

# GUIDEPOSTS TRUST FRIENDSHIP SCHEME

COVERING

EAST HERTS AND WALTHAM ABBEY,  
WELWYN AND HAFIELD AND HERTSMERE

# VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

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## **AN INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDEPOSTS FRIENDSHIP SCHEME**

THE PROJECT IS ABOUT PAIRING VOLUNTEERS AND PEOPLE WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY LIVING IN THE COMMUNITY WHO HAVE SIMILAR HOBBIES OR INTERESTS, TO FORM A FRIENDSHIP AND ENJOY ACTIVITIES TOGETHER.

THE AIMS OF THE FRIENDSHIP SCHEME ARE TO ENABLE MEMBERS OF THE SCHEME TO GAIN CONFIDENCE IN THEIR OWN SKILLS, IMPROVE THEIR INDEPENDENCE AND WIDEN THEIR SOCIAL CIRCLES BY INTEGRATING WITHIN THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITY. THIS IS ACHIEVED BY A VOLUNTEER FRIEND SUPPORTING THEM TO ACCESS LOCAL COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND AMENITIES IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN ENJOYABLE AND MEANINGFUL SOCIAL AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES, WHICH THEY OTHERWISE MAY NOT HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO. PROVIDING THESE FRIENDSHIPS CAN MAKE A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE TO PEOPLE'S QUALITY OF LIFE

### **WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BECOMING A VOLUNTEER?**

- MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO SOMEBODY'S LIFE AS WELL AS YOUR OWN.
- PARTICIPATE IN ACTIVITIES YOU ENJOY E.G. CINEMA, PUBS, BOWLING, COUNTRY WALKS, GARDENING, SPORT, EATING OUT, MUSEUMS.
- MEET NEW FRIENDS AND WIDEN YOUR SOCIAL NETWORK.
- FULL SUPPORT AND TRAINING OFFERED.
- VOLUNTEER AT TIMES TO SUIT YOU.
- OUT OF POCKET EXPENSES PAID.
- GOOD EXPERIENCE AND MAY ENHANCE FUTURE CAREER OPPORTUNITIES.
- HAVE FUN.

# **FINDING THE RIGHT FRIEND**

## **MATCHING**

THE COORDINATOR MATCHES FRIENDS AND VOLUNTEERS ACCORDING TO THEIR HOBBIES, INTERESTS AND PERSONALITIES. IT IS ALSO APPRECIATED THAT MOST VOLUNTEERS HAVE BUSY LIVES AND THEREFORE EACH MATCH IS INDIVIDUAL, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT HOW MUCH TIME A VOLUNTEER HAS AVAILABLE AND MATCHING THIS TO THE MEMBER'S NEEDS.

THE COORDINATOR WILL IDENTIFY A POTENTIAL MATCH BETWEEN A VOLUNTEER AND MEMBER AND CONTACT BOTH PARTIES TO DISCUSS THE PROPOSED MATCH AND ARRANGE AN INFORMAL MEETING USUALLY OVER COFFEE OR LUNCH LOCAL TO WHERE THE FRIEND AND VOLUNTEER LIVE.

PRIOR TO ANY MATCH THE VOLUNTEER AND FRIEND WILL BE GIVEN A PROFILE OF THE OTHER WHICH WILL INCLUDE BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE PERSON. HOWEVER NO IDENTIFYING INFORMATION WILL BE GIVEN UNTIL A MATCH IS CONFIRMED.

BOTH THE VOLUNTEER AND FRIEND HAVE THE RIGHT TO DECLINE A MATCH PRIOR TO THE MATCH BEING CONFIRMED

ONCE A MATCH IS ONGOING, IF EITHER PARTY WISHES TO WITHDRAW THIS SHOULD BE DISCUSSED IN THE FIRST INSTANCE WITH THE FRIENDSHIP SCHEME COORDINATOR WHO CAN ASSESS THE REASONS WHY AND ATTEMPT TO CONTINUE WITH THE SERVICE PROVISION AS APPROPRIATE.

IF THE MATCH PROCEEDS, A SECOND VISIT WOULD NORMALLY BE ARRANGED BETWEEN THE FRIEND, VOLUNTEER AND COORDINATOR USUALLY IN 2-3 WEEKS TIME. TYPICALLY, AFTER THE SECOND/THIRD MEETING FRIENDS AND VOLUNTEERS ARE HAPPY TO GO OUT WITHOUT THE COORDINATOR. HOWEVER, THE COORDINATOR WILL ACCOMPANY YOU FOR AS MANY VISITS AS IT TAKES YOU TO FEEL COMFORTABLE TOGETHER.

## **TIME**

DO NOT WORRY ABOUT HOW MUCH OR HOW LITTLE TIME YOU CAN GIVE, A SMALL AMOUNT OF YOUR TIME CAN MAKE A VERY BIG DIFFERENCE.

VOLUNTEERS WILL ARRANGE WITH THE COORDINATOR HOW MUCH TIME THEY HAVE FOR THEIR VOLUNTEERING. VOLUNTEERS MUST ONLY COMMIT AS MUCH TIME AS THEY ARE ABLE TO MANAGE. IT IS PREFERRED THAT VOLUNTEERS ARE ABLE TO GIVE SOME TIME AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH. PLEASE BE AS RELIABLE AND PUNCTUAL AS POSSIBLE WITH YOUR VOLUNTEERING AND PLEASE GIVE AS MUCH NOTICE AS POSSIBLE TO YOUR FRIEND AND/OR THEIR CARERS IF YOU NEED TO CANCEL AN ARRANGED OUTING.

# WHAT YOU SHOULD EXPECT FROM GUIDEPOSTS TRUST

## ONGOING SUPPORT

THE CONTACT PERSON FOR ALL VOLUNTEERS IS THE FRIENDSHIP SCHEME COORDINATOR. THE COORDINATOR IS AVAILABLE TO VOLUNTEERS FOR ANY HELP AND SUPPORT REQUIRED RELATING TO THEIR VOLUNTEERING.

WHEN YOU ARE FIRST INTRODUCED TO YOUR FRIEND THE COORDINATOR WILL ACCOMPANY YOU FOR AS MANY VISITS AS IT TAKES FOR YOU TO FEEL COMFORTABLE TOGETHER.

A REVIEW WILL BE REQUIRED 3 MONTHS AFTER STARTING VOLUNTEERING TO TALK ABOUT HOW THINGS ARE GOING AND OFFER SUPPORT AND ADVICE, AND THEREAFTER REVIEW MEETINGS WILL TAKE PLACE EVERY 6 MONTHS -1 YEAR.

AT ANY STAGE OF YOUR VOLUNTEERING YOU CAN MAKE AN APPOINTMENT TO SEE THE COORDINATOR TO TALK ABOUT HOW THINGS ARE GOING ETC. PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO ASK FOR SUPPORT AT ANY TIME.

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT MEETINGS MAY BE HELD ON A REGULAR BASIS IF THIS IS WANTED. THESE OFFER THE OPPORTUNITY FOR VOLUNTEERS TO GET TOGETHER, HAVE A CHAT WITH OTHERS, SHARE IDEAS AND SUPPORT EACH OTHER.

COMING TO GROUP SOCIAL EVENTS CAN GIVE YOU THE CHANCE TO MEET OTHER PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT WHO MAY BE ABLE TO OFFER SUPPORT E.G. LIFTS OR GOING OUT TOGETHER OCCASIONALLY.

TRAINING IS AVAILABLE TO ALL VOLUNTEERS. THE COORDINATOR WILL DISCUSS WITH VOLUNTEERS INDIVIDUALLY DURING ASSESSMENT WHAT TRAINING MIGHT BE REQUIRED AND WILL REGULARLY REVIEW TRAINING WITH THE VOLUNTEER.

## EXPENSES

THE FRIENDSHIP SCHEME PROVIDES OUT OF POCKET EXPENSES FOR ALL VOLUNTEERS. VOLUNTEERS MAY CLAIM MILEAGE/TRAVEL COSTS BETWEEN THE VOLUNTEER'S HOME AND THE PLACE OF VOLUNTEERING. VOLUNTEERS MAY ALSO CLAIM THE PRICE OF ENTRY TICKETS FOR THEMSELVES. REASONABLE MEAL EXPENSES CAN ALSO BE CLAIMED. PLEASE SUBMIT RECEIPTS WITH YOUR EXPENSES CLAIM FORM. EXPENSES ARE PAID DIRECTLY INTO VOLUNTEERS BANK ACCOUNTS.

## SOCIAL EVENTS AND OUTINGS

VOLUNTEERS AND FRIENDS ARE INVITED ALONG TO SOCIAL EVENTS AND OUTINGS TO HELP EVERYONE GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER IF THIS IS WANTED.

## REFERENCES FOR THE VOLUNTEER

IN RESPONSE TO REQUESTS FROM VOLUNTEERS, THE SCHEME COORDINATOR WILL PROVIDE A WRITTEN OR VERBAL REFERENCE RELATING TO THE VOLUNTEERS PERFORMANCE DURING THEIR VOLUNTEERING WITH THE FRIENDSHIP SCHEME.

## **WHAT IS EXPECTED OF VOLUNTEERS?**

### RELIABILITY

WHEN A MATCH HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED, DATES AND TIMES TO MEET WILL BE SET. YOU WILL NEED TO SHOW RELIABILITY AND MAKE A REGULAR COMMITMENT TO MEET WITH YOUR FRIEND AT THE AGREED TIMES AND DATES. RELIABILITY IS IMPORTANT AS IT BUILDS TRUST.

IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND A PRE-ARRANGED MEETING, YOU MUST INFORM YOUR FRIEND OR THE FRIENDSHIP SCHEME COORDINATOR.

WE RECOGNISE THAT PEOPLES CIRCUMSTANCES SOMETIMES CHANGE AND THIS MAY MEAN THAT YOU ARE UNABLE TO MEET YOUR FRIEND AS REGULARLY. YOU WILL NEED TO INFORM THE COORDINATOR WHO WILL DISCUSS THIS WITH YOU AND YOUR FRIEND TO ENSURE THAT YOU ARE BOTH HAPPY WITH THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS.

### CONFIDENTIALITY

IN THE COURSE OF YOUR VOLUNTARY WORK YOU MAY RECEIVE INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR FRIEND OR WORK ISSUES WHICH ARE SENSITIVE AND CONFIDENTIAL. THIS SHOULD NOT BE DISCUSSED WITH ANY OTHER PERSON UNLESS IN CONNECTION WITH YOUR DUTIES AS A VOLUNTEER.

WE COMMIT TO TREATING YOUR INFORMATION AS CONFIDENTIAL AND WOULD NOT PASS INFORMATION TO OTHERS WITHOUT YOUR KNOWLEDGE OR CONSENT.

THERE ARE CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE GUIDEPOSTS IS LEGALLY REQUIRED TO DISCLOSE INFORMATION WITHOUT AGREEMENT E.G. IN CASES OF INFORMATION BEING REQUIRED FOR A POLICE INVESTIGATION

### BREACHING CONFIDENTIALITY/DUTY OF CARE

ALTHOUGH THE FRIENDSHIP SCHEME AIMS TO DEVELOP NATURAL FRIENDSHIPS WE DO HAVE TO REMEMBER THAT WE ARE WORKING WITH VULNERABLE PEOPLE AND MUST THEREFORE ACT IN A RESPONSIBLE MANNER. IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO BREACH CONFIDENTIALITY. VOLUNTEERS MAY HAVE TO USE THEIR JUDGEMENT TO REVEAL INFORMATION WITHOUT THEIR FRIENDS CONSENT IF THEY

BELEIVE THAT THERE IS A RISK OR INJURY OR HARM TO THEIR FRIEND OR TO OTHERS. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES THE VOLUNTEER MUST DISCUSS THE SITUATION WITH THE COORDINATOR.

### VOLUNTEER ATTITUDES/RESPECTING SERVICE USERS (FRIENDS) RIGHTS

ALL VOLUNTEERS SHOULD RECOGNISE, VALUE AND RESPECT THE UNIQUENESS OF EACH SERVICE USER (FRIEND) AND UNDERSTAND AND RESPECT THEIR RIGHTS.

-SERVICE USERS (FRIENDS) HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE TREATED WITH DIGNITY AND AS AN EQUAL MEMBER OF THE COMMUNITY IN WHICH THEY LIVE.

-SERVICE USERS (FRIENDS) HAVE THE RIGHT TO PERSONAL CHOICE AND TO MAKE THEIR OWN DECISIONS.

VOLUNTEERS SHOULD AIM TO ENCOURAGE INDEPENDENCE AND PERSONAL CONFIDENCE IN SERVICE USERS (FRIENDS) AND ACTIVELY SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE THEM IN MAKING CHOICES.

### BOUNDARIES

DO NOT LEND OR BORROW MONEY.

DONOT ACCEPT MONEY OR LARGE GIFTS.

DO NOT GET INVOLVED WITH WILLS OR BEQUESTS.

ALWAYS BEHAVE IN A STRAIGHTFORWARD AND HONEST WAY WITH YOUR FRIEND AND DON'T BE AFRAID TO SAY NO TO ANY REQUEST MADE OF YOU BY YOUR FRIEND.

DO NOT GIVE ADVICE ON ANY MEDICATION OR TREATMENTS THAT YOUR FRIEND MIGHT BE RECEIVING. IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS PLEASE SPEAK TO THE COORDINATOR IN THE FIRST INSTANCE.

DEVELOPING WARM AND FRIENDLY RELATIONSHIPS IS IMPORTANT. PHYSICAL CONTACT CAN BE AN IMPORTANT PART OF COMMUNICATING ACCEPTANCE AND REGARD FOR SOMEONE. HOWEVER, VOLUNTEERS MUST BE CAREFUL NOT TO ENGAGE IN ANY PHYSICAL CONTACT WHICH COULD BE MISCONSTRUED AS SEXUAL IN NATURE OR WHICH MAY ENCOURAGE SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS THEMSELVES. IN THE EVENT OF YOUR FRIEND BEHAVING IN A SEXUAL MANNER TOWARDS YOU PLEASE CONTACT THE COORDINATOR WHO WILL HELP YOU DISENGAGE FROM THE SITUATION.

### PERSONAL CHANGES

YOU MUST NOTIFY THE COORDINATOR OF ANY CHANGES OF ADDRESS AND/OR TELEPHONE NUMBERS.

YOU MUST ALSO NOTIFY THE COORDINATOR OF ANY CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS OR DRIVING OFFENCES.

## ENDING THE FRIENDSHIP

IF YOU DECIDE TO LEAVE OR FINISH THE FRIENDSHIP IT IS IMPORTANT TO SET A DATE TO END THE FRIENDSHIP. YOU WILL HAVE BECOME A SIGNIFICANT PERSON TO YOUR FRIEND AND SO AS MUCH NOTICE AS POSSIBLE WOULD BE APPRECIATED.

IF THINGS HAVE NOT BEEN GOING WELL OR YOU JUST DON'T GET ON WITH THE PERSON YOU HAVE BEEN MATCHED WITH, IT IS IMPORTANT TO ASK FOR SUPPORT FROM THE COORDINATOR RATHER THAN JUST SUDDENLY END THE FRIENDSHIP. IT IS STILL IMPORTANT IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES TO SET A DATE TO END THE FRIENDSHIP WHENEVER POSSIBLE, AND AGREE THIS WITH THE COORDINATOR.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

GUIDEPOSTS TRUST IS COMMITTED TO THE PROMOTION OF EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY IN ALL FIELDS OF ITS ACTIVITY. THIS POLICY REFERS TO EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY FOR VOLUNTEERS.

GUIDEPOSTS AIMS TO ENSURE THAT NO VOLUNTEER IS DISCRIMINATED AGAINST ON THE GROUNDS OF RACE, COLOUR, NATIONALITY, ETHNIC OR NATIONAL ORIGINS OR ON THE BASIS OF GENDER, MARITAL STATUS, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, AGE, FAMILY SITUATION, MEMBERSHIP OF TRADE UNION, RELIGIOUS BELIEF OR DISABILITY.

THESE PRINCIPALS OF EQUALITY ALSO APPLY TO ALL SERVICE USERS OF GUIDEPOSTS PROJECTS. ALL VOLUNTEERS ARE EXPECTED TO ACCEPT THIS AS A CONDITION OF BECOMING A VOLUNTEER.

## **COMPLAINTS**

ANY SERVICE USER, RELATIVE, VOLUNTEER, VISITOR OR FRIEND HAS THE RIGHT TO COMPLAIN OR MAKE REPRESENTATIONS ABOUT GUIDEPOSTS TRUST.

YOU ARE ASSURED THAT ANY COMPLAINT WILL BE DEALT WITH IN A CONFIDENTIAL AND SENSITIVE MANNER.

IN THE FIRST INSTANCE PLEASE CONTACT THE FRIENDSHIP SCHEME COORDINATOR, OR IF YOU PREFER PLEASE CONTACT THE MANAGER, LEARNING DISABILITY SERVICES, 82A HIGH STREET, WARE, HERTS, SG12 9AT

SHOULD YOU FEEL THAT THE MATTER HAS NOT BEEN RESOLVED TO YOUR SATISFACTION PLEASE CONTACT THE GENERAL MANAGER, GUIDEPOSTS TRUST, TWO RIVERS, STATION LANE, WITNEY, OXON, OX28 4BH