

GOOD NEIGHBOUR SCHEME

A toolkit for setting up a scheme



Put together by a partnership of
**The Diocese of Hereford
and Herefordshire Council.**

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 **Herefordshire
Council**



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INTRODUCTION

Herefordshire is one of England's most sparsely populated counties; it is largely rural with scattered market towns, a small city and agriculture a predominant industry. A conference, 'Combatting Loneliness' was held in January 2015 and run by a partnership between the Diocese of Hereford and Herefordshire Council. This focussed on the huge impact of loneliness on local people, affecting physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing. But there was also recognition of the strength and resources in our communities that could be mobilised to try and address some of this need.

Good Neighbour Schemes (GNS) were raised as one of those responses to the issue of loneliness.

A GNS can be set up in a way that responds to local need, is relatively cheap to set up and run and is about local communities providing support to local people. Not everyone can rely on friends or family to be on hand when the need for help arises. GNS can be a way of preventing a relatively small issue escalating and developing into a crisis but it's also a way of supporting people following a difficult time, or crisis, to settle back into life with some support where it is needed. Along with the benefit to those needing support those who help run the schemes also benefit from a sense of satisfaction from knowing you are 'making a difference' for someone and contributing to the local community, as well as potentially making new friends.

In other areas where a scheme exists they have noted benefits:

- Greater community involvement, helping to create a strong social bond and promoting people's well-being and self-esteem.
- Valuable but informal support and advice, a helping hand.
- Some people have been able to retain their independence and remain in their homes for longer than would be otherwise possible.
- Feelings of isolation, exclusion and loneliness are reduced.
- The impact of the ongoing decline in

village services such as Post Offices, shops, pubs and public transport, is reduced.

- It becomes a preventative service - preventing or delaying the need for more costly intensive or specialist care.
- Forging a link between younger and older members of the community, and also between newcomers and more established residents.

Schemes can also lead to recognising other needs which might be able to be met within the local community. For example some schemes have gone on to run a 'lunch club' which provides both a meal and an opportunity to socialise for those who are quite isolated.

A small number of schemes were already running in Herefordshire at the start of 2015 and it was recognised that a 'toolkit' would be helpful to other communities in the county who were interested in setting up a scheme. This information has been put together by the Diocese of Hereford and Herefordshire Council to help those interested in starting a GNS in their local area.

Step 1:

ESTABLISHING THE NEED

If you are thinking that a GNS could improve life for the more vulnerable in your community, the first step to take is to ensure that there is not something similar already covering your area. Then look at the interest and need. You will need a core group of people to spend time on planning the scheme and finding out what local people need. You will need a local champion; this could be you, a local councillor or a person that already does a lot in the community. It is helpful to contact the local church and the parish council to keep them informed of your plans and get their support.

A survey or questionnaire can be carried out which gives people the opportunity to say what service they would use if a scheme were on offer. It is also an opportunity for people to express an interest to volunteer for the scheme and say how they might be able to help. The questionnaire could be included with a local newsletter. The best way to maximise the number of responses you receive is to collect them from each household if not an alternative is to leave collection boxes in local halls and shops though this may reduce significantly the number of responses you receive. We've given a questionnaire example on page 3 and you may already have a Parish Plan which might give you information as well.

Example Good Neighbour Scheme Questionnaire

You will need to evaluate the information you receive from any survey or questionnaire to assess the level of need and the number of potential volunteers. Then you will need to call a meeting of interested parties to raise awareness, add potential new members to your core group and field any questions that potential volunteers may have. This will be a good opportunity to get the message across that no volunteer is expected to do everything or expected to be available all of the time.





GOOD NEIGHBOUR SCHEME QUESTIONNAIRE

Volunteers in this area are considering launching a Good Neighbour Scheme aimed at helping to make life easier for people in this community, especially older people and those who are more vulnerable. You may at some point need help from such a scheme, or you may like to volunteer to help others, or you may want to volunteer and use the scheme too.

The scheme will revolve around a group of volunteers who can help in a number of ways, for example by checking a smoke alarm or changing a light bulb, befriending someone who is lonely or tidying the garden for someone who has been in hospital. These are just examples, there are many other ways in which the scheme could help people.

Would you use the scheme for help? If so what help might you need?

Please circle your answer

Shopping	Yes	No
Someone to talk to	Yes	No
Collection of prescriptions	Yes	No
Minor household repairs	Yes	No
One off garden tidy	Yes	No
Form filling	Yes	No
Help with pets	Yes	No
Occasional transport (40p per mile)	Yes	No
Other (please specify)		

Would you like to volunteer as a good neighbour? What could you help with?

Please circle your answer

Collecting shopping	Yes	No
Befriending/advocacy	Yes	No
Collecting prescriptions	Yes	No
Minor household repairs	Yes	No
Transport (re-imbursed for fuel costs)	Yes	No
Being part of a co-ordinating team for the scheme	Yes	No
Other (please specify)		

Establishing the Need Questionnaire Exemplar

If you tell us who you are and where you live we can contact you when the scheme is up and running

Name	
Telephone	
Address	
Email	

Please fill in the questionnaire attached and keep it by your door ready for collection or post it to:

Thank you.

Step 2:

HOW DO WE GET SUPPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY?

After establishing that there is a need for a GNS it is helpful to then hold a public meeting to get support for the scheme. Try to get as many local people as possible to attend the meeting. It should be well publicised locally and invites should also be sent to local groups, clubs and organisations. These should include children's groups e.g. Parent and Toddlers, playgroups, older people's groups e.g. Lunch Clubs, U3A (University of the 3rd Age), youth groups and women's groups e.g. WI, Mother's Union.

Other local services who operate in the area should also be included such as, Health Visitors, GPs, District Nurses, Neighbourhood Watch, Police, Clergy and Parish Councillors, County Councillors and a representative from any local schools in the area.

Information should be available and visible through posters, leaflets to households or through an article in the Parish Magazine. It can take people several times of hearing or seeing publicity before they decide to act, so as much publicity as possible is good! Often the best way of publicising a meeting like this is to talk to people personally and ask them to come along.

At the meeting you may hear a view that their community is already 'caring' and this indeed may be the case. However, a GNS can be a valuable tool for building stronger, more resilient communities and can encourage people to volunteer who would love to help but might not otherwise step forward.

The Advantages of Volunteering may include the following (useful to highlight this in your meeting!)

- Giving something back to the community
- A chance to gain skills and experience
- A pathway into work
- A chance to make friends and new contacts in your community
- A chance to have fun and new experiences
- Increased self-esteem and confidence, a chance to make a difference or be an advocate for positive change
- Personal pride and fulfilment - the feeling of being valued
- Improving volunteers' health and well-being

It is also helpful to get the message across that no volunteer is expected to do everything, they will agree the tasks that they are happy to undertake, and no volunteer is expected to be available all the time but can choose when they help.

From this meeting you may be able to identify some people who want to know more about the organisation of the scheme and may consider being part of the core group who does this. You will also be able to collect details of people who may wish to consider being a volunteer. To give people confidence to step forward, make it clear that any help at any time as is valuable, though consistency and commitment is important.

Your next step is to meet with those who can help organise the scheme and form a Steering Group.

Step 3:

HOW DO WE ORGANISE OURSELVES?

How a Good Neighbour Scheme Operates

There are many ways that you can become involved in a GNS depending on how much time you have and what level of commitment you can make to the scheme. The following pages describe the roles that will be needed to operate a scheme.

Steering Group

You'll need a small core group to carry out the initial survey work and this group may well become the steering group as the scheme develops, but this isn't always the case.

- Constituting the group
- Making sure the necessary systems are in place
- Appointing a chairperson, treasurer and secretary
- Publicising the activities of the scheme
- Recruiting volunteers
- Arranging training and making sure everyone knows what needs to happen and what they are doing

To become an organisation in its own right the group needs to be 'constituted', setting out who is involved, the rules of the group and what its aims and objectives are. This will help should you wish to apply for funding grants as most funders will ask to see a copy of your constitution and a recent set of accounts. A steering group will share the responsibility of co-ordinating the scheme, be able to monitor progress and sort out any problems as well as keeping up the momentum. For this type of organisation a simple document is required and a sample constitution can be found on pages 8-9.



The number of steering group members and specific co-ordinators will depend on the scheme, but you need to take into account that you'll need cover at times of illness or holidays. Ideally, each member of the steering group should have defined and specific tasks or responsibilities. The steering group should include the following posts (with a suggested outline of their respective responsibilities):

- **The Chairperson** - ensures meetings happen in an orderly way so that everything that needs to be discussed is discussed, that everyone gets to have their say and that they keep within the allocated time.
- **The Treasurer** - looks after the money and keeps records to evidence how any money has been spent. If you have a grant the Treasurer will need to provide a report on spending. They are responsible for income, fund-raising, donations, payment of volunteers' expense claims and grant applications (if appropriate).
- **The Secretary** - ensures the meetings happen and take and produce the minutes. They will be responsible for correspondence, insurance, forms and rosters, leaflets and publicity.
- **Co-ordinators** are responsible for the practical day to day running of the scheme. They may also be responsible for recruitment of volunteers and their support and training. Will keep up to date with volunteers and users details, match requests to volunteers and ensure the workload is spread evenly amongst the volunteers. They will also need to be able to advise volunteer helpers on what to do if they come across anything unusual or expected. If a request for help comes in from someone new to the scheme, it is good practice for the co-ordinator to visit with the volunteer. This will help the scheme understand the likely needs of the individual.

- **Volunteers** - Everyone involved in the scheme is a volunteer and will give up a little of their time to help someone that needs support and lives nearby, but some volunteers will only be involved in visiting people rather than running the scheme. They need to be aware of what the expectations are of them as well as how they will be supported. It is always a good idea to have volunteer reps on the steering group.

The more members you have on the group the easier it is to share tasks and get things done and you might want to allocate specific pieces of work to different committee members, such as leading on publicity or fundraising. The committee will need to ensure the necessary systems are in place to run the scheme, arrange training, decide on the activities which the scheme will cover, publicise those activities and recruit and support volunteer helpers. The steering group members may also be co-ordinators and can volunteer to complete requests for help, but this will depend on what time people can give.

Once the scheme has been set up members will decide the frequency of meetings to ensure it is a success. This will include an annual general meeting for all members. This is an opportunity to tell people how the scheme is running, take advice and opinions from the wider community and, if the constitution requires, elect new people to the committee. It is also a good opportunity to officially thank your volunteers, and recruit new ones. It doesn't need to be anything formal, but it's useful to look back over the year and look forward to another one.

For more details see the following document: Draft Constitution form on the following page



CONSTITUTION

This is the constitution for

_____ 'your area'

Good Neighbour Scheme.

1. Status

The organisation is a not for profit organisation. No member is entitled to any payment for services rendered but may be reimbursed any reasonable expenditure incurred in providing such services.

2. Aims

To provide contact and support to vulnerable people living in 'your area'

_____ 'your area'

3. Purpose

- The scheme will try to provide practical support for any member of the community who is in need and is unable to help themselves.
- The scheme will recruit and maintain a bank of volunteers to help offer services
- The scheme will raise funds to be able to offer services

4. Members

The Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer of the Group will be agreed by the members at a general meeting immediately following its formation and where appropriate voted on annually at the annual general meeting. The committee will consist of the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer, with provision for co-opting members onto the committee as necessary. The Steering Group shall make all arrangements for the provision of services to meet the Aims of the organisation.

5. Annual General Meeting

The Annual Meeting will be held in _____ (month) of each year.

A notice of the meeting including date, time and place will be sent by the Secretary to all members of

_____ 'your area'

Good Neighbour Scheme, at least two weeks in advance.

The minimum number for a general meeting and all other meetings will be one third of the membership. Should a vote be necessary to make a decision, each committee member will have one vote, with the Chair having a casting vote in the event of a tie.

6. Bank Account

All funds of the organisation shall be held in a bank account opened in the name of the organisation, apart from a cash float of up to £50 to be held by the treasurer to enable the payment of minor expenditure items. Cheques on the account shall be signed by two authorised signatories as nominated by the Steering Group.

7. Accounts

The Treasurer will keep an accurate record of all income and expenditure and will provide a full account for the Annual Meeting. The accounts will be audited annually by an independent Auditor.

8. Winding Up

Should the Group cease to exist any remaining funds will be passed to the organisers

of _____ to be used for the benefit of
_____ in _____

and the surrounding area.

Constitution Exemplar

Confirmed and adopted at a meeting of the Steering Group held on:

Chairperson

_____ Date _____

Treasurer

_____ Date _____

Secretary

_____ Date _____

Other committee members

_____ Date _____

Step 4:

SETTING BOUNDARIES

Volunteers get involved with GNS for all sorts of reasons - because they are kind, because they want to help people, or because they want to prevent feelings of loneliness themselves. However, it is important to set clear boundaries for both volunteers and users of the scheme right from the outset.

The aim of a GNS is to provide appropriate, proportionate and effective support and you must have a very clear understanding of what form that support is going to take. A GNS is there simply to offer a helping hand. It cannot and should not attempt to do the work of social services, district nurses or other professional caring groups—certain jobs will be beyond the capabilities of the volunteers and they need to have confidence in where the expectation on them stops.

It is also important to be aware that outside help may be required sometimes and to know who to turn to on these occasions. So it is good if the committee can maintain links with appropriate agencies. Most people know about Social Services, Health Clinics or the Citizens' Advice

Bureau but there are many other organisations that can help, many of which are listed on the WISH website www.wisherefordshire.org.

The majority of visits will be a positive and happy experience for both volunteer and the person they help. However, on occasions situations may develop that may need more than the volunteer can manage themselves. It may be as a result of a specific event, or something the volunteer finds out while they are helping someone. Volunteers will need training in how to manage any difficult or inappropriate situations which arise.

It is therefore important that your scheme has in place a system to support volunteers if a situation develops that needs more specialist help and guidance on where their responsibilities end. The most effective way is to clearly brief volunteers on the specific boundaries required by your scheme, before they make their first visit. For example some things to think about could be:

- Guidance on whether volunteers should handle money for clients.
- What happens if a client tries to pay a volunteer?
- Guidance on whether all visits and contacts with clients come through the scheme.
- Guidance on whether volunteers should give out home or mobile telephone numbers and what happens if a client obtains a phone number and phones the volunteer direct?
- What to do and who to talk to if something happens that you are uncomfortable with.
- Who to talk to if you become overly anxious by anything happening with a particular person – is it a safeguarding issue?
- What to do if someone needs support you aren't able to give yourself – e.g. regarding medication, personal care, counselling

It may be difficult to describe every eventuality which may give cause for concern, but what is important is that there is a system for dealing with any such concerns if they arise and a clear understanding of the boundaries right from the outset. GNS should not be stressful for either volunteers or the people being visited – and agreeing these simple guidelines should keep all activities within the correct boundaries – but remember if you need to speak to anyone about any concerns you have – make sure you do so as soon as possible to stop any situation escalating. It may be that it can be simply and easily dealt with.

It is important to set geographical boundaries for your scheme – where you will and won't work. This can be important if you really want there to be a truly local feel to your GNS – and will also mean that you can focus your efforts within a defined area. This will avoid overstretching your service.

Finally, as your scheme becomes particularly successful and well known, statutory agencies like the council, NHS or Police may ask for help with specific tasks or services. Local voluntary sector organisations may also approach you. Such requests should be treated with caution as it may put too great a burden on the scheme. Consideration must be made of the number of volunteers, the limitations of volunteers' skills and the services they offer. Some volunteers may resent such outside interference. It is important to define the scheme's relationship with other agencies.

The boundaries may change as your scheme develops and learns – don't be afraid to redefine boundaries if you need to – in consultation with other volunteers and committee members.



Step 5:

HOW IS IT GOING TO WORK?

There are various ways that schemes can operate, much depending on the size of the community, the number of volunteers and co-ordinators available and the extent of the services provided. Most schemes do not offer an 'emergency' response and require a minimum of 2 or 3 days' notice for a request, which means that there is some time and flexibility for the response.

Smaller Schemes - may have a co-ordinator for each day of the week, or for a week at a time, who handles all requests and then contacts volunteers to find someone to meet the need (they will have details of what volunteers are prepared to offer and when they may not be available). Often a mobile phone is used as the main call number and this along with the records of volunteers is passed to the co-ordinator on 'duty'. Some schemes use a land line which has a message with the phone number of the co-ordinator on duty that day. Another way is to have an answer-phone system that is checked by a co-ordinator two or three times in the day and they then deal with requests.

Your choice of contact may be affected by local circumstance such as mobile phone or Broadband coverage. You may need to use land lines instead of mobiles, or a mobile phone that is enabled (including its contract) to work through WIFI and signal boost. You need to check phone coverage and contract options when setting up the scheme.

Most smaller schemes are run by volunteers only, though some choose to raise funds and employ someone as a co-ordinator for a set number of hours per week. Remember, if you decide to employ a member of staff, you must ensure that you comply with all relevant employment legislation and have the capacity to manage pay role, etc. In some cases, your Parish Council may be prepared to act as the employing body on behalf of the scheme.

Larger Schemes - may have co-ordinators for each type of service offered (e.g. transport, practical help, befriending etc.) and the user will call the relevant co-ordinator with their request and the co-ordinator will find a suitable volunteer to help.

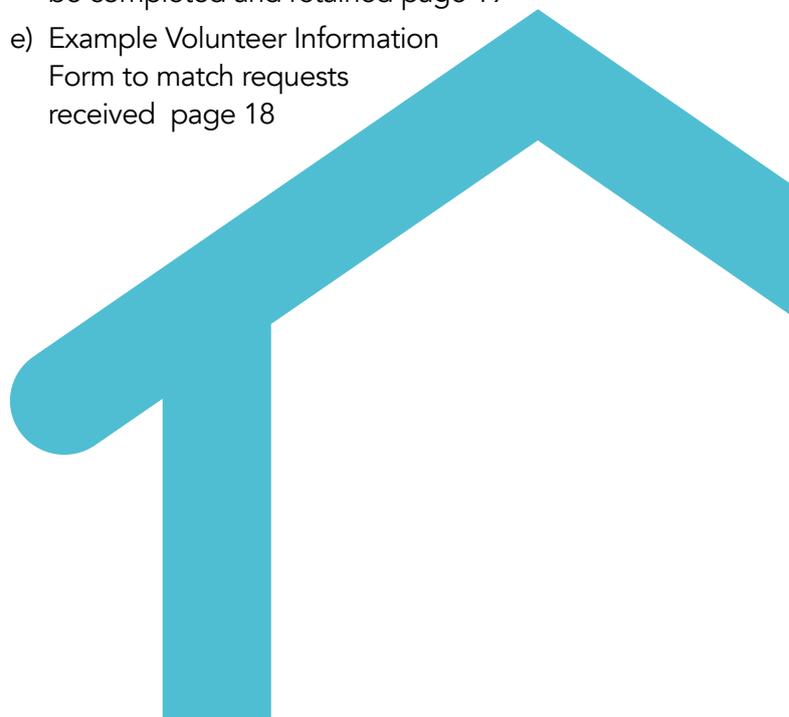
Role of Co-ordinators

You will need a pool of people prepared to take this more active day to day role. On a rota basis with other co-ordinators they will take it in turns to staff the mobile phone and marry up any requests for help with volunteers able to help. The co-ordinator may be a member of the steering group and can also volunteer to complete requests for help.

There will also be a little paperwork to complete and the co-ordinator will need to be available to advise volunteers if they come across anything unusual or unexpected.

Paperwork for coordinator

- a) Guidelines for co-ordinator
- b) Co-ordinator rota form
- c) Task record sheet
- d) Volunteer Record Sheets will need to be completed and retained page 19
- e) Example Volunteer Information Form to match requests received page 18



Liaising with Volunteers

Volunteers will have advised what they are prepared to help with and the days and time of day they are available. When the co-ordinator receives a request they complete a Task Record sheet and match volunteers to the task and call a suitable volunteer. The volunteer will be asked whether or not they are able to help. If they are the co-ordinator will pass on to them all of the details of the request. The coordinator can use the Volunteer Information Form (page 18) to make sure they have all the details they need. When the volunteer has completed the task they will need to let the co-ordinator know that they have finished so they can finalise the paperwork. Each co-ordinator and each volunteer will need to agree how they will make contact after the task is finished and to complete Volunteer Record Sheet page 19.

Important points to consider:

- Arrange adequate cover for holidays and sickness of co-ordinators and volunteers and have a contingency plan in place in case of emergencies/bad weather.
- Issuing identity cards/badges to volunteers to support safeguarding and offer reassurance to those using the scheme – the co-ordinator will need to ensure that the client knows the name of the person they are expecting and can check this against the identity badge.
- Ensure all calls to the scheme are logged, even if the request cannot be met, so that 'gaps' in support can be identified and hopefully addressed.
- Try and spread the work between volunteers - if used infrequently volunteers may feel undervalued
- Keep publicising the scheme and the contact number in local places and magazines and consider providing leaflets or cards about the scheme and what it offers which people can keep by the phone or be part of a 'welcome' pack when someone moves into the area.

- Know what else might be available apart from your scheme it's important that coordinators are aware of what other support is available or where to signpost people if the request does not fit into their GNS.
- Evaluating the scheme can be a helpful and positive experience, consider doing this annually to ensure that it is meeting local needs or can highlight gaps in services and supports, but conversations between volunteers are useful in flagging up concerns or new ideas, as are comments from people who use the scheme. If you want to get funding, these quotes can act as evidence of the benefit you provide. A good evaluation system is Evaluate! which was developed by the Bulmer Foundation and can be found on their website www.bulmerfoundation.org.uk.

Volunteer Recruitment and Support

Key to any GNS are the volunteers. You need a sufficient number of committed volunteers willing to undertake three different roles.

- Committee members
- Co-ordinators
- Volunteer helpers

In reality, some people will cover two or three roles, but it is useful to separate the roles out to understand what is needed for each of them.

Recruiting Volunteers

You may have held a public meeting to look at the need for a GNS and attracted some people who would consider being a volunteer. If not you could advertise the need for volunteers in local places, such as Parish magazines or local community newsletters, at local gathering points or on community noticeboards. An article in a local paper about starting a local scheme could also include a request for volunteers to come forward. You may also approach your local volunteering organisation. In Herefordshire this is HVOSS - Herefordshire Voluntary Organisations Support

Service. They may be able to support you in looking for suitable volunteers in your area. If you talk to other bodies and organisations in your area they may also be a source of volunteers.

However you recruit volunteers to your scheme you will need to make sure that they are suitable volunteers. If you have number of people who have shown interest in volunteering you may want to get everyone together to meet and to explain the scheme, what it means to be a volunteer and the process they will have to go through. It is important for each volunteer to recognise that checks for suitability are essential to the scheme and that no suggestion is made to them that they will become a volunteer until checks are completed and the scheme is satisfied that they are suitable. It is much harder to say 'no' to someone when they already believe that they have been accepted, and this could cause difficulty for the scheme, better to be clear from the start that nobody is accepted until all checks are completed. This also gives time to assess suitability.

When recruiting we recommend you have a brief meeting to interview the volunteer where you can assess their suitability to volunteer, explain what being a volunteer will mean and discuss the need to complete the Disclosure and Barring (DBS) form. Once this has come back and you are satisfied about suitability, you can provide the new recruit with an Information Pack and welcome them onto the scheme.

It is essential that volunteers respect privacy of the scheme users at all times. It is vital that users trust and respect the scheme and the volunteers and it is worth reinforcing this point to your volunteers from time to time. If volunteers are unable to comply with this they may not be suitable for the scheme.

To retain volunteers they need to know that they are valued and that they can get any support they may need from the co-ordinators and/or steering group. It is a good idea to organise volunteer get-togethers from time to time, they may contain an element of updating about anything new, perhaps an element of training but it is also good to enjoy a sociable time together.

Training

This may seem an unnecessarily big step for a simple GNS, but it can be a useful tool for updating and upskilling volunteers. It can also improve confidence and may encourage more volunteers if they know they will gain new skills. Basic training in First Aid, interpersonal/listening skills and other relevant training may be available through other organisations and HVOSS can help you source training. Some training may come at a cost, so you must remember to budget for it.

What to Include in a Volunteer Information Pack

Each volunteer will need a pack of information to enable them to help residents.

This could include:

- A letter of welcome
- Details about the scheme, how it works, the co-ordinators names & contact numbers
- Volunteer Information Form
- Volunteer Record Sheet
- General information about the area
- A copy of the local community or parish newsletter, magazine or email
- A directory of useful phone numbers, including local doctors and hospitals, public transport, community transport, local shops and services.
- Information on any local or community websites as well as WISH
- A map of the Scheme area
- Local Safeguarding information. Available from Herefordshire Council safeguarding pages www.herefordshire.gov.uk/safeguarding-adults

Resources

- Guidance for Volunteers *page 16*
- Expression of Interest letter *page 17*
- Volunteer record sheet *page 19*
- Volunteer Information Form *page 18*
- Risk Assessment following DBS disclosures *page 24*



GUIDANCE FOR VOLUNTEERS

These volunteer guidelines have been written to encourage safe and enjoyable volunteering, but are not intended to be a comprehensive list of do's and don'ts. If you experience any problems as a volunteer you should contact your scheme's organiser or co-ordinator.

Working with People and Home Visits

- Make sure you know all the details about the task being requested before you accept the job from the co-ordinator. Be sure you know what will be expected of you by the client. Make sure you have noted the client's address and phone number. Use the Volunteer Record Sheet to write these details down.
- When home visiting always show your identity card if you have one.
- Explain clearly who you are and why you have come – the co-ordinator will have told the client who to expect.
- Take your mobile with you so you can contact the co-ordinator if you need to and they can contact you.
- You could ask the co-ordinator if you could be accompanied by another volunteer on your first visit if you feel nervous.
- Always request that the client makes future requests through the scheme's mobile phone number.
- Don't give your personal phone number or address to people.
- Don't accept inappropriate behaviour such as comments or physical contact, and report any incidents to the co-ordinator.
- If you are concerned about the client always tell your co-ordinator.
- If a client has a fall while you are there and is unable to get up by themselves, do not attempt to move or lift them. Make the client as comfortable as possible and call 999. Paramedics are trained to check for injuries and to lift people correctly.
- Contact the co-ordinator either by phone or by recording the information on Volunteer Record Sheet when you have completed a task. You will need to agree when this information will be shared with the co-ordinator.

Beware of Accidents

- If you have an accident during the course of volunteering you must inform your co-ordinator in writing immediately, using the appropriate form.
- If you are injured or feel unwell see your doctor. He or she will be able to provide an independent record of any injury.

Privacy and confidentiality: It is very important that volunteers respect the privacy of the users at all times unless there is a clear safeguarding issue. It is vital that users trust and respect the scheme and the volunteers, and it is worth discussing this at meetings from time to time to reinforce the point to your volunteers. Volunteers should understand that they are invited guests into the home of the people they are supporting and absolutely everything should be treated as confidential. In a small community, casual conversations in the pub or shop – even if you think you have anonymised the subject of your conversation – can often lead to people being recognised and the safest thing to do is to share nothing about the people you are visiting.



EXPRESSION OF INTEREST LETTER TO PROSPECTIVE VOLUNTEER

Thank you very much for expressing an interest in becoming a volunteer for the (INSERT NAME OF GOOD NEIGHBOUR SCHEME). We have set this scheme up to make a real difference to the quality of life of the residents in our community.

Volunteering is a highly rewarding activity as it

- Benefits the individual volunteer
- Benefits the client of the scheme
- Benefits wider society as it encourages people to become increasingly socially responsible and caring

There are many different types of tasks for which you can volunteer as a GNS volunteer and examples of this are taking people to appointments, helping with minor household tasks, dog walking, etc.

If you volunteer to drive, you will need to amend your insurance to be a voluntary driver. Most insurance companies do not charge for this. You will also be paid p per mile for journeys outside the immediate area.

If you would like to be a volunteer with our group we ask that you have a Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) check completed.

Once you become a volunteer you will go on our list of volunteers. When a call is received, the scheme's duty officer will contact someone off this list to see if they are able to carry out the work. If you can't or the duty officer is unable to contact you they will simply move to the next person on the list.

If you would like to become a volunteer then please complete the attached form stating the sort of voluntary work you would like to do and when you would be available. Please also attach a passport sized photograph or email a digital image to (INSERT EMAIL ADDRESS) so you can be provided with an identity badge.

You will also need to complete the DBS form, this will be provided to you once we have received your volunteer information form. A Committee Member will arrange to visit you to discuss the scheme in more detail. You will then receive a more detailed pack about being a volunteer for (INSERT NAME OF SCHEME) and an identity badge to be worn when doing the volunteer work.

We do hope you will join us and look forward to welcoming you as a volunteer, it is a rewarding vocation. Should you have any further queries please email (insert email address) or ring (insert phone number).

Please return your completed form to (INSERT DETAILS)

Volunteer Information Form



VOLUNTEER INFORMATION FORM

Name	
Address	
Postcode	
Tel. Number	
Email	

Please circle the appropriate age range

Age	16-20	21-40	41-60	Over 60
-----	-------	-------	-------	---------

Please circle the times you are available

Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Am						
Pm						
Evening						

Type of Volunteering you can do	Please tick for yes
Befriend on a regular basis	
Sit with someone – occasional basis	
Write a letter for someone	
Help fill in non-legal forms	
Computer assistance	
Walk a dog	
Care for a pet during illness	
Deliver a meal	
Cook or prepare an emergency meal or snack	
Prepare a home for someone coming home from hospital	
Small jobs like changing a light bulb	
Occasional light housework	
Move furniture within the house	
General garden tidy up	
Picking up prescriptions	
Shopping errands	
Hospital or doctors' appointments (would you be able to wait?)	
Short local trips to shops, hairdresser etc.	
Outings	
Could you assist a wheelchair user (would the wheelchair fit in your car?)	
Longer journeys/trips to airports	

Would you be willing to be a duty officer? Please tick for yes

This involves taking over the scheme's mobile phone once every 'x' weeks and taking calls for help from people in your community. You will then be required to match a suitable volunteer to the task requested. You would be shown how to use the phone and would learn techniques on dealing with callers effectively.

Please return this form with two passport sized photos for your identity badge.



VOLUNTEER RECORD SHEET

For the scheme to work well you will need to record all of the tasks you have been asked to take on and what happened. You need to agree when you will give the duty officer this information. It may be at the end of each task or at another agreed time.

Record of Requests						
Date	Client's name	Job Number	What was requested	What actions were taken	How long did it take	Date Completed

Expenses Claimed – To be backed up by receipts where possible		
Date	Item	Cost

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

No of vol hours:

No of co-ordinator hours



Offering Transport

The most frequent service offered by GNS is transport. In the absence of regular public transport and the difficulties encountered by elderly and disabled people using public transport, this is probably not surprising. Transport is usually provided for:

- Medical appointments –hospital, doctor, chiropodist, optician (although patient transport services, hospital car schemes and doctor’s car schemes may be available)
- Visiting relatives and friends in hospital
- Shopping and non-medical appointments such as the hairdressers
- Attending Social Clubs, Luncheon Clubs and Day Centres or social events
- Collecting prescriptions, shopping, pensions, library books

Before you consider whether transport is something your local scheme could offer, please contact your local community transport scheme to see what services they provide. Information is on the Herefordshire Council website: Community transport - Herefordshire Council

To be a volunteer driver you need to comply with all the usual legal requirements such as a full driving licence, current tax, MOT and insurance.

Volunteer driving should not increase your car insurance premium. This was agreed by members of the Association of British Insurers in 1984. It is however advisable to write to your insurance company to let them know, stressing that you will be receiving expenses only, and that no element of profit is involved. A sample letter for use by volunteer drivers is included as part of this resource pack and written confirmation should be received from the insurance company before the volunteer starts driving for the scheme.

It should be noted that seatbelts should be worn in front and back seats – legally this is the passenger’s responsibility in the case of adults but the driver’s responsibility for children under 14. If babies or children are being carried they must use a suitable car seat for their size which is fitted in the car according to manufacturer’s instructions.

Drivers should be paid a contribution for their petrol and running costs. The Inland Revenue current tax free rate is 45p a mile for the first 10,000 miles in the tax year and 25p per mile for each additional mile over 10,000 miles.

Before taking the task make sure you agree with your co-ordinator whether or not you will be required to wait if the client is attending an appointment.

Be sure to notify the co-ordinator when you have completed a journey.

Donations for car journeys

Some schemes have a suggested tariff for donations, a certain amount per mile. Which they report allows users to take some level of ownership of the scheme. Some people won’t accept charity, so being expected to pay for the service helps people feel more comfortable about using the scheme on a regular basis. Volunteers can either be given envelopes in which clients can place donations, or carry donation boxes – such methods avoid potential embarrassment on both sides. Donations should not be refused as clients may feel they need not offer again, or that the service is free and may expect it to be so next time.

If you pay a parking fee, this should be recoverable from the client.

Step 6:

BUDGETING & FUNDING

Expenses

There will be expenses, costs you need to consider are telephone, stationery, venue hire, insurance, training etc.

The main costs incurred when setting up your scheme will be the mobile phone (if needed) and publicity, with insurance, phone calls and travel costs the major expenses once the scheme is up and running. Volunteers may be offering their services for nothing but should not be out of pocket – drivers should be paid a contribution for their petrol and running costs.

If you are not using a dedicated telephone line, or mobile phone, an amount per minute can be paid to co-ordinators, or an itemised bill can be requested. One scheme suggests that it takes on average 3 or 4 calls by the co-ordinator to find a volunteer, so this is an important consideration. Some volunteers may not want such a contribution but they should be persuaded to record this 'actual' cost, even if they decide to donate it back to the scheme. It is the only way to discover the true costs of running the scheme. It has been pointed out that volunteers that refuse expenses may deter others from joining the scheme.

Sources of Funding

There are many ways to fund the start-up costs of a GNS. As the grant situation is an ever-changing picture, we have not included many specific sources of funding, however, we have tried to make helpful suggestions about where you can go to find the most up to date information about the most appropriate grants for your scheme.

You will also need to do some fund raising activities in your local community and this has the added advantage of raising awareness of the scheme. Alternatively you may want to apply for a start-up grant and there are a variety of sources you could consider applying to. The beauty of most schemes is that they usually require very little funding to operate, particularly if they are a volunteer run scheme.

However, what each scheme should be aiming for is being sustainable if the sources of funding – particularly grants – dry up.



One really useful source of funding for this type of project is Awards for All (England). This is a lottery fund specifically for small projects that involve people in their community. Grants between £300 and £10,000 are available.
www.awardsforall.org.uk

Nationwide Foundation: For projects supporting people to live independently. Grants available up to £5,000.
www.nationwidefoundation.org.uk

Sometimes the local police administer a pot of funding that can support projects and schemes that work towards reducing crime and the fear of crime in the communities where we work and live.

Sometimes your local church may be a good source of funding, or the Diocese may offer a grant scheme for projects set up in partnership with local church organisations. Other faith groups also run and administer grants schemes so it's worth exploring those avenues.

Parish Councils also offer small grants, and each parish council will have its own criteria and timescales. There are examples of parish councils including funding for schemes within their precept – so it is always worth having a conversation with them to see if that could be a possibility.

Local businesses often like to support very local causes and it is worth having a conversation with larger businesses as they very often have their own corporate social responsibility programme and are willing to offer goods and services if lieu of money.

Trust funds can be a good source of funding for small schemes, and particularly those with a focus on social wellbeing.

To find information of funding you could sign up to Funding Central, or simply google funding for the type of project to need grants for.
<http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk>

Advice is also available from HC. Project Development team [NEED LINK](#) or from C.P.F.O at Hereford Diocese from j.gibbon@hereford.anglican.org.

Donations

Some schemes have a suggested tariff for donations, a certain amount per mile perhaps, or for a particular journey. All schemes should encourage clients to make donations, although everyone can be encouraged to give only what they can. Some schemes report that making a donation allows users to take some level of ownership of the scheme. Some people won't accept charity so being expected to pay for the service helps people feel more comfortable about using the scheme on a regular basis. Volunteers can either be given envelopes in which clients can place donations, or carry donation boxes – such methods avoid potential embarrassment on both sides. Donations should not be refused as clients may feel they need not offer again, or it may cause them embarrassment if you refuse the donation.

To find sources of funding, speak to project development at Herefordshire Council or your local parish council or HVOSS . All should be able to point you in the direction of the best funding advice or sources of funding. But remember, these schemes don't need much to keep them going.

Financial Management

Although some schemes will be relatively informal there will be expenses and income that need to be recorded. Should you decide to apply for grants, most funders will expect to see a recent set of accounts and possibly a projection for the coming year. They will also expect to see a bank account, which requires at least two signatures for transactions and which should include the name of the organisation as the account holder. In the case of the lottery, they expect the name on the bank account to be the same as the name of the organisation named in the constitution or governing document.

Step 7:

WHAT ABOUT THE LEGAL STUFF?

Insurance Cover

Public Liability Insurance protects the organisation from claims by third parties, including service users and members of the public, for death, illness, loss, injury or accident caused by the negligence of the organisation. It generally covers anybody other than employees who come into contact with the organisation. You will need to get a quote for your scheme. There are many different companies that offer this type of insurance, you could seek advice from an insurance broker or do a quick search like 'community group insurance' on the internet.

Where a GNS activity includes volunteers offering some sort of transport assistance to clients it is also suggested that schemes should arrange cover to protect your drivers against loss of their No Claims Bonus – clearly this should encourage more volunteer drivers.

Safeguarding

Some of the people that may use the scheme for support may be considered to be 'vulnerable'. As well as ensuring that all your volunteers are DBS checked it is important that they know what to do if they think someone they are supporting may be at risk of harm. Co-ordinators should undertake some basic safeguarding awareness training as they will need to act as the point of contact for the volunteers should they have a concern. The training will enable them to know if the information given needs to be reported to the Local Authority and how to do that or what other avenues of support may be open to them. Herefordshire safeguarding Adults Board (HSAB) has a website with information to help you, as does the WISH website.

It's also useful to grow good working relationships with local social workers as they can give support if needed.

DBS Checks (Disclosure and Barring Service)

It is strongly recommended that all volunteers complete a DBS check prior to volunteering. The check will reveal if the person has convictions that would make you consider them unsuitable to be a volunteer, such as convictions for theft, fraud, dishonesty and violence, including sexual offences. It will also reassure vulnerable people needing your help that you have done all you can to make sure they are safe with the people visiting them. If convictions show up on a DBS check it doesn't mean you can't use that person as a volunteer, you can carry out a risk assessment (see exemplar page 24) to help you consider if they are suitable to take part. You will need to think about whether the nature of each disclosure impacts on the tasks the volunteer will be doing before refusing or agreeing to use a volunteer. The steering group need to be prepared for this eventuality and treat everyone fairly and equitably. If a check reveals that the person is barred from working with vulnerable people, this is legally binding so a barred person must not undertake certain roles under any circumstances. Failing to comply could lead to prosecution.

You can apply for DBS checks through HVOSS, Hoople or through the Diocese of Hereford.

Risk Assessment of DBS check following a disclosure

A criminal conviction may not automatically disqualify anyone wanting to be a volunteer. However, the steering group will need to assess whether any risks are posed. The following risk assessment form should be used if a volunteer discloses a conviction or when a DBS disclosure check reveals undisclosed convictions.

This risk assessment model is based upon guidance from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. It can be used to guide you to investigate the legal position, to consider any evidence of the risk and to investigate whether you can establish a way of working so that this is not an issue. You will need to record all of your assessments for each disclosure as well as recording your decision.

Risk assessment of DBS check following a disclosure



VOLUNTEER RECORD SHEET

Name of volunteer:

Name of Assessor:

RISK CRITERIA	Descriptions
Does the volunteer have one to one contact with children or other vulnerable groups?	It is illegal to employ some offenders in regulated positions with children & vulnerable adults
To what extent are you bound by other legal constraints?	For example employing people with motoring convictions such as dangerous driving as drivers
What level of supervision will the volunteer receive?	How will this reduce opportunities to re-offend
Does the volunteer have any direct responsibility for finance or items of value?	
Does the volunteer have any direct contact with the public?	
Will the nature of the task present any opportunities for the post holder to re-offend in the course of work?	
How serious was the offence, how relevant is it to the safety of person being visited and property?	
How long ago did the offence take place?	The age at which the offence took place might be a relevant consideration
Was there a one-off offence or a history of offending?	As above
Does the volunteer offer any relevant explanation about the circumstances that led to the offending (domestic situation, finances)	
Have there been any changes in circumstances since the offending that might reduce the likelihood of further offending?	
The degree of remorse expressed and evidence of individual's motivation to change	
Has the offence been de-criminalised?	
The country in which the offence was committed. Some activities are criminal in some countries but not in others	

Decision taken:

Signature: **Date:**

VOLUNTEER RECORD SHEET

GOOD
NEIGHBOUR
SCHEME

Step 8:

LAUNCHING YOUR SCHEME

Having completed all the hard work to prepare your scheme to work in your community it is important that you give some thought to how you launch it. This is an opportunity for further publicity and a chance to celebrate where you have got to.

It's often a good idea to try the scheme out for a few weeks before you launch it, just to make sure you have ironed out any difficulties. If something goes wrong early on people will lose confidence in the scheme, but any project has a few gremlins that need to be worked out. Once you are happy all is well and you've made any tweaks you need to you'll feel more confident too.

If you have a 'champion' who is well known in the area try and make sure they can attend, and contact your local ward member to come along too. Publish the launch widely with information about the 'Who, What, Where and Why' information included. Do let the local press know about your launch and if they cannot attend take photos yourselves and complete a concise write up about your launch to send to them. Remember to gain people's consent for being included in photographs and their names which can be sent with the photos to the press.

Publicity

Publicising your scheme well is very important both potential users and volunteers need to know that the scheme exists, what help it can provide, how it works and how to contact the co-ordinators.

The telephone numbers of the scheme or the co-ordinators can be put in the parish and village magazines, can be distributed on leaflets or cards to keep by the phone, or can be part of a special welcome pack or booklet produced as part of the scheme, which will also outline the services offered. These should be distributed throughout

the area covered, ideally to every household, and should be kept up to date, with the correct names and contact numbers and accurate scheme details.

Possible ways to promote the scheme include:

- Through door-to-door leafleting of all households
- Posters throughout the village/town
- GP surgeries
- Local shops, garages, supermarkets and other businesses
- Articles in the parish magazines
- Information on parish and community websites (including county information/advice sites)
- A website/Facebook page and messages on twitter
- Promotion through local organisations, such as Age UK, Local Authority and Emergency services and voluntary groups
- Talks to local clubs, such as the Women's Institute, social clubs and so on
- Newsletters
- Welcome Packs
- Word of mouth



Word of mouth is often the best form of publicity, and both users and volunteers should be encouraged to share their experiences and inform others of the benefits of the scheme. It is worth asking users for feedback and asking permission to quote some of the more positive comments in articles and advertising material.

A short newsletter or leaflet is a good way of advertising the scheme, relating success stories, and updating volunteers and users about the scheme, other support groups, new legislation and other items of interest.

It's very important that you let local health and social care services know you are there to help people locally. Go and talk to your local GPs so they get the message about how you can help and how your system works. Contact the hospital too – often people are kept in hospital longer than they might be because hospital staff are nervous about discharging them if there is no one to look in on them, and this is something a scheme can do very well. This doesn't mean you are acting as a service for the NHS, it simply means they know they can contact you and find out if you could help, which might make the difference between someone staying in their own home and community or going into care.

Monitoring & Evaluating Your Scheme

Once you've set up your project you will need to undertake some form of evaluation to make sure that everything is going well and that you are achieving what you set out to achieve. It can also help you consider opportunities for development or improvement. You can do this by monitoring the ongoing activity and evaluating the whole network. These are two separate activities.

Monitoring means regularly collecting information on your project and analysing it to see how things are going. To do this, you can look at facts such as how much money you have spent, the number of participative volunteers and the number of contacts you received. In some cases it may be a contractual requirement, i.e. a condition of grant. So, for example, if you told your funder in your application that you will work with 25 people from a certain geographical area, then you will need a mechanism to collect this information.

To make any form of monitoring easier, you should develop a template to help you collect information about your scheme right at the start. There may be a number of reasons why you would want to do this and not only to allow you to report back to funders. It may be just to keep a record of who your clients are, so you can look for gaps in your provision, it may simply be so you can analyse your service so that you can improve it. Whatever the reason is, it's a good idea to design the template right at the start of the scheme. This information is also useful to pass on information to other volunteers – for example it could be a little bit of important information that all volunteers need to know.

But it's just as important to consider less measurable things, like how you've supported people, how have you made things easier for them,. Focus on the difference you have made as that's what will keep morale high, gather new volunteers and show partners how valuable your scheme is. You could consider a feedback form for clients to complete.

Monitoring and evaluation should happen from the very beginning of your scheme. It will give you a basis to make decisions on how to go forward and help highlight any gaps in the network as well as any changes you may need to make along the way if you find something isn't going well.

Evaluation is a review of the whole project, looking at its overall value and effect. You can use the information you've collected during monitoring, but you'll also need feedback from volunteers and people they've supported. Carrying out an evaluation will help you see how and where your project has been successful. It will let your funder's see how well funds have been used, and what the benefits of your network have been to those involved. You can also use this information to improve future projects. If you need help with evaluation please contact the Herefordshire Council Project Development team.

For more information on evaluation:
Also see www.ces-vol.org.uk this is a good link – but there are others you could use.

GOOD NEIGHBOUR SCHEME

A toolkit for setting up a scheme

Put together by a partnership of
The Diocese of Hereford
and **Herefordshire Council**.

 THE DIOCESE OF HEREFORD

 **Herefordshire
Council**

