Shinfield Voluntary Car Service

Registered Charity No. 1152423

A guide for potential Volunteers

Welcome

We extend a warm welcome to you and thank you for enquiring about voluntary work with the Shinfield Voluntary Car Service (SVCS).

Who we are

The Shinfield Voluntary Car Service is a well-established, registered charity. It was founded in 2009 to provide a local Community Transport Service.

All SVCS clients are registered with the Car Service and either live in the Parish of Shinfield or are patients of the Swallowfield Medical Practice. Our catchment area includes Spencers Wood, Three Mile Cross, Ryeish Green, Arborfield Cross, Beech Hill and Riseley.

What we do

The Car Service aims to assist local residents who can't easily get out and about, with trips to and from their appointments of a medical nature. For some people, getting to the doctor, dentist, optician, podiatrist or other healthcare professionals can be a major challenge. Our clients have difficulty in coping with ordinary public transport.

How the service operates

To provide the Car Service we rely on a group of dedicated volunteers.

Volunteer drivers use their own vehicles, which need to be suitable for carrying people who may not be able to get in and out of a car very easily. Drivers are reimbursed a tax-free mileage rate which contributes to the estimated cost of driving somewhere in terms of fuel, wear and tear and insurance. Drivers will be advised the current mileage rate on application.

A supportive Administrative Team is essential to the successful running of the Car Service. Office based Voluntary Bookings Officers handle telephone enquiries and journey requests, arrange trips for drivers and carry out other office activities. Bookings Officers are always work in pairs. Travel expenses are payable.

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How to Apply

Before making any commitment, potential volunteers should be reasonably sure that they would be able to give several months of continuous service.

If you're interested in proceeding with an application, then please complete an Application Form including a reference from someone who knows you well. The next stage is to come along for an informal meet up and chat with two of our management team.

Starting Work

Anyone who goes on to volunteer with us will become a registered member of the Shinfield Voluntary Car Service and receive the familiarisation or special training they need for their role.

Training

Voluntary Bookings Officers will receive training on our computer and manual bookings systems which are designed to be easy-to-use.

Voluntary Drivers will attend a training session and an observed drive with our own MiDAS accredited trainer. This is to help raise awareness of the best methods of helping to give SVCS passengers a safe and comfortable ride. Once training has successfully been completed, drivers are awarded a 'MiDAS Certificate for Voluntary Drivers'. This is a nationally recognised and transferable qualification.

Support

We hold meetings for all volunteers working in the Car Service where we get together to exchange experiences and ideas, plus we organise various social to meet up.

Volunteers are welcome to contact the manager at any time, to discuss suggestions and ideas, or to pop into the office for a cup of coffee and a chat.

However, if during their work, a volunteer does become concerned for any reason, they can discuss this in confidence with the manager who is there to provide liaison and support.

Identification

Voluntary Drivers are provided with an identification badge which we ask them to wear when carrying out their voluntary work.

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Attendance

Volunteers drivers are asked to keep the office informed of any forthcoming holidays and other planned absences so it can be entered in the Bookings Diary. The Bookings and Driving teams use 'What's App' messaging services to let each other know about any short notice unplanned absences requiring cover where possible.

Refreshments

SVCS provides free tea and coffee at the office for all volunteers. We usually have a good stock of biscuits too! There is kitchen on site with use of a fridge and dishwasher.

Drivers often call in when the Office is open.

Confidentiality

Volunteers will get to know details about clients and colleagues, including their names and addresses, so we ask all volunteers to sign a confidentiality agreement, which is found on the application form. Please do not hesitate to ask if you have any queries about this.

Data Protection

We safeguard our volunteers' personal information by treating it with strict confidentiality and store it in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) of 2018.

Volunteers are welcome to a copy of The Shinfield Voluntary Car Service Privacy Policy and can ask to view any information we keep about them.

Insurance

The Shinfield Voluntary Car Service has Public Liability and Employers Liability Insurance which covers all Car Service voluntary workers. In addition, each driver requires fully comprehensive motor insurance and to inform their insurance company that they will be driving in a voluntary capacity. Drivers may need to confirm with their insurance company that they will not be receiving any remuneration for their services. However, expenses are permissible for both insurance and HMRC tax purposes.

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Disclosure and Barring Service (D.B.S.) Screening Process

Anyone driving for the Car Service will require an 'Enhanced and Adult barred DBS Certificate'. This DBS screening process is free of charge to the applicant, and you will be given a DBS information pack. The turnaround time for the process can be around 6-8 weeks.

For new drivers who already have a DBS certificate and are registered for the DBS Update Service, we will check if it meets our requirements, to avoid completing a new request, if it is not necessary.

A manager needs to inspect the DBS certificate before a volunteer can start their driving role.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted in any buildings or vehicles whilst a volunteer is on duty.

And finally, ...

We hope you find this guide useful and thank you once again for your time and interest. If you do join us as a volunteer at the Shinfield Voluntary Car Service, we hope you find your work enjoyable and rewarding.