

**Nottinghamshire County Council**

**== DRAFT ==**

**Voluntary Car Scheme**

**Handbook**

OCTOBER 2011

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# Nottinghamshire County Council- Voluntary Car Scheme Handbook

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## 1. Introduction

Thank you for offering your time and energy as a Volunteer Driver with your local Voluntary Car Scheme (VCS) we hope that you will find the role rewarding.

Voluntary Car Schemes (VCS) provide the opportunity for car drivers to offer practical and convenient transport for local people, who have difficulty using mainstream public transport.

This handbook provides volunteers with details of the scope of the work and the requirements of the scheme, the conditions that apply and the care standards that must be provided to clients. It also provides schemes with details of best practice and should be read in conjunction with the Grant Aid Agreement and Conditions and funding criteria for financial support from Nottinghamshire County Council which is issued to schemes as a condition of grant aid funding.

Since VCS are a voluntary service as such, the offer of voluntary work to the volunteer does not constitute any contractual arrangement or contract of employment. However, by way of reimbursement of costs, a mileage allowance for journeys undertaken, and any agreed expenses incurred, will be paid at a rate not exceeding the current HMRC approved mileage rate.

All volunteers are required to declare a clear understanding of the volunteer status by signing and returning a copy of this Handbook.

All voluntary car schemes in receipt of Grant Aid funding from the Council are expected to achieve the Council's Quality Standard, details of which are provided in the Grant Aid Agreement, and communicated with volunteers as appropriate.

## 2. Recruitment and Selection Criteria

This is managed by the scheme Coordinator. All drivers should complete a Driver's Registration Form. (See example attached).

Applicants must hold a full EU driving licence with no more than 3 penalty points and own a car that is in a clean and suitable condition for the carriage of passengers. A current, valid MOT certificate, insurance indemnity must be held and will be inspected at interview and then annually

Volunteers should ideally also have the use of a mobile phone; and make the number known to the Scheme Co-ordinators to enable communications whilst volunteering.

The driver should agree to notify the scheme of any change to their medical condition or endorsements on their licence that may affect their suitability to drive.

Two references should be requested. One must be an employer or former employer another personal referee but not a family member. It is a requirement of Council grant funding that the scheme arrange to carry out as standard a CRB check all volunteers as they will be working one to one with potentially vulnerable people. All appointments should be made through a process of interview and driving assessment.

If there are any doubts about the vehicle's suitability, then examiner may wish to refer the vehicle for an independent mechanical check.

Successful applicants will be issued with a starting pack and relevant documents, including this VCS handbook, claim forms, ID badge and car sticker.

Applicants must have at least 2 years driving experience.

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## 3 Induction / Training

Having applied successfully, arrangements will be made with the driver for an induction meeting. This involves the completion of the Schemes VCS Induction checklist by the driver and VCS co-ordinator and includes an introduction to the role. There will be a documentation check, and this handbook will be issued.

During the Induction, training for VCS drivers will be discussed and the necessary arrangements made for attendance. This training will be part of the national MIDAS standard and delivered in one or more sessions.

MiDAS provides both classroom-based theory training and an on-road driving assessment for all minibus drivers and additional training on passenger assistance and the use of wheelchair accessible vehicles, for drivers who will be transporting passengers with disabilities.

For further information on Midas training can be found [www.ctauk.org.training/midas.aspx](http://www.ctauk.org.training/midas.aspx).

We do expect drivers to also read and understand the content of the Handbook, which we hope will come to be regarded as a reference guide.

## 4. Documentation required

The following documents will be checked annually by the local VCS Co-ordinator and copies will be taken to keep on file:

- Vehicle Registration document
- Insurance details
- MOT Certificate
- Driving licence

Following recent work by the Community Transport Association the Association of British Insurers (ABI) has published a list of insurance companies showing how they treat volunteers driving their own car for the benefit of the community. Many of the companies on the list no longer charge a fee or require any letter to be sent to inform them of the fact that a policy holder will be starting to volunteer. Further information is available on the [Association of British Insurers \(ABI\) website](#). You may still require written confirmation via a declaration form to confirm the level of insurance cover in place is sufficient for the role and in particular the anticipated number of miles. Please see appendix 4 and 5 for a sample of the letter and declaration.

## 5. Vehicles

Vehicles should give passengers a good impression of a Scheme, so we expect cars to be clean and odour free at all times.

VCS vehicles must have front and rear seat belts,

Please notify the scheme Co-ordinator if you change your vehicle at any time, so records can be updated.

## 6 Driving Skills

**We might think that we have good driving and road awareness skills but that might not be the case.**

All volunteers will be offered the opportunity to have an observed drive prior to commencement as a volunteer. And from time to time, volunteers may be asked to undertake an observed drive

## 7. Health and Safety

VCS drivers have a responsibility to ensure a healthy and safe environment for themselves and their passengers. If at anytime you feel that you cannot meet a particular passenger's needs, please inform your Co-ordinator and avoid taking risks if client is clearly not suitable for car transport. (See 16)

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Volunteers must abide by current laws regarding the use of mobile phones whilst driving.

## 8. Code of Conduct and its purpose

The efficiency and reputation of any service, no matter how well organised and equipped depends upon the conduct and efficiency of its representatives. You have a responsibility to perform your task within the limits laid down in the scheme's procedures and the training that you have received. Actions outside these limits could have legal implications for:

- The client
- Yourself
- The Scheme

Drivers have a duty to make sure that they understand the rules governing conduct adopted by the Scheme with regard to the law, standing operating procedures, operational code of conduct, and the scheme's policies and procedures including disciplinary and grievance procedures.

Any breach of the code of conduct by a member of the VCS team will be regarded as a potential disciplinary matter accordingly; the scheme should reserve the right to cease to use the driver's services.

We ask VCS drivers to promote a positive image at all times and to adhere to the guidelines in this handbook.

Do remember that you are in a position of trust

If you are involved in any form of inquiry or complaint, make sure you truthfully give all the facts.

No alcohol or medicines likely to cause drowsiness should be consumed before or during transportation of clients. Drivers must not smoke in the vehicle whilst undertaking activity on behalf of the Scheme.

## 9. Identification

All drivers will be issued with an identity card that they should carry with them whilst on duty. Car stickers will also be issued and should be displayed **clearly** whilst on volunteer car service duties.

## 10. Health/Physical Fitness

VCS drivers are sometimes required to assist clients into and out of the vehicle. There may also be suitcases, walking aids and personal belongings to be carried for clients. It is therefore essential that volunteers be in good general health.

VCS drivers will be asked to complete a health questionnaire periodically and may be required to attend a medical examination as deemed necessary.

VCS drivers will ensure, as far as possible, that they are fit for the duties involved. The Scheme requires drivers to notify them should they develop any injury or illness which may affect their ability to continue.

It is expected that all drivers will be legally fit to drive when reporting for duty. If you have recently consumed alcohol or have been through a period of physical or emotional stress, please consider your fitness to drive, as the after effects can affect your ability to drive

## 11. Smoking

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In the interest of drivers and their clients, smoking in vehicles used for VCS duties is not permitted.

## **12. Availability and Allocation of Work**

VCS drivers are asked to nominate days and times when they will be available for the allocation of journeys. Drivers are at liberty to change their availability but are requested to give the Co-ordinator at least two working days notice of these changes. While we would hope to identify suitable work, during your stated availability times, we cannot guarantee to provide voluntary work during those times

## **13. Hours and Days of Work**

*Driver working hours are regulated and subject to the law. In this respect, it is best practice to work an average 37.5hrs per week and not exceed 48 hours per week.*

## **14. Lone Working**

An example of good practice is the RCAN Lone Working Policy this can be modified to fit your own organisation. A copy of this is available on request.

## **15. Personal Service**

Clients should receive a personalised service from VCS drivers. They must be treated with kindness and respect at all times and given as safe and comfortable a journey as possible.

If a client requires lifting, they are not suitable for transport with the VCS and the Office should be informed immediately.

## **16. Difficulties on the road**

If in the course of a journey any difficulty is experienced i.e. problems finding an address, difficulties at the address, or a vehicle breakdown, the Office should be contacted immediately and appropriate advice sought.

## **17. Confidentiality**

All volunteers are requested to respect client confidentiality at all times and not divulge any personal information to any third party.

## **18. Cessation of Volunteer Role**

Any driver resigning from VCS duties must inform the VCS co-ordinator and return any documents, equipment and identity badge. Since the VCS is an entirely voluntary activity, either party may terminate the arrangement without notice. However, in the interests of continuity of service, both parties should give appropriate notice of termination wherever possible

The VCS may decide to cease the arrangement for a number of reasons. The following are examples of what might result in the decision to do so:

- Failing to comply to VCS policies and procedures
- Breach of Code of Conduct
- Bringing the Scheme or Council into disrepute
- Criminal or driving convictions
- Inappropriate patient contact
- Over claiming mileage / expenses

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This list is not exhaustive and can be determined by any action deemed by the Scheme or Council to have a detrimental impact on its reputation.

## **19. Seat Belts/Carriage of Children**

The Road Traffic Act 1988 requires that drivers and passengers in the front or rear of a motor vehicle wear a seatbelt unless they have a Medical Exemption Certificate\*\*. It is the responsibility of the driver to ensure that all passengers conform to the law with regard to seatbelt use". See appendix 3

\*\* Known as a Certificate of Exemption from Compulsory Seat Belt Wearing" which can only be issued by a Medical Practitioner, following a full and thorough clinical assessment.

Children/babies should be carried in approved child seats \*

*\*Supplied by the Scheme on request – prior arrangement should be made with VCS.*

## **20. Folding wheelchairs, Luggage**

Drivers may occasionally be asked to carry a client's own folding wheelchair, and/or light luggage. Please ensure that this has been pre-booked with the Office, and that you are happy to comply safely with the request.

## **21. Carriage of Animals**

Animals must not be carried whilst vehicles are being used for transport of clients. The exception to this rule would be the conveyance of a Registered Guide Dog (after permission was sought from the Scheme). Volunteers would not be expected to transport Guide or Hearing dogs without prior agreement.

## **22. Clients property**

If on completing a journey a driver finds a client has left behind personal belongings, the Scheme Co-ordinator should be informed immediately so that arrangements can be made to return the property.

## **23. Road Accident/Incident**

Any accident or incident involving a client should be reported to the office immediately. The Client should either be advised to contact their GP, taken to the nearest A & E Casualty department or an ambulance called via 999, depending on the seriousness of the injury. The appropriate form, from the office must then be completed.

## **24. Standards of driving and mechanical efficiency of car**

The Scheme will not in anyway be accountable to cover the cost of any fines or endorsements obtained by the volunteer in respect of their duties as a volunteer. It is expected that volunteers will remain within the law at all times.

All clients will be transported safely, efficiently and as comfortably as possible

All journeys should be undertaken within the law, obeying speed limits and all traffic signs

Drivers are expected to maintain their vehicles to the highest standard. Vehicles can be inspected by the local manager at anytime.

Vehicles over three years old must be covered by an MOT test certificate.

## **25. Driving Laws/Parking**

Any contravention of the law is your responsibility, although drivers should park as near as possible to the Client's home, this does not give exemption from parking restrictions.

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## **26. Routes**

VCS drivers should ensure journeys are completed using the most direct route, allowing for road conditions and circumstances. Your Co-ordinator will endeavour to provide postcodes for Sat Nav use, but there are instances where Sat Navs take a longer but quicker route, which may not necessarily be appropriate

Any necessary deviation to the most direct route should be noted, and reasons given against the relevant journey on the claim form.

## **27. Abortive Journeys 'no shows'**

The scheme co-ordinator should be notified as soon as possible if a client is a 'no show' or does not travel and booking documentation amended accordingly.

## **28. Handling Cash/Gratuities**

VCS drivers should ensure that all cash is securely stored

VCS drivers must not accept gratuities and any additional payments made to the driver by the client should be treated as a donation to the scheme.

## **29. Driver reimbursement**

The driver can be reimbursed for the running costs of their vehicle. HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) have established an Approved Mileage Allowance Payment (AMAP) rate of 45 pence per mile for the first 10,000 miles then 25 pence for every mile thereafter. In addition the driver can receive a further 5 pence per mile per passenger when the passengers are carried as part of their volunteering. The total received, however, must not exceed the running costs of the vehicle

It is not advisable to pay the driver more than the AMAP because any payment over this amount would be considered to be profit and subject to tax. It may also invalidate the driver's insurance and take the car's operation outside car sharing and into private hire legislation.

### *Further reading and information*

The HMRC web site has detailed information about volunteer driver expenses at <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/mileage/volunteer-drivers.htm> . This includes details of how to calculate actual motoring expenses.

Whether the driver is collecting fares, or if the organisation is billing passengers, receipts must always be given. If the organisation is VAT registered and they invoice the passenger for travel then the invoice must include VAT. VAT would not be applicable where the organisation acts solely as a contact point to match passenger to driver and the driver takes complete responsibility for the expenses paid to them by the passenger.

## **30. Further Information**

Further advice and information about all aspects of Voluntary Car Scheme operation is available from the Community Transport Association - [www.ctauk.org](http://www.ctauk.org) including access to the CTA Member's advice line and leaflets covering a range of related topics.

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### Appendix 1

#### **Declaration:**

I understand that registration as a VCS driver will be made subject to the accuracy of information given on my VCS application and CRB Disclosure application. To withhold, falsify or omit relevant information, may lead to removal of my registration as a Volunteer driver if duly registered.

I have read and understood the VCS Handbook and agree to abide by the terms and conditions therein.

I understand that the Voluntary Car Service is, as stated, a voluntary role and, as such, does not constitute any contractual arrangement or Contract of Employment, specified or implied, with xxxxxxx.

I also understand that as a volunteer, I declare a clear understanding of the Volunteer status by signing and returning a copy of this Handbook.

I confirm that as a Volunteer I may cease to be available as a volunteer at any time, and the xxxxxxxx may also cease to use me as a volunteer without being required to give any formal notice.

In the event of cessation of use as a volunteer, I agree that I will return all items issued and belonging to the xxxxxxxxx within 14 working days.

NAME..... SIGNATURE..... DATE.....  
(Please print)

**Two copies of the Handbook have been provided. One for your retention and one which must be returned to the VCS Co-ordinator with declarations signed and dated.**

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## Appendix 1a

### **Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974:**

Within the organisation certain roles, including volunteer roles, are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974). As such, the Scheme reserves the right to decline an application or to cease to utilise an existing volunteer should a CRB check determine that the individual has a criminal record.

- Prior to being selected as a volunteer driver you will be requested to consent to the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) carrying out a search to determine any convictions against you.
- By signing below you agree to an enhanced CRB check being carried out.
- Have you ever been convicted of an offence or received a formal caution / bound over order?

Please circle Yes or No and sign to agree to a CRB check.      Yes / No

NAME..... SIGNATURE..... DATE.....  
(Please print)

### **Data Protection Act 1998:**

As a result of being accepted as a volunteer with the Scheme it is necessary to hold data on our systems in respect of your voluntary activity. Such data includes your name, address, telephone numbers, skills, driving details, car insurance, MOT and training records etc. We will also hold sensitive personal data including details of your physical or mental health or condition (Health Questionnaire / Medical).

The commitment or alleged commitment of any offence by you, any proceedings for an offence committed or alleged to have been committed by you including the outcome or sentence in such proceedings (CRB Check).

You are required to give your consent to the Scheme to hold and process personal data.

This personal data is held for the purpose of administration and management of your participating as a volunteer and Scheme business. Processing includes obtaining, recording or holding information or data and carrying out operations on the information of data. This data will not be forwarded to a third party, without prior consent, unless we are legally bound to do so.

I hereby consent to the Scheme holding and processing personal data, including sensitive personal data, based on the information provided above.

NAME..... SIGNATURE..... DATE.....  
(Please print)

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## Appendix 2

### **Contact Details**

xxxxx xxxx,  
xxxx,  
xxxx,  
xxxx

Tel: xxx

**VCS Coordinators:**      xxxx  
                                xxxx

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## Appendix 3

### (Road Traffic Act 1988, Section 14 & 15)

The table below summarises the main legal requirements for wearing seatbelts in cars, vans and goods Vehicles.

	<b>Front Seat</b>	<b>Rear Seat</b>	<b>Who is Responsible?</b>
Driver	Seat belt <b>MUST</b> be worn		<b>Driver</b>
Child up to 3 years	Correct child restraint <b>MUST</b> be used	Correct child restraint <b>MUST</b> be used.	<b>Driver</b>
Child from 3 <sup>rd</sup> birthday. Up to 135cm in height (approx 4' 5") or 12 <sup>th</sup> birthday - whichever is reached first	Correct child restraint <b>MUST</b> be used	Correct child restraint <b>MUST</b> be used.	<b>Driver</b>
Child over 135cm in height (approx 4' 5") or 12 or 13 years	Seat belt <b>MUST</b> be worn	Seat belt <b>MUST</b> be worn	<b>Driver</b>
Adult Passengers (i.e. over 14 years of age)	Seat belt <b>MUST</b> be worn	Seat belt <b>MUST</b> be worn	<b>Driver</b>

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### Appendix 4 – Sample of Insurance Declaration Letter

Name of Volunteer  
Address of Volunteer

Date

Dear Sirs

I write to inform you that I have applied to become a volunteer driver for xxxxxxxxx Scheme. This will involve transporting people on pre arranged journeys utilising my own car.

I am receiving mileage reimbursement in line with HMRC guidelines i.e. a non-profit making rate.

Before I commence this role, xxxxxxxx requires written confirmation from you on the attached declaration stating that you are aware of the role I will be undertaking and the extent of mileage. Also, that my policy covers such use without restricting it to social, domestic and pleasure use only.

I would be grateful if you could please complete and return the declaration to myself as soon as possible to enable me to forward this onto xxxxxxxxx and commence my voluntary role.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully

Name of Volunteer Car Driver

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**Appendix 5 – Sample of Insurance Declaration**

**xxxxxxxxxx Voluntary Car Scheme  
INSURANCE DECLARATION  
FOR  
VOLUNTARY CAR SERVICE DRIVERS**

<b>DATE</b>	
<b>POLICY HOLDER</b>	
<b>POLICY HOLDERS ADDRESS</b>	
<b>VEHICLE REGISTRATION NO.</b>	
<b>LEVEL OF COVER</b>	
<b>ESTIMATED ANNUAL MILEAGE</b>	
<b>POLICY NUMBER</b>	
<b>EXPIRY DATE</b>	
<b>INSURANCE PROVIDER</b>	
<b>ADDITIONAL COMMENTS</b>	

*(Name of Insurance Provider:)* .....  
declare that the above insurance covers the relevant passenger liability requirements of the  
**xxxxxxxxxx Voluntary Car Scheme**

Signed .....

Date .....

.....

**COMPANY STAMP**