

CAREPLUS

VOLUNTEER

HANDBOOK

As a volunteer, your time and commitment are very much appreciated. Your contribution to the work of CarePlus is invaluable - we couldn't do it without you!

This handbook is provided to ensure that the relationship between us works to our mutual satisfaction. Please read it through carefully because it forms an essential part of your induction. As a manual, it should tell you everything you need to know to take on any CarePlus volunteer task. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you need more details or clarification on any point.

Thank you.

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Registered Charity No. 1061356

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INTRODUCTION

MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of CarePlus is to provide a friendly, free service for older people within Bromley who may need befriending, social support and practical assistance. We work with individuals and alongside statutory agencies and voluntary services.

This is achieved through:-

- Providing direct Volunteer services
- Annually updating and circulating a Directory of local information
- Running Gentle Exercise classes
- Setting up inter-generational links, e.g. Salvation Army, Age Concern
- Advice on Community Services

Clients are referred to CarePlus via a number of sources:-

- Social Services and other Statutory Bodies
- Neighbours
- Family & Friends

- Volunteers
- The Six Supporting Churches within Bromley
- Other Voluntary Sector Organizations

INITIAL PROCEDURES

After we receive a referral the Coordinator of Volunteers pays a visit to the client to assess the level of need and whether CarePlus can help. A suitable volunteer is then matched with the client to carry out specific task(s), identified on a placement agreement. CarePlus carries insurance to protect and reassure the Volunteer and the client (and the organisation) when undertaking these agreed tasks.

STRUCTURE OF CAREPLUS

CarePlus has an Executive Committee which consists of a Chairperson and several Trustees, who have overall responsibility for:-

- Strategic planning
- Ensuring continued funding
- Reviewing policies in response to identifying changing needs
- Monitoring and verifying quality of service and overview of achievements
- Identifying legal responsibilities and acting accordingly
- Charity Commission accountability
- Employment matters and liaison with, and supervision of, paid staff

CarePlus employs two part-time paid staff: Coordinator of Volunteers, Jayne Gorey and Development Worker, Carol Ann Walters. When Jayne is on leave Jane Farrer will be port of call for all volunteers and can be contacted currently on CarePlus line 020 8290 4992; or her home no. 020 8460 8228.

THE ROLE OF THE VOLUNTEER

CarePlus seeks to help older people in need in the locality, through the provision of a volunteer service. Without Volunteers, CarePlus could not fulfil its key objective. Therefore CarePlus recruits and supports Volunteers who help local residents in a variety of ways: befriending; gardening; simple DIY or house-hold tasks (not cleaning); shopping; transport; wheelchair escorts and other appropriate tasks.

Partly for protection of the Volunteer's time and partly to ensure compliance with insurance cover, Volunteers are advised not to comply with ad hoc requests that come directly from clients unless the situation is an emergency. Volunteers should seek advice from the coordinator of volunteers if they receive such requests. While Volunteers are not employees, so are paid only expenses, CarePlus aims to treat each Volunteer as fairly and equally as it treats its paid staff.

If a client proffers payment for the services rendered at point of contact, the Volunteer must:-

- redirect the client to the Coordinator of Volunteers as we are pleased to accept donations to the general funds but Volunteers, by definition, cannot be paid;
- explain carefully to the client that the offer of money is appreciated but it must take the form of a general donation, not direct payment to the Volunteer.

CAREPLUS EXPECTS

CarePlus expects each Volunteer to:

- Be polite, courteous, reliable and honest.
- Treat the Client as the Volunteer would hope to be treated with sensitivity and respect.
- Be reliable in keeping appointments with clients. Where delay or cancellation is unavoidable, the volunteer must let the client know at once. If the client cannot be contacted, please inform the Coordinator of Volunteers, to enable them to be prepared for the client's query and to make alternative arrangements where necessary.

This means, for example, that:

- CarePlus business is treated as confidential — only to be discussed with the Coordinator of Volunteers.
- Any personal information given by a client to a volunteer must not be shared with other clients/volunteers.
- Volunteers must not be judgmental or impose their own beliefs, values or views.
- The client should not be burdened with the Volunteer's problems.
- Money should never be lent to clients.
- Volunteers should not let clients down - never promise something you can't deliver; be realistic about limitations.
- Volunteers should attend specially arranged Volunteer meetings whenever possible. CarePlus is always interested in hearing suggestions from Volunteers. Apart from being an opportunity for CarePlus to support its Volunteers, the meetings are also valuable in encouraging a sense of teamwork and of mutual support amongst volunteers, and enabling us to

learn from each other. Everybody is reassured to know that the same practices and procedures are being followed in each case.

VOLUNTEERS' GUIDELINES

Please read through all the Guidelines as there valuable points under all areas that will be beneficial in your role as a volunteer.

Always take your Identity card with you because:

- You are on official business for CarePlus, not in your own capacity.
- The client (or a relative or neighbour) may ask to see your ID card.
- If an emergency arises and you need to call for assistance (e.g. Police/ Ambulance) it helps to show that your involvement is formal rather than that of a bystander.

Please fill in your contact sheets

- After every visit please fill in the sheet. It is important that we keep an accurate record of hours in total worked by volunteers. As a charity aiming to gain any kind of funding, volunteer hours are very important and evidence of this may be required.

Keep a note of expenses

- Expenses should be claimed within the calendar month immediately following when they were incurred. Claim forms for mileage and other expenses such as car parks and phone calls directly in connection with your volunteer are available from Jayne Gorey.

There are at least two good reasons for claiming expenses:

- Whilst Volunteers are not paid and must not make any profit from their role, it is not fair to expect them to subsidise the work.
- When submitting funding applications and reports, CarePlus needs to reflect

accurately the true cost of running the project. If Volunteers regularly don't claim expenses, the figures are distorted accordingly.

In an emergency...

If you arrive and find the client unwell, ask the client for permission to call their G.P. and/or a relative. If the client has collapsed or becomes seriously unwell while you are there, dial 999 for an ambulance. Do not administer first aid unless trained to do so.

If you are unable to gain access at the expected time of your visit, follow these checks:-

- *ask neighbours or the housing warden for information*
- *try calling his/her name or knocking loudly on a window/frame instead of just pressing the doorbell - it may be broken or the client might be in a different room from usual*
- *try to see in through a window (within reason - don't endanger yourself or risk offending the client's right to reasonable privacy)*
- *attempt to telephone them yourself if you have a mobile with you or ask the Coordinator of Volunteers to follow up the problem*

If you are still unable to contact the client, the situation should be treated as potentially serious and you should:

- *think - does the client have a Carelink alarm? If so, try ringing 8466 0046 to see if there is any information available; the staff at Carelink may be able to contact the person or their next of kin.*
- *ring Bromley Social Service Direct on 020 8461 7777 enquire and/or draw the problem to their attention during normal office hours; and 8464 4848 out of hours. Please keep a note of the time of your call and to whom you spoke.*

Once you have informed Social Services and they have confirmed that they will follow up the matter, it is no longer your responsibility. Try to stay calm. It is very rare for anything to be seriously wrong. Usually, the client has simply confused the dates and is sleeping in a room with the door shut or has forgotten to let you know that they are out at another appointment. Do not attempt to break in yourself.

ACCIDENTS

- to yourself whilst gardening/DIY;
- whilst driving a client to shops/appointment;
- to yourself or to the client or client's property during a visit must ALWAYS be reported to the office immediately. Should an insurance claim be necessary, CarePlus has to show that records have been kept in accordance with the Insurer's requirements.

VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES FOR SPECIFIC TASKS

BEFRIENDING

Be clear who is befriending whom and from when. What exactly is the commitment? Work out in advance how much you are prepared to give. Stick to your intentions. Set time-limits; not more than about an hour per week, once a week, or perhaps longer if alternate weeks. Try to avoid the client becoming too dependent on a definite, regular visit by varying the times slightly - suit your own timetable as well as his/hers.

CarePlus tries to match client and volunteer who have similar experience/background wherever possible - try to build on this.

- the client may like to go out for a walk or into the garden to sit out if possible
- get the client talking about him/herself and sharing memories; asking to see a photo-album can be a good starting point
- foster a sense of trust and confidentiality
- the client may ask you to read letters, help reply, mark dates on calendar etc.

- be prepared to listen
- conversation is important
- show patience and kindness; be forbearing over repetition, but also develop your ability to draw the client out, and on to new interests.
- don't talk about your own problems - this is the client's time to share their concerns; only bring in yours if your experience is directly relevant and helpful, and part of developing mutual friendship
- be reliable; let the client know in advance if/when you're going to visit and stick to the agreed time

SAFETY

Nothing dangerous to be undertaken:

- don't attempt lifting, or moving heavy furniture
- know your own limitations (and your role as a volunteer), and don't be persuaded beyond them
- don't take on 'personal or intimate care' tasks for a client (see below)
- beware of emotional commitment/attachment; talk to the coordinator if you feel concerned about this
- do not accept money, jewellery etc. even if requested by the client to do so for safe-keeping
- report any accidents, to yourself or the client, to the Coordinator of Volunteers immediately

GENERAL

Be observant and vigilant. As you visit week by week, you may notice changes in the client's state of health and mind (for example, they may seem more forgetful, their mobility may be deteriorating or their self-care may be less good), or you may notice a deterioration in their accommodation (e.g. broken steps or windows, leaks etc.) Keep your ears open for other real problems surfacing in the course of conversation, and report any such concerns directly to the Coordinator of Volunteers. It may be that if the client is agreeable, an assessment from the statutory services will be needed in order to provide necessary help or services.

SHOPPING

- some clients like to accompany a volunteer to the shops as it may be one of the only times that they can get out. Other clients who are unable will inform you of what they need. Make sure to take a detailed list from the client, checking exactly what is meant by, e.g., ("Peas"-frozen, fresh, mangetout, tinned, dried? Quantity?), and ask for suggestions about alternatives. If your client is at all vague or forgetful, it may help to keep a standard shopping list of basic essentials as a guide, or check against last week's list.
- Check whether the client has a strong preference as to the shop used but, if you are combining shopping for clients, use the most convenient for you.

MONEY

- take a spare purse/wallet with you
- check that the client has the money to pay you; either take the money in advance and keep it separately, or keep the receipts very carefully for

re-imburement

- check if the client has a customer loyalty/discount card to be used
- keep your own record of transactions
- check that the client knows and understands that he/she has received change etc. and if necessary write this down for them as well as giving them the receipt
- when returning the shopping to the client's home, go through it all carefully and help put it away if necessary
- consult the Coordinator of Volunteers, if you come across any difficulties
- don't feel that you're isolated from any support

GARDENING AND DIY

Please note that CarePlus only gets involved in very light-duty DIY, i.e. not wiring or decorating, plumbing or anything remotely structural or otherwise dangerous.

Volunteer Gardeners need to use their initiative, within reason. However, this does NOT mean that a Volunteer should act on impulse and take on all sorts of gardening and DIY jobs at the client's behest.

Check what the client specifically requires for that particular visit, e.g.

- lawn-mow?
- annual cut-back of shrubs?
- light weeding/tidy up?
- how is rubbish to be disposed of?
- which light bulb or fuse needs replacing?
- where does the carpet need tacking down?

TRANSPORT AND ESCORT

This is always a very specific request and, therefore, instruction to a Volunteer; for example, to take a client, Mr. Bloggs, to "x" Surgery for 10 a.m. on the 16th. That said, Volunteers are advised to 'phone the client shortly before the appointment to confirm any last-minute details or changes.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

It is important, and a legal requirement, that each Volunteer is aware of Health and Safety guidelines for CarePlus.

The Executive Committee further recognises that the paid staff and volunteers equally have a duty of care placed on them by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to exercise personal responsibility and to do everything that is reasonably practicable to prevent injury to themselves and others by their actions or omissions.

All volunteers will be asked to declare if they have any condition that could be a risk to the clients.

The Health and Safety procedures are as follows:-

- i. The Coordinator of Volunteers carries out a risk assessment when first interviewing the client and visiting his or her premises.
- ii. The Volunteer Co-ordinator will give the Volunteer precise and clear instructions about their duties as regards safety of themselves and the clients.
- iii. The Volunteer has a Duty of Care to him/herself and the client and therefore must always
 - *observe Health and Safety instructions*
 - *familiarise him/herself with all safety procedures applicable to the agreed role*
 - *report any incidents to the Coordinator of Volunteers immediately whether or not there are injuries.*

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

All Volunteers need to be aware of the Complaints Policy and Procedure for CarePlus. We receive very few complaints but it is part of good practice and quality assurance that all those connected with CarePlus (i.e. Volunteers, paid staff and committee members/trustees) know how to handle a complaint properly. A full statement is available from the office. The Coordinator of Volunteers always mentions to clients, when first assessed, that they may make a complaint (or suggestion) at any time. Some extracts follow which give a general outline.

1. CarePlus aims to ensure a high standard of care is provided to all clients, Some clients may wish to draw attention to aspects of their care about which they are unhappy. The executive committee and the paid staff need to respond quickly and constructively. The purpose of this Policy and Procedure is to state the way complaints will be processed.
2. Oral and written complaints should receive the same consideration and sensitive handling.
3. The executive Committee places emphasis on resolving complaints as quickly as possible particularly through empowering the paid staff and volunteers to provide an immediate informal response to verbal complaints. Written complaints should be investigated and answered speedily, openly and honestly.
4. Any paid worker or volunteer who receives a verbal complaint should make every effort to resolve this issue immediately. This must be subsequently reported to the Coordinator of Volunteers.
5. Any paid worker or volunteer receiving a request for information on how to complain should provide the name and address of the organization.

INSURANCES

CarePlus carries Public Liability, Employer's Liability and Personal Accident insurances. N.B. In this handbook, the aim is only to give a broad understanding of the position on insurance and an outline of procedures should an incident arise. What follows, therefore, is not to be taken as reflecting the terms of the Policy Document; an enquiry must be made in order to determine exact coverage.

One significant Policy term is that neither Careplus nor its Volunteers and employees must make any admission of liability. Of course this presents an immediate difficulty - if an accident happens (say to an antique) while you're on a visit and you know that it's your fault, the obvious desire is to reassure and comfort the client for whose benefit you're there in the first place. However, Volunteers must understand that, ultimately, they are not doing the client any favours by making promises of compensation that might not be met by the Insurers. However difficult it may be, Volunteers need to find other ways of comforting a client in such (extremely unlikely) circumstances.

If it is very obvious that damage (to persons or property) has been done and that the client is wanting to or needs to make a formal claim, rather than a verbal comment or complaint such as "Oh, what a shame!", Insurance procedures are as follows:-

1. Immediately be objective and make a mental note of what happened.
2. Avoid making admissions of liability - (for the client's sake in the long-run).
3. Inform the Coordinator of Volunteers as soon as possible.
4. Make out a brief, written report explaining what happened.

Employer's and Public Liability Insurance apply to CarePlus and not directly to its employees or Volunteers as any claims are likely to go to court against CarePlus rather than against the individual.

(There is provision for CarePlus to request the insurer to extend cover to the individual if legal liability is so claimed.) Broadly, this would be the concern of the committee rather than individual Volunteers.

The Personal Accident Insurance applies to all Volunteers over the age of 12 years, though, for a claim to be considered any accident needs to result in at least temporary disablement which largely prevents the claimant from attending to his/her usual business or occupation.

If a Volunteer gives lifts to CarePlus' clients (e.g. to go shopping or to appointments), CarePlus has a duty of care to ensure that the vehicle used is safe and insured correctly. Therefore, we ask that any Volunteer who is offering this service:-

- kindly checks with his/her Insurers that cover for this type of "work" is included.
- please supply a photocopy of his/her insurance certificate so that it can be kept on record (so that CarePlus can demonstrate that appropriate checks have been made, if need be).

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

CarePlus has an Equal Opportunities Policy which seeks to ensure that there is no discrimination on grounds of race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion, age, disability, gender or sexual orientation. This is binding on all who work with or for CarePlus.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

CarePlus also has a *Grievance Procedure* for Volunteers. CarePlus values its Volunteers highly and therefore believes that any Volunteer should have the opportunity to raise any grievance they might have concerning the volunteer role. At first, the matter should be raised with the Chairperson; the Volunteer will be given a written statement of the standard procedure for follow-up.

There is also a *Disciplinary Procedure* for Volunteers, a full copy of which can be obtained. It applies to all CarePlus Volunteers. Complaints can be made, albeit extremely rarely, against a Volunteer by

- a client
- another Volunteer
- a member of the Public.

This could be due to an inability to meet required standards; misconduct (such as failure to carry out a reasonable request); or gross misconduct (e.g. intoxication, physical or verbal abuse, and theft).

