSH will be used as the abbreviation of the group's name throughout this publication.

The FiSH constitution states that we exist to promote any charitable purpose for the benefit of all residents in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, in particular for those in Barnes, Mortlake, East Sheen and the surrounding areas. We offer support to relieve the needs, distress or suffering of our clients. We also offer help to avoid the social exclusion and loneliness that so often can occur in our community.

## **VOLUNTEER IDENTITY CARD**

YOUR FiSH identity card shows that you are one of our volunteers. You may need to use it if someone asks you for identification or to reassure someone who might be reluctant to open their door to strangers - even though your visit will be arranged by our helpline and the person should know who you are and when you will call.

*Please ask the office to send you an identity card if you have not already been given one.*

## **PHONING CLIENTS**

If a FiSH volunteer has been booked for a particular task we do not give the volunteer's home phone number to those we help, and ask that all contact with our volunteers is made through the helpline or office. However it may be necessary for volunteers to call clients direct, prior to their task date or for shopping lists. **In order for volunteers to protect their personal phone number dial 141 prior to the number you are calling.**

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

In order to protect your privacy please do not give your home address or telephone number to any person you help on our behalf. Instead, ask that all contact with you be made through our Helpline. In return, to protect those we help, many of whom are vulnerable and living alone please, do not discuss their circumstances outside of our care group. However we always value valuable feedback.

## **ROLE OF FiSH VOLUNTEERS**

There are a number of different ways that volunteers can get involved with FiSH. You might be able to offer to take on the role of a car driver to take someone on a visit or to an appointment; we might ask you to get some shopping or help escort an outing on our minibus; or you could help us at our weekly FiSH'n'Chats group; visit someone who is isolated and housebound on a regular basis as a befriender; or become of a minibus driver.

What ever role you take on it is providing a valuable service in our local community and you can do as much or little as you wish.

## **OUR WORK IN BRIEF**

- Transport
- FiSH minibus outings / shopping trips
- Shopping
- Visiting
- Gardening
- Miscellaneous odd jobs
- Befriending on the phone or face to face
- FiSH'n'Chats, social listening
- Duty Team manning the FiSH Helpline

- Office admin / computer work
- Social Events, concerts
- PQASSO Group Quality Assurance
- Trustee / Governance

## **LIMITS TO WHAT WE DO**

"Voluntary Care" can be taken to mean a great deal so there must be limits to what our volunteers can be expected to do for those whom we help. Much depends on what our volunteers consider reasonable, but a good yardstick is what A CARING AND CONCERNED NEIGHBOUR might be expected to do for someone who asks them for help.

We do not ask our volunteers to do cleaning, or to undertake personal care such as assistance with bathing, taking to the toilet or administering medication; anything other than simple repair jobs and no lopping of trees or large shrubs. These tasks are not covered by our FiSH insurance and are more appropriate to professional help which we can refer people to. Please see the 'Insurance and Risk Assessment' section at the end of this pack.

## **SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT**

FiSH runs regular training courses and seminars throughout the year and we would encourage you to take the opportunity to come along. These are usually advertised in our regular Newsletter. This is a good way of sharing experiences and meeting other FiSH volunteers. We would always welcome suggestions if you would like any particular training that you feel would be relevant to our work.

Detailed handbooks for FiSH 'n' Chats volunteers and Client one-to-one Visiting (Befriending) volunteers are given to all volunteers participating in these activities as additional practical support and reference.

## **CONTACTING OUR OFFICE or HELPLINE**

Jenny Hughes runs the FiSH office at Barnes Green Centre in the role of director. If you have a concern regarding a visit or a particular client you can phone on 020 8876 3335 to talk to her or one of the other office staff, Leslie, Phyllida or Helen.

If you need to speak to the Helpline for details about your task please phone 020 8876 3414 between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon, Monday to Friday.

If you find that you cannot do a job after initially agreeing to do it, please let us know at once on 020 8876 3414 between 9.00 a.m. and 12.00 noon Monday to Friday.

## **OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO YOU**

You are covered by our Public Liability Insurance against the event of any claim arising against you whilst engaged on FiSH activities. We do not wish to put your health or safety at risk so if you have any doubts about a job we ask you to do please raise them at once with the office. You should also refer any problems, accidents and complaints to the FiSH office. A list of policy documents is listed at the end of this information pack.

## **HOW WE ARE MANAGED**

FiSH is managed by an elected committee of 12 Trustees which is made from FiSH volunteers. Elections take place at an Annual General Meeting, normally in November, to which you will be invited and this is another opportunity to get to know other people involved in the organisation.

We receive some funding from LBRuT, Richmond Parish Lands Charity and Barnes Workhouse Trust.

## **OUT OF POCKET EXPENSES**

You can claim out-of-pocket expenses for your volunteer work with us. A car mileage allowance can be paid to cover your petrol expenses - details are given on the INFORMATION SHEET FOR DRIVERS. Other expenses can also be claimed for, phone calls, parking etc. Please ask our office for a claims form if you need one.

## **DONATIONS FROM THOSE WE HELP**

Our service is free but we encourage the users of FiSH to offer small donations.

If someone wishes to make a donation please accept this on behalf of FiSH and put it in an envelope to pass it on to the FiSH office. Donation envelopes are available at the FiSH office. Please note on the envelope from whom the donation comes. The office will write back to the person thanking the donation sender. If you require more envelopes please let the FiSH office know or collect in person.

Some people may want to give you a small personal gift, such as a cake or chocolate and it would be discourteous to refuse it. We would however ask you to use your judgement about accepting gifts and please let the office know if you have any concerns. Volunteers should only accept money that will be given as donations to FiSH and make this clear to the clients they are helping.

## **OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO THOSE WE HELP**

The welfare of those we help is a major concern to us and we ask you to help by:

- being reliable in trying not to let people down
- being honest with us if there are problems
- treating those we help with courtesy, dignity and respect

## **REQUESTS FOR EXTRA HELP**

If someone asks you to do something extra to the job that our office has described to you your response must depend on whether you have the time and want to do extra. Bear in mind our "CARING AND CONCERNED NEIGHBOUR" yardstick.

If you do agree to do an extra task please inform the office when you next speak to them as it is important to keep an accurate record of our work for updated statistics. If you do not have time or feel that someone is trying to take advantage of your generosity do not be afraid to say "no" and suggest the person wanting extra help get in touch with our Helpline again.

If a passenger asks you to do a detour to your agreed trip, such as taking them to the bank or the post office, it is up to you to decide whether you can do this. If it is not convenient explain that you have only time to do the agreed job and suggest they contact our helpline for further assistance.

## **HOW ABOUT REFERRALS?**

If you are approached about a new person who would like help from FiSH we would ask you to ring the office and they will make arrangements to contact them. Please do pass on our Helpline number to anyone who may require it 020 8876 3414. Cards are available in the office to give to people.

## **FiSH EVENTS**

FiSH runs a number of events each year, such as Concerts, FiSH Sunday, Christmas Parties and a stall at the Barnes Fair. We may ask you if you would like to come along and help at one of them. Please do not feel at all obliged to do so, but it can be a very pleasant way to meet some of your fellow volunteers and a good way of helping to raise vital funds for FiSH.

FINALLY, you should receive a lot of verbal thanks for the help you give, and in some cases donations to FiSH to show appreciation. But please bear in mind that some people find it difficult or embarrassing to say "thank you". Rest assured that all your efforts are much appreciated by the staff and Trustees of FiSH.

A list of these policy documents is available in the handbook housed at the FiSH office.

1. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY
2. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE
3. HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY
4. CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY
5. DATA PROTECTION ACT POLICY
6. FINANCIAL PROCEDURES
7. FINANCIAL POLICY
8. WORKERS WITH DISABILITY

9. FIRE SAFETY POLICY
10. PERSONAL SAFETY POLICY
11. ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY STATEMENT
12. STRESS MANAGEMENT POLICY
13. VIOLENCE AT WORK POLICY
14. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE
15. DISCIPLINARY POLICY

FiSH is one of eight neighbourhood care schemes covering the whole of The London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames. Although being run as separate organisations, regular meetings do take place to discuss relative issues and ideas. For more information about other schemes contact the FiSH office 020 8878 3335, or contact Richmond CVS 020 8255 8500.

## **INFORMATION SHEET FOR DRIVERS**

### **FiSH LOGO CARD**

This only shows that you are a FiSH volunteer driver. It will NOT protect you against penalty notices if you are parked illegally.

### **PETROL EXPENSES**

We are able to pay you a mileage allowance to cover these. Please complete the claim form we can provide for this purpose. You can claim mileage from home to pick up your passenger(s), for the actual driving job, and then your mileage back home.

FiSH is able to claim back petrol expenses from the Council and Health Authority, so please make a claim, as it is important the Council is aware of how much driving we do for the community. If you do not want the petrol allowance please tick the box at the bottom of the claim form allowing the proceeds be donated back to FiSH to go towards other expenses.

Petrol expenses are claimed three months in arrears. Please send your claim to our office within 10 days of the end of each quarter at the end of March, June, September and December. Further forms are available from our office.

### **INSURANCE**

As well as having cover under our Public Liability Insurance you are also covered against loss of no claims bonus and the application of an excess if you are in an accident whilst doing a job for FiSH. You will need to check with your insurance company that you are allowed under the "social purposes" in your policy to provide transport as a volunteer driver for FiSH. You should explain that you receive no reward for carrying out FiSH tasks.

### **YOUR ROLE AS A FiSH DRIVER**

This should be: as a friendly, caring taxi driver if you are just dropping off or collecting a passenger and as a supporter and advocate if waiting during a hospital appointment. Please take care when helping a disabled passenger into your car.

FiSH offers regular "Moving and Handling Courses" to help equip volunteers with useful tips on how to get frail clients in and out of cars and the use of equipment like wheelchairs. A shiny new black plastic sack on your passenger seat can be helpful to slide their legs in and out of cars.

### **PARKING**

You can ask your passenger if they have a "Blue" disabled parking permit. If so, parking will be very easy as you can park virtually anywhere provided you do not cause an obstruction. The badge must be displayed inside the windscreen with the valid date clearly showing. If your passenger does not have a Blue Badge, you must follow the normal parking rules. It is reasonable and acceptable if you have to pay for parking to ask your passenger to pay for this. However, if for any reason your passenger is unable to pay, please pay the fee yourself and claim reimbursement from the office along with your petrol expenses.

Parking at HOSPITALS can be difficult. If you cannot find a parking space you should ask if you can use the "AMBULANCES ONLY" bay to drop off as you are providing hospital transport on behalf of FiSH.

### **PENALTY NOTICES FOR PARKING**

We expect you to park considerately at all times. However, it occasionally may not be possible to park legally for example if you are picking up someone who lives in a restricted parking area with yellow lines. Always display your FiSH Logo Card and take all practical steps to avoid getting a Penalty Notice, - e.g. Look out for the attendant and say what you are doing. If you do get a Penalty Notice, discuss this with FiSH staff as soon as possible. If you are called to park at one of the Richmond Housing Partnership properties, e. g The Willoughby's in Priests Bridge, please be extremely careful as there is a private firm of Wheel Clampers in operation.

### **ACCIDENTS**

If you unfortunately have an accident whilst on FiSH business, report it to your own Insurance Company and let our office know. If you have to leave a message on our phone we will contact you as soon as we can.

### **WHAT HAPPENS IF THERE IS NO ANSWER AT THE CLIENT'S HOME**

Many of our clients are frail and slow do give them time to answer the door. If you get no reply please try phoning them if you have a mobile with you. Failing that please call the FiSH helpline to check the details of the task. The helpline can then call the office 8876 335 to check clients details and any contact person.

### **MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**

If your passenger has a serious medical emergency - pull over to the side of the road if you have a mobile phone call 999 for an ambulance or ask someone to make an emergency call for you. Help the person to lie back and reassure them until help arrives. **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO DRIVE THEM TO HOSPITAL YOURSELF** unless you are extremely close to one.

### **RETURN TRIPS**

FiSH does not normally agree to offer return trips to hospital appointments. It is often difficult to know how long an appointment is likely to take. Clients are therefore encouraged to make use of their Taxi Card for return trips. However for some shorter local appointments a return might be requested.

If you have only agreed to do a one way trip and then subsequently agree with the client to return them please call the FiSH office to let us know of the change. It is important, for our statistics and funding that we keep accurate records of the work our volunteers do.

### **EXTRA TRIPS**

#### **FOLLOW - UP APPOINTMENTS**

On returning a passenger from a hospital or clinic appointment they may ask if you can take them to their next appointment as well. **PLEASE ASK THEM TO MAKE THE ARRANGEMENTS THROUGH OUR HELPLINE, NOT THROUGH YOU.** It is vital that all arrangements are made through the office so that you are covered by our insurance policy.

### **WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU CAN NOT DO AN AGREED JOB**

Please call the FiSH Helpline 8876 3414 as soon as possible so that they can rearrange a replacement helper.

We hope you enjoy working with us as a volunteer driver.

Please do not hesitate to contact the office with any queries and feedback. 0208 876 3335.

# INFORMATION SHEET FOR SHOPPERS

## OUR SHOPPING JOBS

These fall into two categories:

1. Shopping for someone who can't get out.
2. Weekly minibus shopping.

### 1. GOING SHOPPING FOR SOMEONE

This service is for those who can't get out and is usually on a temporary basis following an accident or illness. We leave our volunteer to collect the shopping list and the money. It is helpful to check through the list when collecting it to clarify exactly what is wanted and if alternatives are acceptable. For example if 'a loaf of bread' is on the list, ask what colour, size and type, brand name etc. It is a good idea to agree and write down on the list the amount of cash given to help later on when giving back the change.

You can shop wherever is most convenient to you of course, but a supermarket which gives a till receipt with descriptions of each item - is a good idea. We do not expect you to spend a lot of time searching for a particular item or to get very bulky shopping. Bear in mind the lengths you would expect a neighbour to go to in shopping for you. If an item is unavailable settle for the nearest equivalent. Whenever possible, when delivering the shopping give a till receipt along with the change and make sure that you are given any extra money if you were given insufficient cash in the first place.

### PAYING FOR PARKING WHEN SHOPPING

If you have to pay to park whilst shopping with or for someone it is reasonable and acceptable to ask them to pay the parking fee but if they are unable to do this you can claim reimbursement from the office.

### 2. MINIBUS SHOPPING

We run a weekly escorted minibus trip, driven by a volunteer driver.

The bus collects people from their home and takes them to various local shopping places where they have an hour or so to shop. A volunteer escort is always on the bus to help and carry bags etc. Escorts work on a rota basis and new names are always welcome. If you would be interested in occasionally being a bus escort please contact the office and we'll be happy to take you on one of our trips.

# INFORMATION SHEET FOR ESCORTS

FiSH volunteers who help to escort clients on the bus and on outings are an essential and valuable means of support for people joining outings and shopping trips. Volunteer escorts may be called on to help clients with things such as:

- getting into and out of the bus, sometimes even if the passenger lift is used
- strapping into their seat belts before setting out
- help with pushing shopping trolleys
- stowing shopping on the return trip (this may be done by the driver)
- assistance on outings with steps, inclines, getting through doors etc

Escorts could also benefit from knowing how to best carry out this assistance and also cope with emergencies of varying difficulty:

- making sure that all clients are accounted for during the whole trip (headcount in and out)
- the best way to assist people with mobility problems
- someone being sick or injured on the bus or during an outing
- where emergency equipment is stored on the bus and how to use it

### 1. GETTING INTO AND OUT OF THE BUS - sometimes even if the passenger lift is used:

It is the responsibility of the escort (perhaps sometimes working with the driver) to see that passengers get on and off the bus safely. The obvious dangers are slipping, tripping and falling. Make sure that

- The doors are secured open and won't blow shut on the passenger
- Steps and gangways are unobstructed
- Any fold out steps and handrails are fixed in position

- If necessary and when available, lights over the stair wells are switched on and not obscured
- Everything is clear of the passenger tail lift before operating and any passenger using it is stable or supported on it.
- Make sure that all fingers, hands and feet are clear of any moving parts or hinges when getting into or out of the bus

## **2. STRAPPING CLIENTS INTO THEIR SEAT BELTS**

All passengers, helpers and driver must wear seat belts in the minibus **at all times when moving**.

- Many clients need assistance in getting their seat belt ready to fasten and also to fasten it properly. They may be reluctant to ask for help, or reluctant to wear it.
- Escorts must insist that passengers wear seat belts.
- If it is absolutely necessary for an escort to move during a journey (to help a client, for example) the driver should be asked to stop first if this can be done safely. If a client needs to move from a seat then the bus must come to a complete stop.

## **3. HELP WITH PUSHING SHOPPING TROLLEYS**

In many cases the trolley acts as a walking support for clients so they don't need much extra help. Some clients may need help with getting a shopping trolley around the aisles, or collecting items from high or low shelves. In most cases the office will have determined how many clients need assistance and in what degree (one-to-one, occasional, none). There should be enough helpers on every shopping trip to make sure that nobody is left to cope on their own if they need assistance. It might also be possible to get help from a shop assistant.

For wheelchair clients, there are usually trolleys which clip onto a wheelchair so that the client can either go round on their own or the helper is free to push the wheelchair and the trolley together.

## **4. ASSISTANCE ON OUTINGS**

Clients need different degrees of assistance on outings, depending on the type of outing and the surroundings. Some clients do not need physical assistance but like to know that "someone is there" in case of difficulty. The office administration usually makes sure that everyone going on outings can manage their own personal care even if help would be needed for pushing a wheelchair or carrying a lunch tray etc.

- Theatre trips generally need some sort of assistance getting on and off the bus, negotiating theatre steps (if any) and getting into a seat. Some theatre aisles have a slope which may cause people to feel unstable. Occasionally a helper might be asked to get refreshments for a client during an interval to save them getting out of a seat. Escorts should not be asked to take someone to the toilet or provide personal care as this is outside the remit of our volunteer help.
- For museum and building interior outings there might be some sort of assistance needed taking people round the exhibits and also making sure that everyone is accounted for at the start and the end of the visit. Some clients may decide to go to a museum shop and would then become separated from the group.
- Outings to exterior venues (gardens, exterior exhibitions etc) may require more assistance from escorts with negotiating pathways, slopes, gates. Escorts and clients are usually "matched" on outings to make sure that (a) there are enough escorts to help whoever is on the outing and (b) if there are wheelchairs or mobility problems that escorts are strong enough to manage whatever they may be asked to help with.

# **INFORMATION SHEET FOR HOME VISITING**

## **SITTING IN**

Our volunteers are sometimes asked to sit with someone for a short period while their normal carer is out. This can be arranged through the Helpline as it is only for odd occasions.

If this is needed FiSH volunteers can not offer any personal care or administering of medication.

## **ONE-TO-ONE BEFRIENDING**

Clients who might be interested in a regular FiSH visitor should be referred to the FiSH office. They will then be visited and matched up with an appropriate FiSH volunteer. Guidelines for FiSH befrienders are available at the office.

## **FiSH 'N' CHATS PROJECT**

FiSH volunteers interested in working with this social listening project should contact the FiSH office. There is a selection process and training is given prior to joining the team. Guidelines are also available at the FiSH office.

# **VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY**

We rely on FiSH volunteers to conduct themselves in a manner which maintains the integrity of FiSH, its standing in the community and with other bodies; and to act with courtesy and consideration for others at all times.

Volunteers are expected to respect and promote the agreed policies and procedures of FiSH agreed by the Executive Committee, including our Equal Opportunities Policy. All FiSH policies are available in the office if needed.

Volunteers are expected to work within the spirit of our confidentiality policy at all times, respecting both client confidentiality and information which is confidential within the organisation in relation to financial, personnel and strategic management issues.

Any matters of concern should be raised with the Co-ordinator so that we can act promptly and protect the needs of our clients and our volunteers.

## **Insurance and Risk Assessment**

FiSH maintains Public Liability and Employers Liability Insurance for all employees and volunteers working on our behalf. The policy covers the work of volunteers carried out in accordance with the Code of Conduct, Policies and Procedures. It covers all normal 'jobs' that are requested through the FiSH office or Helpline.

Our policy is not a Motor Insurance policy. All driving volunteers must have a valid Motor Insurance policy that provides cover for all driving jobs carried out for FiSH.

Also, our policy is not a 'Handyman' policy. If a volunteer carries out a job at the client's home please note that the insurance only covers light house and garden work, examples of which are changing a light bulb, lawn mowing, hedge-trimming and weeding. Working on a step-ladder up to 4 feet off the ground is covered - other ladders and heights above 4 feet are not. There is no cover for any work that would be considered to be 'DIY'.

Insurance is very important both to the employees and volunteers and to the Charity. Volunteers are asked to raise any uncertainties they might have with the FiSH office before a job is undertaken.