



**Carers Link**  
**Lancashire**  
IMPROVING LIFE FOR CARERS



**carerstrust**  
a Network Partner

# Volunteer Handbook





# Welcome to Carers Link Lancashire

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to Carers Link Lancashire. Through volunteering you are helping make a positive difference to the lives of many people. Your contribution is vital to our work.

This booklet is intended to provide an introduction to Carers Link Lancashire and will form part of your induction. It gives a brief overview of the relevant policies and procedure we have in place to ensure your wellbeing as our volunteer. Copies of all our policies can be obtained by asking the Volunteer Co-ordinator.

## Our Vision

Carers Link Lancashire's vision is to be a values and outcomes driven organisation that promotes:

- a world where carers feel valued as individuals and for their contribution to society;
- carers are able to lead fulfilling lives with a good quality of life;
- carers are encouraged and enabled to look after themselves, their health and wellbeing, physically, emotionally and psychologically

## Our Mission and Values

**Our mission is to make a positive difference to the lives of carers.**

The **Values** that we observe to guide us to achieve our vision and purpose are:

- Respect for the people we serve and work with
- To act with integrity
- To be non-judgmental
- To develop and maintain collaborative partnerships

# Equality & Diversity



We are proud of the action we take in challenging prejudice and tackling all forms of discrimination, including harassment, bullying and victimisation. Carers Link Lancashire works hard to develop an inclusive culture that values the diversity of its staff, volunteers and service users.

The aim of our Equality & Diversity Policy is to ensure that no job applicant, employee, volunteer or service user is discriminated against either directly or indirectly on the ground of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion, belief, sex or sexual orientation. As an organisation, we also recognise that incidents can occur and we will take prompt and appropriate action whenever we discover them.

## Training and Support

Your main point of contact for any questions, comments, updates or support related to your volunteering role is the Volunteer Co-ordinator who can be contacted on **01254 387444** or by emailing **[info@carerslinklancashire.co.uk](mailto:info@carerslinklancashire.co.uk)**.

You will have regular informal contact and 1 -1 meetings with the Volunteer Co-ordinator alongside being invited to regular meetings and events.

As a volunteer:

- We will respect your individual skills, knowledge and experience and aim to offer our support in line with your individual needs and wishes
- We will provide any training you need to allow you to confidently carry out your volunteer role
- You will be required to attend the mandatory Volunteer Induction and training programme
- You will be required to attend ongoing 'refresher' training relevant to your role e.g. safeguarding children and vulnerable adults



## Code of Conduct

- Cold food and snacks may be eaten at a desk when necessary, but please make use of space in the kitchen or therapy room where possible. Please take care with drinks next to computers
- Signing in/out – please ensure you sign in on arrival and sign out on departure from the building for health and safety reasons
- You are responsible for ensuring all your details are up to date such as your name, address, telephone number, next of kin etc
- We operate a strict no smoking policy. When at the office please smoke away from the building (ask a member of staff to show you an appropriate place). Please do not smoke whilst working with service users in the community or whilst on home visits, even if the carer or cared for does
- Conflict of interests – please let us know if you arrange or undertake any work or activity which could be considered to be in conflict with or affect in any way the interests of Carers Link Lancashire
- Do not remove material or equipment of any kind from Carers Link Lancashire without prior permission. Please notify a member of staff of any incident causing damage to property
- Please ensure that your personal hygiene and appearance is of a very high standard
- Please do not accept gratuities, gifts, loans or other benefits from service users, their friends/families, suppliers or professionals without the prior permission of the Volunteer Co-ordinator.

## Expenses & Timesheets



Carers Link Lancashire will reimburse you for approved out of pocket expenses e.g. travel, car parking, refreshments, wholly and necessarily incurred in the course of your volunteering.

Each month you will also be expected to submit a timesheet, recording all the volunteering hours you have undertaken for that month. You will be shown how to record this during your induction.

Claim forms & timesheets can be obtained from the Volunteer Co-ordinator and must be submitted no later than the 7th day of the month. These will then be paid by BACS payment.

## Information for Drivers

Should you use your own car when volunteering you are required to provide the following original documents before you begin volunteering and on an annual basis thereafter:

- Current MOT certificate and tax disc
- Paper and card driving licence and current vehicle insurance certificate with 'business use' clearly indicated

You should notify your insurers of the exact nature of the business use insurance required. Most insurance companies do not make any charge for this. A copy of these documents will be retained on your volunteer file as in the event of any accident, irrespective of fault, Carers Link Lancashire's own Public Liability Insurers will require to see evidence of these documents.

You must keep the car well maintained, regularly serviced and in a clean and tidy condition. You must also ensure that the vehicle meets legal requirements for use on public roads at all times and check it thoroughly at appropriate intervals for this purpose. Please notify us of any points added to your licence or driving related convictions as they arise.



# Computers

## **INFORMATION SECURITY**

Please take the appropriate steps to guard against unauthorised access to, alteration, accidental loss, disclosure or destruction of data. For example, locking your screen when you leave your computer, saving documents before closing the system, care in deleting files, not forwarding information to any personal or unauthorised computers etc.

Please do not divulge your password to anyone else (other than the appropriate member of Senior Management), nor should you gain access or attempt to gain access to information stored electronically which is beyond the scope of your authorised access level.

## **INTERNET AND EMAIL**

The email and internet system is intended to allow more effective communication and information related to the business of Carers Link Lancashire.

If you wish to use the internet or email system for personal use please speak to the Volunteer Co-ordinator beforehand.

## **COMPUTER SOFTWARE**

Because of potential virus infection and consequent damage to Carers Link Lancashire, you must not load any software into any computer via any source, including memory sticks, flash drives, pen drives, or any portable memory devices, without the prior approval of a member of staff.

# Confidentiality

Carers Link Lancashire believes that confidentiality is essential to ensure that any person using our services has full confidence that any personal information given will remain within the organisation and used only for the sole purpose of which it is given. In no circumstances should details which enable a service user to be



identified be made public. If any unauthorised release of confidential information is imparted it will result in disciplinary action.

The principle of confidentiality also extends to any information about the internal affairs of Carers Link Lancashire.

Carers Link Lancashire recognises that exceptional circumstances may arise in which a breach of confidentiality must be considered. These circumstances are when there are concerns an individual is at risk of harming themselves or others, or are at risk of harm from others, including where it would be against the law not to do so e.g. act of terrorism. This includes physical, emotional, sexual and financial harm and neglect.

During your induction you will receive further information about confidentiality & safeguarding along with what to do in the event you feel a safeguarding or confidentiality incident arises.

## Health & Safety

Your health and safety as a volunteer is paramount to the organisation including providing you with a safe working environment and ensuring all aspects of your volunteering role is safe. We will always endeavour to ensure and protect your wellbeing and safety whilst volunteering for Carers Link Lancashire.

If you become aware of any potential hazardous or unsafe conditions, you should have no hesitation in raising them with us.

On the following pages is important information relating to:

- Good practice
- Lone working
- Home visits



## **SAFETY DO'S AND DON'T**

Some rules will be explained to you by the Volunteer Co-ordinator or by an experienced employee or volunteer. If you are unsure about health and safety issues do not be afraid to ask.

### **DO**

- Make sure that you really understand what to do before you operate any piece of equipment or machinery however simple, on your own
- Make sure that you use proper methods for lifting and handling including keeping your back straight. If anything is too heavy for you to lift on your own, please do not do it or ask someone to help you
- Clean up after yourself: your untidiness or carelessness may cause injury to someone else
- Ensure that you contribute to minimising the risk of spreading infections through regular hand-washing
- Take care at all times for the safety of yourself and others
- Report any hazards or injury, however slight, to the Volunteer Co-ordinator, Office Manager or another staff member as soon as possible

### **DON'T**

- Attempt to operate any machinery or equipment without taking prior instructions
- Tamper with any electrical wiring or equipment
- Leave things lying around on desks or on the floor
- Obstruct fire exits

## **INCIDENT/NEAR MISS/ACCIDENT REPORTING**

An incident/accident is an unplanned event, which may or may not result in injury. Those that do not result in injury are called near misses. Reporting a near miss allows action to be taken before an injury occurs.

If you or someone you are supporting has a near miss or an accident you must report it to the Volunteer Co-ordinator as soon as possible or another staff member in their absence, even if no action needs to be taken at the time.





## ACCIDENTS – FIRST AID

Any injury requiring treatment should be dealt with and recorded by one of Carers Link Lancashire's trained first-aiders. Names of qualified first-aiders are posted on notice boards throughout the building. You should also acquaint yourself with the locations and contents of the nearest first aid box.

You must report and enter into the Accident Book all accidents, no matter how small.

## LONE WORKING

Carers Link Lancashire has a lone working policy and will avoid the need for you to work alone where reasonably practicable. Where lone working is necessary, we will take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of those working alone is safeguarded.

We will never compromise our volunteers safety and will never ask you to lone work with unacceptable risks. We will ensure that all lone working volunteers are thoroughly trained at the commencement of volunteering and receive regular monitoring and supervision.

Whenever lone working, you must ensure you adhere to our policies and procedure including contacting the office on **01254 387444** when finishing any session, this is called undertaking your **END CALL**. Lines are open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.30pm. Should you undertake lone working outside these times you will be provided with the contact number for a member of the Senior Management Team.

## HOME VISITING

If you are volunteering as part of the Sitting in Service then we recognise that you will be undertaking home visits. A full risk assessment has been conducted by the Senior Management team to cover all home visits (a copy is available upon request).

**At Sitting in Service appointments it is YOUR responsibility to ring the office at the end of EVERY appointment. If we do not hear from you at the scheduled time then we will instigate the Home Visit procedure which ultimately involves calling the emergency services if we cannot contact you.**



## Safeguarding Concerns

It is the policy of Carers Link Lancashire to act where there are concerns about the safety of children and vulnerable adults. As part of your role, it is mandatory to complete Carers Link Lancashire's safeguarding training. This is a compulsory part of your induction process. Failure to complete our training will unfortunately mean you are unable to volunteer for us.

If you have a safeguarding concern where you feel any party is at risk, you should immediately contact the Volunteer Co-ordinator on **01254 387444**. If they are not available please ask to speak to a member of the Senior Management Team

## Wellbeing

Volunteers registered with Carers Link Lancashire can take advantage of the go2 Carers Leisure scheme which enables you to access the following:

- Discounted council run leisure facilities - We will provide you with a letter which you must take with you, along with some form of personal ID
- Discounted services at private businesses who have agreed to work with us to support our carers and volunteers. To issue you with your card we will require you to provide us with a passport sized photo.

Both these schemes (letter and card) are only valid for 12 months and must be renewed. It is your responsibility to keep a check on that renewal date. For more information contact the Volunteer Co-ordinator on **01254 387444**.

A full list of these providers can be found on our website at **[www.carerslinklancashire.co.uk](http://www.carerslinklancashire.co.uk)** or is available in a paper copy from your Volunteer Co-ordinator. From time to time other wellbeing schemes and activities become available so please ensure you read your newsletter on a regular basis.

## Information & Events



As a Volunteer with Carers Link Lancashire you will receive a regular newsletter keeping you up-to-date about:

- Upcoming social events
- Volunteering opportunities
- Training
- Important information

We would ideally like to send this via email so please ensure we have your up to date email address.

## Disciplinary Procedure

Carers Link Lancashire has a disciplinary procedure which will be implemented if the need arises. In most instances, after establishing the facts, we would hope that talking over the matter between parties involved would be sufficient. If further action is necessary, verbal and written warnings would be issued at the appropriate times and a record kept as appropriate within our files.

## Grievance Procedure

Carers Link Lancashire has a formal grievance procedure that allows you to formalise any issues you have with your volunteering role. Once again, we hope that any grievances will be resolved through informal discussions. In normal circumstances you would raise a grievance with the Volunteer Co-ordinator, but if this is impractical you should discuss the matter with the Services Manager.

This procedure gives all those involved a structure and ensures that each case is considered fairly. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout any investigations.

# ...and finally

We hope that you have found this booklet useful and that you now have more insight into Carers Link Lancashire.

If anything is unclear, or you would like to know more about any aspect of what we do, please ask. If you are comfortable that this booklet and the training you have received have given you the basis you need to volunteer at Carers Link Lancashire within the policies and procedures you have been shown, please sign the declaration alongside your Volunteer Co-ordinator and your volunteering can begin.

Good luck with your volunteering role with Carers Link Lancashire!

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