



The Bedwyns' LINK Scheme  
Registered Charity No. 1052579

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**

### **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**

Our statement of general policy is

- to provide adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from our activities;
- to consult with our volunteers on matters affecting their health and safety;
- to provide information, instruction and supervision for volunteers;
- to ensure all volunteers are competent to do their tasks, and to give them adequate information;
- to prevent accidents and cases of ill health related to our activities;
- to maintain safe and healthy working conditions; and
- to review and revise this policy as necessary at regular intervals.

In this Health and Safety Policy the following expressions shall have the following meanings:-

"Volunteer" means any person who volunteers in the activities of the BLS.

"Co-ordinator" means the person who for the time being is the point of contact between the client and the volunteer. Clients make their requests for assistance by telephone and the Co-ordinator is told by the client of any special requirements or if the client needs extra time to get from house to car. The Co-ordinator makes arrangements with a volunteer to carry out such tasks (and notifies the client accordingly).

"Chairperson" means the chairperson for the time being of the Management Committee.

"Management Committee" means the management committee of Trustees for the time being of the BLS.

### **Responsibilities**

Overall and final responsibility for health and safety is that of the Management Committee day-to-day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice is delegated to the Co-ordinator who is on duty on the day in question.

To ensure health and safety standards are maintained/improved, the following people have responsibility in the following areas:

## Chairperson

- Ensuring that this policy is maintained and updated as required;
- Ensuring that risk assessments are undertaken and maintained;
- Ensuring that the required insurance policies are in place;
- Working with the management committee to ensure that all requirements of this policy are met.

All volunteers have to:

- Co-operate with Co-ordinators and other volunteers on health and safety matters;
- not interfere with anything provided to safeguard their health and safety;
- take reasonable care of their own health and safety; and
- report all health and safety concerns to an appropriate person (as detailed in this policy statement).

### **Health and safety risks arising from our work activities**

Risk assessments have been undertaken by the Management Committee, and will be reviewed from time to time.

Action required to remove/control risks will be approved by the Management Committee. The Chairperson will be responsible for ensuring the action required is implemented.

Management Committee will check that the implemented actions have removed/reduced the risks.

Assessments will be reviewed every 12 months or when the activity changes, whichever is soonest.

### **Consultation with volunteers**

BLS will consult with volunteers on the following:

- any new measure which may substantially affect their health and safety in activities, for example new equipment, new ways of working, new external factors and new procedures;
- arrangements for getting competent people to help satisfy health and safety laws;
- the information we give to volunteers on the risks to health and safety arising from their volunteering activities, measures to reduce or get rid of these risks and what they should do if they are exposed to a risk, including emergency procedures;
- planning and organising health and safety information sessions; and
- the health and safety consequences for them of any new technology we plan to introduce.

The information provided to volunteers will be in a form that can be easily understood.

BLS will consult directly with volunteers through, written communications and face-to-face discussions.

BLS will allow enough time for volunteers to consider the issues and give informed responses. Volunteers are encouraged to ask questions, raise concerns and make recommendations.

BLS will take volunteers' views into account before a final decision is made, respond

to any concerns and questions raised and explain the final decision and why it has been taken.

### **Carrying out volunteers' driving activities and associated matters**

- Volunteers must only undertake tasks that have been organised by the Co-ordinators as the insurance provided by the Scheme does not cover any deviation from the authorised task. For this reason, volunteers must not arrange jobs directly with clients. Nor should volunteers arrange for another volunteer to do a task should the original volunteer find that he or she is unable to do the job. In these circumstances the volunteer must inform the Co-ordinators.
- Volunteers may withdraw from a situation of risk. If a volunteer arrives at an address and they feel uneasy that the situation is not what the Co-ordinator had led them to expect, they should walk quietly away and notify the Co-ordinator.

Examples of this might be if extra people were waiting to be transported, or if someone is manifesting signs of mental disturbance, or if anyone appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

- Age of Volunteers. When a volunteer attains the age of 79 years, it is necessary for a Drive Plus assessment to be undertaken to show they are still competent to drive. The driving assessment is to be completed every 3 years in line with driving licence renewal.  
NB reduced levels of insurance are in place for volunteers over age 85.
- General Health - The Management Committee has recommended that volunteers should be responsible for informing the Chair of BLS of any condition that may render them unfit to perform their required duties.
- Eyesight - Volunteer drivers must be aware of the need to have good eyesight: the committee expects those over 60 years of age to have regular eye checks. If glasses are prescribed for driving, these should be worn.
- Medication, etc. - Volunteer drivers are reminded of the effects of certain medication or alcohol on their driving ability. Drivers in any doubt as to their being in a fit condition for a task they have been asked to do should contact the Co-ordinator.
- Fatigue - Drivers will not normally be expected to travel single distances greater than 60 miles. Drivers should be aware of the dangers of fatigue and allow time for rest periods on longer journeys and whenever they feel it necessary.
- Road Traffic Accidents - All accidents should be reported to the Co-ordinator immediately. A subsequent report of events will be made by the driver to the Co-ordinator. An injury to any party must be reported to the police.
- Severe or Unusual Weather Conditions - Drivers should assess the road conditions before travelling. If they are in doubt about the wisdom of undertaking a journey they should contact the Co-ordinator, who will notify the client if their journey is to be cancelled. In the event of particularly cold weather drivers should take extra care to ensure the safety of their clients, for example carry a blanket and flask of hot drink with them.

- Difficult or challenging clients - Volunteers may withdraw from a situation of risk. In the event of a client presenting them with difficult or challenging behaviour during a journey, and if warnings are ignored, the driver is entitled to stop the car and request the client to get out. The Co-ordinator should be informed immediately.
- Physical assault as a result of 'car-jacking' or attempted theft - If at any time there is a perceived risk of assault or menace from a person outside, the doors should be locked
- Infirmity of Clients - The Co-ordinators should make drivers aware of their clients' infirmities and consider the level of assistance they may require. Drivers who consider, on arrival at their client, that it would be unsafe for them to take that client, should inform the Co-ordinator and decline the task. It is the responsibility of the driver to ensure the client safely reaches the reception area of the Clinic or Hospital the client is attending.
- Vehicle Condition - It is the responsibility of individual drivers to make sure that their vehicle is roadworthy and appropriate for the carriage of the particular client and has a current MOT certificate. In particular, but without limiting the generality of the foregoing, volunteers are responsible for checking:  
 Vehicle bodywork: Vehicle fluids (oil and water): Lighting: Tyres: Door Operation:  
 Seat Belt Operation: First Aid Kit if applicable
- Vehicle Insurance - It is the responsibility of the volunteer to ensure their insurance cover is adequate for the carriage of passengers for the purposes of BLS.
- Convictions - Volunteers, who incur any convictions, including motoring, must inform the Chair of BLS. Any convictions acquired will be considered by the Management Committee and suitability to continue as a volunteer will be assessed.

### **Instructions to Volunteers in Carrying out Tasks**

- Always wear your identity badge so as to assure clients of your role.
- Never give your home telephone number or address to clients. This is for your own protection and avoids you being approached directly by clients. If asked, give the BLS number 0771 700 6787.
- Limits of Duties\_ - Volunteers are expected only to act as a good neighbour and provide social contact. They should not provide personal care (e.g. washing, assisting with toilet or administering medication) or housework. If you are in any doubt about what a client asks you to do, please contact the Co-ordinator.
- Injury - Should an injury occur to a client in your care, seek medical assistance immediately if necessary, and report the incident to the Co-ordinator, who will then ask you to complete a written report of the incident. No driver should be required to manually handle the client into or out of their cars.
- If you are transporting a client, always wait for them and bring them home again, unless instructed otherwise. Many clients appreciate assistance in locating clinics they are attending, and the moral support of a volunteer while they wait to be called. Drivers

should not accompany the clients into the clinic or accept instructions or prescriptions from medical staff.

- Clients are at liberty to put into the donation envelope whatever they can afford. If clients seek guidance, it is suggested that they are told the journey costs BLS 45p per mile and the distance for the journey.
- Donation Envelopes - you should hand the envelope to the client for them to make their donation. You may be asked to do a one-way trip, in this case ask the client if they have been given an envelope - they may already have given their donation to another volunteer.

## **Insurance**

If you drive your car as a BLS Volunteer your normal car insurance will provide the same cover as usual. Volunteers must write to their insurance company advising them that they are volunteer drivers. The Chair of BLS has a sample letter, a copy of which is available on request. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to ensure their insurance cover is adequate for the carriage of passengers.

The BLS Scheme maintains an additional insurance which protects the volunteers' No Claim Discount (up to £250) and provides protection against Policy Excess Payments (up to £150).

The BLS Scheme has a Public Liability Insurance policy which protects both volunteers and client. The main elements of the policy are:

- Public Liability cover to protect against responsibility for personal injury or damage to property due to Negligence up to a maximum of £5,000,000.
- Personal Accident cover to benefit volunteer if they sustain an injury while engaged in a BLS Scheme activity. Full benefits would apply to anyone between the ages of 16-84 and reduced benefits to anyone over 85.
- Employers' Liability provides compensation for volunteers, suffering injury due to BLS Scheme's negligence up to a maximum of £10,000,000.

Additional Passengers in the Car - Passengers who are not a BLS Volunteer, Client or Client helper, should not be involved with BLS work.

## **Care Situations**

- Lone Working - Volunteers should be aware of their own vulnerability when alone with a client. Except in acute emergency, volunteers should not touch clients without first seeking their permission to do so. A phrase such as 'How may I best help you?' may be useful.
- Key Holding - Volunteers are not to retain client keys, although it is acceptable to collect a key from a key holder and then return it on completion of the task.

- Shopping and Money Handling - Volunteers should be aware of their vulnerability to false accusations when handling clients' money.

### **Safe handling and use of substances**

BLS does not currently use or store any substances which need a COSHH assessment.

### **Information, instruction and supervision**

Health and safety advice is available from the Chair of BLS.

Supervision of new volunteers will be arranged/undertaken/monitored by the Management Committee

The Management Committee is responsible for ensuring that our volunteers working at locations under the control of other employers are given relevant health and safety information.

### **Competency for tasks and training**

Induction information sessions will be provided for all volunteers by the Management Committee.

Job specific training is not required for any jobs within the BLS Scheme. Information sessions are recorded.

Information sessions will be identified, arranged and monitored by the Management Committee

### **Monitoring**

To check that safe working practices are being followed, we will:

- carry out inspections and spot checks;
- investigate any accidents or sickness absences that occur.

The Chairperson is responsible for investigating accidents.

The Chairperson is responsible for investigating activity related causes of sickness absences.

The Chairperson is responsible for acting on investigation findings to prevent a recurrence.

The Management Committee will be available to support the Chairperson with all tasks due to the legal obligation of the organisation.