COMMUNITY FIRST

THE LINK PROJECT

WILTSHIRE LINK SCHEMES
GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE 2016

Link volunteers making a difference every day

The Wiltshire Link Schemes Good Practice Guide 2016 is produced by the Link Project, and replaces the previous (2011) Good Practice Guide.

COMMUNITY FIRST

THE LINK PROJECT

Researched and edited by Mike Read Associates.

MIKE READ ASSOCIATES

Important Notes

1. This Guide has been produced by the Wiltshire Link Project at Community First. It is intended to be used by Wiltshire Link Schemes both in the set up phase and as an on-going reference. It is based on the experience of the Link Schemes themselves, current legislation, and advice from a number of agencies.
2. Please note this Guide is for guidance only. Each Link Scheme must review and amend documents, information, processes and policies to match their circumstances and needs.
3. In general, this Guide assumes that a Link Scheme is a Registered Charity (which is the case for most Link Schemes). If your scheme is not a Registered Charity, then guidance is included in Section B. The Link Project is aware that other legal arrangements exist and may be chosen by Link Schemes, such as charitable incorporated organisation, charitable company, unincorporated association or trust. Advice is available from the Charity Commission.
4. You will find '**(L)**' in various places throughout the Guide. This is designed to help Link Schemes and direct their attention to legal requirements. Where **(L)** appears at the head of a sub-section this indicates the following section covers some legal requirements. Where **(L)** appears next to one or two items in a section these items are particular legal requirements. Please be aware that these distinctions are not always straightforward, and that general good management is also a legal requirement of charitable status.
5. There are also funding requirements. These are the criteria set by the funders of the Wiltshire Link Schemes, and apply to the Annual Grants Programme and the Small Grants Fund. These criteria are set out in Section G.5. These may occasionally change, but full notification and support will be given to Wiltshire Link Schemes to meet any new requirements.
6. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that information is accurate, this document is for guidance only and there is no assurance that it is a full statement of law. We do hope you find it useful, but no legal liability can be accepted by Community First or its employees.
7. Please check the Link Project website for updates and news.

Community First
Unit C2
Beacon Business Centre
Hopton Park
Devizes
SN10 2EY

01380 722241

linkproject@communityfirst.org.uk
www.wiltshirelink.org.uk
Facebook: Community First

Table of Contents

If online you can 'hover' on a section then 'Control and Click' to jump to that section

A Link Schemes and the Link Project

A.1 Link Schemes

'Link' is the name adopted by Good Neighbour schemes in Wiltshire. Link Schemes have existed in Wiltshire since 1979 and there are currently 44 schemes in the county supporting rural and urban communities. Link Schemes are voluntary groups which offer a transport and good neighbour service to local people who are in need, perhaps because they are elderly, disabled, or single parents, or perhaps temporarily in need because of illness.

These essential services provide a safety net for those unable to access services in other ways. Link Schemes aim to complement other services, statutory and voluntary, and clients will be directed to another service if appropriate.

Link Schemes operate as small, independent charitable organisations, and generally have a Management Committee, Co-ordinator and Volunteers. Each Link Scheme responds to the needs of its community and uses the skills offered by its volunteers. The Scheme should use the Link logo and identify itself as part of the county-wide Link network.

The service broadly covers two areas: transport and 'good neighbour'.

Transport

- Link Schemes exist to provide a supplementary transport service for those residents unable to access facilities or services in any other way. This may be through lack of transport provision or individuals' inability to use existing provision because of cost or inaccessibility. This excludes medical journeys which could be referred to the Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service - a statutory provision for non-emergency transport to meet a hospital appointment. Eligibility criteria for this are set by the Department of Health and are based upon whether the patient's medical condition prevents them from travelling by any other means[1].
- On a day to day basis, priority may be given to elderly clients requesting transport to medical appointments; requests for transport for social visits or leisure activities are dealt with if sufficient volunteers are available.

[1] The current contract is with Arriva Transport Solutions 0845 600 6068. email patientcustomerservice@arriva.co.uk.

Transport is provided for:
  - medical appointments,
  - shopping,
  - visiting relatives or friends in hospital,
  - social visits,
  - attendance at Luncheon Clubs or Day Centres, and
  - collecting shopping, prescriptions or library books, or other personal business.

- In most cases Transport is provided by volunteers using their own private vehicles. The Link scheme holds relevant Public Liability insurance but volunteer drivers are responsible for ensuring their motor insurance policy covers their volunteer driving activity. There is a general agreement across insurers nationally that no additional premium is payable, however, it is the responsibility of the policy holder to check. The Link project Insurance includes Motor Policy Compensation for loss of excess and no claims bonus in the event of an accident. See section I.5.
- Transport should be provided at no fixed charge. Voluntary contributions will be accepted and encouraged but schemes should ensure that those most in need can access the service.
- The Link Scheme should ensure that it does not undermine the viability of existing public transport services and should only provide transport where the journey could not be made using existing services. This should include, where appropriate, providing a link to the nearest available bus or rail service. Wiltshire Council's Passenger Transport Unit can provide details of bus and train timetables on request.

Email educationtransport@wiltshire.gov.uk or write to

Wiltshire Council Passenger Transport Unit, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 8JN.

01225 712852 (North Wiltshire) or 01225 713398 (South Wiltshire).

- The Scheme should be prepared for its services to be publicised in an appropriate manner in public transport publicity issued by Wiltshire Council's Passenger Transport Unit.

Good Neighbour

- Volunteers may also offer practical help for small tasks in the home or garden, and caring support.
- Typical areas of work may include:
  - sitting to relieve a carer,
  - befriending,
  - assistance with shopping,
  - reading,

- temporary assistance in the house on discharge from hospital or in case of illness,
- company on a short walk.

- The service should specifically exclude ‘personal care’ i.e. any assistance with washing, dressing, toileting or bathing as these tasks should only be carried out by trained personnel.
- The ‘care’ service encompasses the type of support which would be offered by a “good neighbour” and should not include those duties which are the responsibility of Adult and Community Services or the Health Service.
- The Link Scheme Management Committee should offer support and guidance to the Co-ordinator in deciding whether requests are appropriate for a Link volunteer and Link Project staff may be contacted for advice if necessary.

A.2 The Structure of a Link Scheme

The chart and descriptions below are a simple illustration of how Link Schemes work.

Management Committee

- *Chairperson.* Chairs meetings of the Management Committee and has oversight of the whole Link Scheme activities. Trustee.
- *Vice-Chairperson.* Assists the Chairperson, possibly with a view to take over as Chairperson in due course. Trustee.
- *Secretary*. Takes minutes and assists with actions arising from meetings. Trustee.
- *Treasurer*. Deals with all financial aspects of the scheme. Trustee.
- *Assistant Treasurer or Grants Officer*. Assists the Treasurer with financial aspects of the Link Scheme. May be a trustee.
- *Volunteer Recruitment and Support Officer*. Advertises for volunteers, inducts and supports volunteers in their role. May be a trustee.
- *Press/Publicity Officer or Communications Officer*. Publicises the activities of the Link Scheme and assists in fundraising and recruitment of volunteers. May be a trustee.

- *Protection of Vulnerable Adults Officer/ Designated Safeguarding worker*. Works to ensure that the clients of the Scheme are protected from harm. May be a trustee.
- General committee members. May be trustees.

Volunteer Co-ordinator

- Provides the link between volunteers and clients, and reports to the Management Committee. There may be more than one person in this role. Should not be on the Management Committee or a trustee.

Volunteers

- Perform voluntary tasks for the Link Scheme, as agreed with the Volunteer Co-ordinator at induction. Likely to be a 'member' of the Scheme and able to vote at the AGM.

A.3 How Can The Link Project Help?

If you have any queries or you're interested in starting a Link Scheme in your area please contact the Link Project. Telephone and email advice and support is available Monday to Friday, 9am - 3pm.

Community First
Unit C2
Beacon Business Centre
Hopton Park
Devizes
SN10 2EY
01380 722241
linkproject@communityfirst.org.uk
www.wiltshirelink.org.uk
Facebook: Community First

The Link Project can also provide the following:

- Leaflets about particular aspects of Link Schemes, sample policy statements, and templates for everything from Gift Aid Declarations to Volunteers' Expense Sheets. A list appears in Annex A and these are all available for download from the website, or can be provided on CD or Memory Stick if preferred.
- Updates on legislation changes and good practice.
- Training and support meetings for Link Co-ordinators.
- Training and support meetings for Management Committee members.
- Induction training for new Management Committee members. Help with volunteer recruitment and support strategies.
- Help with additional training for volunteers.

- Attendance at Link Scheme meetings if requested.
- Practical resources and loan of equipment.
- Administration of grant funds on behalf of some Wiltshire statutory authorities.
- Liaison and networking with voluntary and statutory partners in Wiltshire.

The Link Project also holds Regular Chairpersons' meetings, addressing operational and legal issues.

B Setting Up a Link Scheme

Currently, coverage of Wiltshire by Link Schemes is very good. So the chances are there is already one working in your area. You might be better advised to work with them than set up a new scheme. Look up your community in the directory to see if it is served by one of the Link Schemes at www.wiltshirelink.org.uk.

B.1 Setting up a new Scheme

There are a range of leaflets available with this Good Practice Guide which cover different aspects of how a Link Scheme works.

- Talk to others in your community, they might already have arrangements to help people within the community which you can build on.
- Talk to the Link Project Officer to discuss local issues and needs.
- Publicise your idea and ask potential volunteers to contact you. A simple leaflet is available from the Link Project to help. You can put it in your local shops, churches, pubs, schools and library to let everyone know about the project. Also consider sending invitations to local groups and individuals, distributing publicity via village and church newsletters, delivering leaflets, displaying posters and advertising in local press and radio.
- Grants are available from funding partners to set up new Link Schemes in Wiltshire. The size of the grant will depend on the size of the proposed Link Scheme. This grant funding is managed by the Link Project on behalf of the funding partnership. Application forms and further information can be requested from the Link Project.
- Most Link Schemes register as a form of charity. See guidance later in this Section.
- During the setting up process it is useful for the "mission" of the Link Scheme to be clear to all.

Mission Statement

Wiltshire Link Schemes believe that local communities and volunteers can have a positive impact in maintaining the unique quality of life in rural areas.

Declining services and an increase in the population of older people and others who need support, leave many people vulnerable and unable to access essential services and social activities that enable them to maintain an independent and enjoyable life style.

Link Schemes draw on goodwill in communities to provide a voluntary good neighbour service, assisting to fill this gap. Volunteering has many benefits for individuals and communities and vulnerable residents receive a much valued service.

Link Schemes provide a friendly, confidential service welcoming donations from their users. All donations are used in the provision of the service which is run entirely by volunteers.

B.2 Holding a public meeting

- An important part of setting up a Link Scheme is making the community aware of its existence, so hopefully by the end of the public meeting there will be sufficient people to form a Management Committee. Some of these people may remain on the committee for a few years while others may only wish to offer support during the setting up period – both are welcome. If there are not enough people to form a committee immediately it is best to wait until you have a full complement (for instance a Link Scheme will not get far without a Treasurer).
- The purpose of the public meeting is for local people to decide whether a Link Scheme is appropriate for their community. If so then names and addresses should be gathered. The emphasis throughout the setting up process is on thorough ground work rather than speed, so that when the Scheme comes into operation, it is working from a solid base. The process takes approximately six months from the date of the public meeting but this can vary considerably.
- Advice on community engagement and consultation is available from the Link Project. The Link project is also available to make presentations and facilitate meetings.

B.3 A Management Committee

- The first committee is likely to be made up of willing volunteers but it is important that those volunteers understand their positions and duties. Volunteer Role descriptions - essentially 'Job roles' - should be provided for all posts. In addition all committee members should be issued with the summary of trusteeship, see Section C.
- Committee members without a specific role are welcome to contribute their ideas and support the officers. A member of staff from the Link Project is available to attend the first Management Committee meeting, and any subsequent meetings at the request of the committee.
- Subsequent Management Committee members will be elected at the AGM according to rules set out in the constitution (see below).
- Committee meetings may need to take place once a month during the setting up phase.
- Your new Link Scheme will need a founding document or 'constitution' **(L)**. Model constitutions are available from the Link Project, which may need some amendment to suit your Scheme. Guidance on constitutions can also be found on the Charity Commission website[2]. Items in the constitution include the name of the scheme, the objects (that is the charitable benefits you are working to achieve), membership, management committee, AGMs, finance, volunteers, how to alter the constitution, and how to dissolve the Scheme. This should summarise your Scheme well and be a guide for you in the future.

B.4 First Committee Meeting

- Having decided to set up a Link Scheme at the public meeting, the Management Committee will meet to take that idea forward. There is a fair amount of work involved, but what is aimed for is a Scheme which will serve the needs of its community, is run according to good practice guidelines and will be accountable to its users, volunteers and funders. In other words, a Scheme which has secure foundations and will run well.
- There will inevitably be differences of opinion about what should be done and early meetings are not only about getting through the work, but about getting to know each other and operating as a team with a common aim.
- It is useful therefore to start this first meeting with an open discussion so everyone has a chance to voice their queries or concerns.
- Election of officers. Not all new Schemes will be able to fill all offices at this meeting. Gaps may be filled by those present talking to others after the meeting. Someone who feels they would just like to be a committee member should not be pressurised.

[2] www.gov.uk/government/publications/setting-up-a-charity-model-governing-documents

Suggestions for a First Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions.
2. Questions arising from the public meeting.
3. Geographical area to be covered.
4. Name of the Link Scheme.
5. Distribution of roles to potential officers and committee members.
6. Appointment of officers if appropriate.
7. A brief introduction to the Link Good Practice Guide.
8. Allocation of any tasks to be completed before the next meeting.
9. Date and venue of next meeting.

B.5 Checklist of tasks before launch

The following tasks should have been completed by the Management Committee before the Link Scheme begins operating. Remember the Link Project is available to help.

- ✓ Name the Link Scheme.
- ✓ Specify the area to be covered.
- ✓ Complete constitution.
- ✓ Decide on the logo.
- ✓ Set up a bank account.
- ✓ Produce budget for first operational year.
- ✓ Decide on the mileage rate.
- ✓ Complete risk assessment.
- ✓ Take out insurance.
- ✓ Recruit Co-ordinator/s.
- ✓ Recruit volunteers.
- ✓ Complete Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.
- ✓ Apply for funding.
- ✓ Apply for charity registration if appropriate.
- ✓ Design and print publicity material.
- ✓ Issue induction packs to volunteers.
- ✓ Complete the Link Project Directory form so that the Link Project can put you on the website.

B.6 A volunteer recruitment meeting

- A volunteer recruitment meeting should be arranged for a date at least two months before the launch date of the Link Scheme. This length of time is necessary to ensure references are taken up and DBS checks are completed. It also allows time for volunteers to be issued with an induction pack if required.
- An initial list of names and addresses of volunteers will have been obtained from the public meeting. If this list does not give sufficient numbers additional publicity may be necessary e.g. using posters, press releases and contact with other voluntary organisations.
- If there is a long time gap between the public meeting and the volunteer meeting, letters thanking volunteers for their interest and advising them of progress, may be useful.
- The volunteer recruitment meeting is usually held in the evening and all the volunteers who expressed an interest at the public meeting should be invited. Additional publicity to attract other potential volunteers is a good idea.
- The aim of the meeting is to ensure the Link Scheme recruits committed volunteers who appreciate what being a Link volunteer entails and understand the legal and insurance implications of volunteering.
- The evening should take the form of a presentation by a member of staff from the Link Project on 'Being a Link Volunteer', plus the Chairperson and the Volunteer Recruitment and Support Officer outlining plans and local issues. It may be an opportunity to show the Link Project promotion video. Contact the Link project for a copy or use online video on the website.
- It is useful for as many members of the Management Committee as possible to be present, and the Link Co-ordinator/s, so that everyone can get to know one another. Volunteers should be given adequate opportunity to ask questions both during the meeting and at the end. Refreshments are a good idea.
- All volunteers should be issued with an application pack at the end of the presentation. It is useful if volunteers complete the application form on the evening but a return address should be given for those who do not, or provide an opportunity to email or source documents online. A series of introductory leaflets on different aspects is available from the Link Project.
- Larger schemes, or those having difficulty recruiting, may decide to hold volunteer recruitment meetings. It is important to recruit enough volunteers for the scheme to enjoy a confident start.
- It is important that all volunteers are recruited and inducted according to agreed practice. Occasional further recruitment meetings can be arranged to achieve this. The Management Committee should consider developing an ongoing volunteer recruitment strategy.

B.7 Registering as a Charity (L)

- A Link Scheme that is a charity and has an annual income of over £5,000 is legally obliged to register with the Charity Commission. **(L)**
- A model constitution (or 'governing document') has been developed for Wiltshire Link Schemes. This has been accepted by the Charity Commission and makes registration much simpler.
- The model constitution can and should be amended as necessary by the Management Committee.
- Charity Commission documents CC21a[3] and CC22a[4] provide much useful advice.
- Only apply for registration as a charity when set up properly. You will need to have: **(L)**
    - decided what your charity's purpose is,
    - decided what type of structure it will have,
    - written a governing document,
    - chosen a name,
    - recruited trustees, and
    - decided how your charity will be funded.
- Log on to the Charity Commission website, open a user account and complete the on-line application form. Once you have a reference number you can save the form for up to three months.
- When submitting an application, be prepared to send
    - the constitution,
    - the minutes of the meeting at which the constitution was adopted
    - a copy of the financial accounts for up to the last three years of the Link Scheme, and
    - signed trustee declaration forms.
- You should then receive confirmation that details of your organisation have been entered on the Central Register of Charities and advising you of your registration number.
- If you need to amend your constitution, this can only be done at an AGM or Special General Meeting (see Section K). **(L)**
- There are other legal structures you may wish to consider including a Charitable Incorporated Organisation or Community Benefit Society. If you wish to explore other options contact the Link Project.

[3] www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-set-up-a-charity-cc21a
[4] www.gov.uk/guidance/charity-types-how-to-choose-a-structure

C Link Management Committee and Trusteeship

This section gives an overview of the Link Scheme Management Committee and the role trustees play within the organisation. It also outlines the suggested structure of the Management Committee and the roles and responsibilities of officers.

Information on the roles of Co-ordinators is in Section D, and Volunteers in Section F.

C.1 Link Scheme Management Committee: An Overview (L)

Most Link Schemes operate as small, charitable, independent, unincorporated associations with a Management Committee whose members are responsible for the efficient operation of the Scheme and who are accountable to its funders **(L)**.

The Management Committee responsibilities are as follows.

- Take legal responsibility with regard to current charity law. **(L)**
- Ensure the efficient running of the Scheme according to principles of good practice. **(L)**
- Ensure the Scheme complies with its constitution. **(L)**
- Ensure sufficient funding, including applying for grants where necessary. **(L)**
- Ensure the Scheme meets criteria laid down by funders.
- Take decisions about the operation of the Scheme. **(L)**
- Ensure volunteers are correctly recruited and supported. **(L)**
- Provide support to Link Co-ordinators.
- Put in place operational policies, including safeguarding of vulnerable adults and ensure they are complied with. **(L)**
- Take out appropriate insurance policies. **(L)**
- Ensure good representation of volunteer and client views on the committee.
- Ensure audit figures are completed and submitted to the Link Project.
- Produce an annual Risk Management statement.
- Produce balance sheets and income and expenditure statements. **(L)**
- Determine guidelines for non-transport services, and for mileage rates.
- Ensure that the most recent 'Link Parking Guidelines' document is available to all Volunteer Drivers.

C.2 Composition of Management Committee

Recommended Roles

- Chairperson
- Vice-Chairperson
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Assistant Treasurer or Grants Officer
- Volunteer Recruitment and Support Officer
- Press/Publicity Officer or Communications Officer
- Designated Safeguarding Worker
- General committee members

The number and type of committee members required will depend on the individual Link Scheme's needs and its constitution **(L)**. Whilst not encouraged, roles and responsibilities can be shared among committee members (e.g. a Treasurer may also be the Designated Safeguarding Worker).

Link Co-ordinators are an essential and extremely valuable part of the Link Scheme. If the Management Committee feels that it is appropriate, the Link Scheme Co-ordinator should be invited to Management Committee meetings. However, it is strongly advised that Link Co-ordinators are not given voting rights (or full Management Committee status) due to the conflict of interest concerns that might arise from doing so, and the legal implications that might ensue **(L)**.

C.3 The Chairperson

Personal qualities

Positive, organised, tactful, polite, able to make decisions, able to evaluate different points of view, a good mediator and a good communicator.

Roles and Duties

The Chairperson should…

- Be committed to the aims of the Link Scheme and have the enthusiasm to ensure the Management Committee works smoothly and enjoys its work.
- Provide impartial leadership to the Committee, ensuring the charity operates effectively.
- Arrange meetings on a regular basis, encouraging prompt and regular attendance of all members.
- Agree agendas with the Secretary.
- Liaise with the Secretary to ensure minutes are promptly produced.

- Approve minutes.
- Chair meetings, allowing everyone an equal voice, and take all views into account.
- Ensure all decisions taken by the Committee are proposed and seconded, and a vote taken.
- Ensure all decisions that require action are clearly recorded, with responsibilities and schedules.
- Ensure everyone is aware of the tasks they have agreed to, and carries them out in reasonable time.
- Ensure appropriate policies and procedures are in place and adhered to (see Section J).
- Support other officers in their roles as agreed by the Management Committee.
- Represent the Link Scheme at Chairpersons' meetings, or appoint a deputy to attend.
- Report back from Chairpersons' meetings at the next Management Committee meeting.
- Read relevant paperwork and either pass on information to relevant members of the committee or report verbally to all if appropriate.
- Represent the Link Scheme Management Committee's views at local meetings and forums.
- Be prepared to ask for outside help from, for example, the Link Project or the Charity Commission if appropriate.
- Arrange and conduct the AGM **(L)**. See Section K.
- Support the Volunteer Recruitment and Support Officer during the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checking process.
- Make a "fit and proper person" declaration if the Link Scheme is claiming Gift Aid **(L)**.

C.4 Vice Chairperson

- The Vice Chairperson acts a deputy and support for the Chairperson and should be issued with the same job role.
- The post holders can then discuss which areas of responsibility can be taken by the Vice Chairperson who will be aware of all duties if called on to deputise.
- The Vice-Chairperson may also have skills they use to support other members of the Committee.
- The role of Vice Chairperson is often used in succession planning as a way to prepare a future Chairperson.

C.5 Secretary

Roles and Duties

The Secretary should undertake the following.

- Attend Committee meetings and take minutes.
- Draw up agendas, after discussion with the Chairperson.
- Distribute agendas and minutes to all Management Committee members.
- Record in the minutes the responsibilities and schedules for carrying out any actions that are decided.
- Present minutes from previous meeting for approval and the Chairperson's signature.
- Ensure all decisions taken by the Committee are accurately recorded.
- Receive letters and emails and if appropriate pass them on to relevant Management Committee members, or report to the next committee meeting.
- Undertake general communication (i.e. letters and emails) on behalf of the Link Scheme.
- Support the Management Committee to complete all the necessary paperwork for the AGM.
- Attend the AGM (see Section K) and take minutes.
- Ensure a supply of stationery for the Link Scheme's needs.
- Advise the Link Project of any Management Committee changes, and any changes to contact details for the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary, Volunteer Recruitment and Support Officer, and Co-ordinator/s.
- Book venues for meetings when necessary.
- Assist the Treasurer or Grants Officer with completing funding applications.
- Assist the Treasurer with Gift Aid claims as required. If required, sign a "fit and proper person" declaration **(L)** See Section H.

C.6 Treasurer (L)

Roles and Duties

It is advisable for all Link Schemes to have both a Treasurer and an Assistant Treasurer or Grants Officer as the operation of the Scheme means there is quite a heavy workload concerned with finances.

The main areas of responsibility are to:

- keep the Link Scheme accounts in accordance with Charity Commission requirements **(L)**,
- apply for grants,
- receive and record donations, and
- receive volunteers' expenses forms and pay their claims.

The Charity Commission provides excellent and comprehensive advice on charity accounts and reporting which a Link Scheme should follow. This is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission.

The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer can decide between themselves which areas of responsibility they wish to take on according to their knowledge and skills. An alternative is to appoint a Treasurer and a Grants Officer.

The Treasurer and/or Assistant Treasurer should undertake the following.

General Duties

- Open a current bank current account in the agreed name of the Link Scheme.
- Consider whether a deposit account is appropriate.
- Keep formal accounts of all financial transactions **(L)**.
- Prepare a statement of accounts for presentation at each committee meeting.
- Prepare a budget for each financial year in consultation with the whole committee.
- Pay all submitted invoices within a reasonable time.
- Check the record of transactions against bank statements.
- Pay all monies received (whether cash or cheques) into the bank as soon as possible.
- Keep an agreed amount of petty cash and record all payments.
- Operate a Gift Aid system if agreed by the Committee (see Section H) and if so sign a "fit and proper person" declaration **(L)**.
- Prepare annual accounts and submit to the appointed auditor or independent examiner **(L)**.
- Distribute a copy of the annual accounts at the AGM and be prepared to answer queries **(L)**.
- Ensure that all grants are listed separately and attributed to the correct grant giving body.
- Ensure that all payments made are in accordance with the charitable objectives of the Link Scheme **(L)**.
- Review the proposed budget against the financial situation at quarterly intervals or more often if necessary.

Applying for Grants

- Apply for grants for scheme 'development' or 'start-up'. See Section G.
- Apply for grants as required if the scheme is running with less than six months running costs in unrestricted reserves. See Section G.
- Record all decisions on grant applications and amounts received if successful.
- Acknowledge receipt of all grants.

Dealing with Donation Envelopes

- Ensure donation envelopes are received from volunteers on a regular basis.
- Ensure money is counted at least once a month and amounts recorded.
- Ensure that the contents of the donation envelopes are counted with two people present.

Some Schemes find it useful to match the donation to the job carried out so that the shortfall on individual journeys can be calculated. If such a system is put in place it is important that the anonymity of the donation is protected.

The overall shortfall can be assessed by simply comparing the amount received in donations, with the amount issued in mileage expenses for each month.

Dealing with Expense Claims

- Ensure expenses claims are paid by an agreed date every month unless an alternative procedure has been agreed by the Committee.
- Ensure expense forms are received from volunteers by the agreed date.
- If volunteers do not wish to receive mileage expenses, ensure they are asked to submit a statement of miles travelled.
- Ensure claims are validated by being counter-signed by the Co-ordinator, or by the Co-ordinator submitting to the Treasurer a record of journeys carried out.

C.7 Volunteer Recruitment and Support Officer

Roles and Duties

To recruit and support volunteers in their on-going role with the Link Scheme, the main areas of responsibility are as follows.

- Recruit volunteers according to policies and procedures agreed with the Management Committee.
- Develop an annual volunteer recruitment plan. See Section E.
- Maintain volunteer records, with regard to the Data Protection Act **(L)**. See Section I.
- Facilitate Disclosure and Barring Service checks **(L)** See Section E.
- Carry out the induction of volunteers.
- Provide the Co-ordinator with regularly updated details of volunteers and their availability.
- Be available to deal with any concerns, questions or grievances volunteers may have (see Section J.2). Liaise with other members of the Management Committee if appropriate.
- Offer all older volunteers the Wiltshire Council SAGE Driving Assessment or similar reputable safer driving assessments such as the Institute of Advanced Motorists Mature Drivers Assessment. There is likely to be a charge for assessments and it is recommended that this is paid by the Link Scheme.

- Consider the needs of volunteers for on-going support and training. An informal coffee morning is a good way of supporting volunteers and letting them share experiences.
- Inform volunteers of training offered by the Link Project or other agencies.
- Review volunteers' driving licences, MoTs and vehicle insurance.
- Represent volunteers at Management Committee meetings.

C.8 Press Officer/Communications Officer

The public image of the Link Scheme is important to educate the public about the service provided and to attract potential volunteers. In addition, the increasing number of Link Schemes in Wiltshire has brought widespread publicity and the reputation of one Link Scheme reflects on others.

Roles and Duties

With support and guidance from the Link Project, the main areas of responsibility are as follows.

- Issue reports to the local press, free papers, village newsletters, magazines, websites, etc.
- Design, produce and distribute effective publicity material e.g. leaflets and posters, for local events.
- Display leaflets advertising the service in surgeries, local hospitals, libraries, and other venues.
- Once publicity material has been produced and distributed, check to see if further supplies are needed.
- Ensure that publicity is well distributed in each community for schemes covering several villages.
- Place regular articles in village magazines and on websites.
- Combine with other Link Schemes in the area for big events.
- Where suitable and appropriate provide the Link Project with 'good news' stories and details of events and fundraising activity for use in county-wide and national press releases and through digital and social media.

Community First and the Link Project are available to offer some PR and marketing support.

Link Scheme Logo

This logo was adopted in 2011 as a county-wide symbol to identify all Link Schemes.

Some Link Schemes use this logo, or a variation with their Link schemes name included within or as a strapline adjacent to the logo.

The Link logo is available on the Link Project website[5] or by email from the Link Project.

Donation Envelopes

- Donation envelopes can be ordered directly via Townsends Print and Design in Melksham (Tel: 01225 705 025) or Link Schemes can source their own supplier. Printing can be arranged directly with Townsends at additional cost.
- Identity Badges - The Link Project can provide templates for identity badges. It is not possible to produce these with the logos of individual Schemes.
- Self-laminating badges and lanyards are also available at additional cost.

Link Hospital Parking Cards

- Link Hospital Parking Cards are available to be displayed at all times by volunteers when parking at Acute Hospitals and other health and medical centres as agreed locally.
- The cards are free and available from the Link Project. Each volunteer should be issued with a card and the guidelines for hospital parking. Cards have an expiry date (to reduce the potential for inappropriate use from former drivers), so please ensure new cards are ordered prior to the expiry date.
- It is imperative that the Link Scheme's name and vehicle registration is completed on the card so heath authority staff can contact the appropriate scheme if required in an emergency.

Publicity Material

The Link Project is happy to design and produce publicity material for promoting Link Scheme services. This design service is free of charge, however we may have to make small charge for any printing. This may include:

- volunteer recruitment posters,
- volunteer recruitment leaflets,
- Link Scheme leaflets, and
- sample newsletter articles.

The Link Project can also provide a video about what a Link Scheme does which can be played on a laptop at events or for new volunteers

The Link Project video can be viewed online at youtube/7YNVnKvwiGA

[5] www.wiltshirelink.org.uk

Display boards

The Link project has two small table-top display boards available on loan to Link Schemes. These boards are in high demand, especially during the summer fête and fair season. If you would like to borrow the display boards, please book them as early as possible and arrange plenty of time to pick them up from the Devizes office.

C.9 Designated Safeguarding Worker (L)

Link Schemes are set up to benefit vulnerable adults within the community and as such have a duty to fully safeguard these people **(L)**. The Designated Safeguarding Worker ensures that training, policies and procedures are in place to protect people using Link Schemes from harm and exploitation by the Scheme. Providing transport to a vulnerable adult is classed as a "regulated activity" under schedule 4 part 2 para 7(1)a of the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. 'Safeguarding' is protecting these vulnerable adults from harm and abuse while engaged in this 'regulated activity'. Part of this safeguarding is the requirement for DBS checks for all 'customer facing' Link Scheme volunteers, and trustees as appropriate **(L)** as detailed in Section E.

The Safeguarding Worker should be a member of the Management Committee and all volunteers should be made aware of who they are, their roles, how to contact them, and when they are available.

Roles and Duties

The Designated Safeguarding Worker has the following responsibilities.

- Ensure the safeguarding policy is implemented and adhered to **(L)**.
- Be familiar with, and have an understanding of all relevant legislation.
- Liaise with other services and organisations to ensure best practice is adhered to.
- Ensure that safeguarding is part of the Link Scheme's working culture.
- Arrange appropriate training for all relevant workers.
- Provide support during and after incidents involving safeguarding and referrals to Social Services or the police.
- Provide the trustees with information on the number and outcomes of incidents or concerns involving safeguarding, if requested.

Protection of Vulnerable Adults Guidance

The Care Act 2014 brings in new laws around protecting adults from abuse or neglect. The Act, for the first time, sets out a clear legal framework for how local authorities and other parts of the health and care system should protect adults at risk of abuse or neglect.

Local authorities have safeguarding duties. They must:

- lead a multi-agency local adult safeguarding system that seeks to prevent abuse and neglect and stop it quickly when it happens

- make enquiries, or request others to make them, when they think an adult with care and support needs may be at risk of abuse or neglect and they need to find out what action may be needed
- establish Safeguarding Adults Boards, including the local authority, NHS and police, which will develop, share and implement a joint safeguarding strategy
- carry out Safeguarding Adults Reviews when someone with care and support needs dies as a result of neglect or abuse and there is a concern that the local authority or its partners could have done more to protect them
- arrange for an independent advocate to represent and support a person who is the subject of a safeguarding enquiry or review, if required.

It is hoped that Link schemes and volunteers will not be required to report on safeguarding issues but as a trusted service supporting vulnerable people a situation may arise where an individual 'discloses' a safeguarding issue, which cannot be ignored. The information below offers guidance on how to respond to a 'disclosure' and how to report the information disclosed to the local authority. It is not the responsibility of the Link schemes or volunteers to investigate a disclosure only to report concerns of abuse to the relevant authority.

Guidance to the alerted person (Wiltshire Council Safeguarding Adults Team)

- Listen carefully to what you are being told
- Reassure the person that you are treating the information seriously
- Explain that you are required to share the information with a relevant committee member and the regulatory authority (as appropriate)
- Reassure the person that any further investigation will be conducted sensitively and with their full involvement wherever possible
- Make a written record of what the person has told you, taking into account that this report might be required as part of any legal action or disciplinary procedure
- Do not promise to keep secrets
- Do not contact the alleged abuser or alleged victims
- Do not discuss the content of the disclosure with others outside the investigation.

Reporting Guidelines

If you see, hear about or suspect abuse:

- Take urgent action as appropriate to protect the adult at risk from any immediate danger
- Pass on the relevant information to a relevant designated safeguarding worker or chairperson, as appropriate
- Act within the wishes of an adult at risk where possible. Avoid asking investigative questions, e.g. who, what, when, why?

- Avoid making comments about what has happened
- Support and reassure the individual throughout
- Make an 'Adult at Risk' referral to the Social Care Help Desk or the Wiltshire Police – Safeguarding Adults Investigation Team (SAIT).

Social Care Help Desk

Tel: 0300 456 0111

Email: customeradvisors@wiltshire.gov.uk

Wiltshire Police (SAIT)

Tel: 01380 826350

A safeguarding flowchart can be found in the Annex

C.10 Charity Trusteeship (L)

For Link Schemes registered as charities, voting members of the Link Scheme Management Committee are by law trustees of their Link Scheme[6] **(L)**. Each voting member of the Management Committee should be aware of their responsibilities.

> 'Trustees have, and must accept, ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of their charity, ensuring that it is solvent and well run, and delivering the charitable outcomes for the benefit of the public for which it was set up'
>
> The Essential Trustee CC3a[7]

In law trustees can be held personally liable for a charity's debts or losses. For unincorporated charities, such as most Link Schemes, the trustees would be personally liable. However, trustees that have acted conscientiously, honestly and in good faith are extremely unlikely to be held personally responsible. **(L)**

If trustees act imprudently, are guilty of breach of trust, negligence or dishonesty they may be personally liable. This liability can be reduced by purchasing Trustee Indemnity Insurance or by becoming an incorporated organisation. This does not, however, protect against instances of dishonesty, criminal behaviour, negligence or disregard of the charities interests. It is extremely unlikely that this situation is going to arise in a Link Scheme and the best defence is good management. **(L)**

It is important that every new committee member reads through the governing document carefully to be aware of their responsibilities, and attends the New Committee Member Induction training provided by The Link Project. It is advisable for each new committee member to receive a copy of The Essential Trustee and Charities and Reserves (documents CC3a, and CC19, produced by The Charity Commission).

C.11 Charity Trustees – Role Description (L)

Roles and Duties

The duties of a Trustee are as below **(L)**.

- Accept ultimate responsibility for what the charity does, and act collectively with other trustees.
- Exercise prudence to ensure the charity remains solvent and all assets are used to further the charitable objectives.
- Exercise reasonable care and skill to ensure the charity is well run and efficient.

[6] The Charities Act 1993 (S97 1) provides a functional test. Charity trustees are those persons having the general control and management of the administration of the charity.
[7] www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3

- Ensure that the organisation complies with its governing document, (i.e. its constitution), charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
- Ensure that the organisation pursues its objects as defined in its governing document.
- Ensure that the organisation applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects.
- Contribute actively to the board of trustees' role in giving firm strategic direction to the organisation, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets.
- Safeguard the good name and ethos of the organisation.
- Ensure the financial stability of the organisation and protect the assets of the charity.
- Use any specific skills, knowledge or experience to help the board of trustees reach sound decisions.

Each Trustee must have:

- commitment to the organisation,
- willingness to devote the necessary time and effort,
- integrity,
- strategic vision,
- good, independent judgement,
- an ability to think creatively,
- a willingness to speak their mind,
- an understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship,
- and ability to work effectively as a member of a team.

C.12 Eligibility (L)

Anyone over 18 is eligible for trusteeship with the following exceptions.

- Anyone who has an unspent conviction for an offence involving deception or dishonesty.
- Anyone who is an undischarged bankrupt.
- Anyone who has been removed from trusteeship of a charity by the Court or the Commissioners for misconduct or mismanagement.
- Anyone under a disqualification order under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986.

Link schemes may well be involved with vulnerable adults, and wherever appropriate a Link Scheme should ensure trustees have a DBS check **(L)** (See Section E). If a potential trustee has a 'positive disclosure' from the DBS process, this does not necessarily bar them from acting as a trustee for the charity, as being a trustee is not a 'regulated activity'. Trustees should take account of potential risks to the charity's reputation and beneficiaries, and seriously consider whether it would be appropriate to have a trustee who is barred by the DBS.

The Finance Act 2010 also requires that if a Link Scheme wants to claim Gift Aid, all of the charity's managers (including trustees) must be 'fit and proper persons' **(L)** (see Section H.2).

It is good practice for trustees to sign a declaration confirming that they are eligible to act.

C.13 Trustees' Standards of Conduct (L)

- Case law states that trustees should *"exercise the same degree of care in dealing with the administration of the charity as a prudent business person would exercise in managing their own affairs"*.
- Trusteeship is normally a voluntary, unpaid office. Section 185 of the Charities Act 2011 details the conditions where it is possible for trustees to be paid for services to a charity (e.g. if they are a builder they can be paid for building work but not for their work as a trustee). A trustee is entitled to be reimbursed for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred while on charity business.
- All trustees should act exclusively in the best interests of the charity. Therefore a trustee must not allow a situation to arise where their duty as a trustee conflicts with their own personal interest. Examples of a conflict of interest include a trustee who buys, sells or rents something to or from a charity (e.g. goods, land or a building). There would also be a conflict of interest if any close family members or business associates of a trustee were affected by such transactions.
- Trustees must meet regularly enough to ensure they retain control over the running of their organisation. Decisions are taken by a simple majority vote of those trustees present and voting at the meeting, unless the governing document makes some provision such as a casting vote for the Chair, or a greater majority for decisions on certain issues. It may be practical for the governing document to specify a quorum for trustee meetings; otherwise meetings will not be valid unless all trustees are in attendance.
- Trustees no longer need permission from the Charity Commission or their governing document before buying indemnity insurance. This can be purchased where the governing document simply states a general prohibition against personal benefit. Trustee Indemnity Insurance is not included in the Link Project group scheme but can be added as a separate policy, Speak to the Link Project for more details.

C.14 Charity Reserves (L)

Reserves are that part of a Link Scheme's income that is freely available to be spent on any of the Scheme's charitable purposes. Wiltshire Link Schemes are advised to hold reserves of approximately six months running costs.

Trustees have a duty to apply charity funds within a reasonable time of receiving them. They also have an implied power to retain income in reserves where it is in the best interests of the charity. If income is held in reserves without justification then this may amount to a breach of trust. Therefore it is important that an appropriate policy is formulated to justify the retention of such reserves based on the charity's needs. **(L)**

As a minimum the policy should cover the following.

- Reasons for reserves.
- Level of reserves required by the charity.
- Steps to be taken to reach and maintain that level.
- Arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the policy.

The policy should be based on a review of the following.

- Forecast income.
- Forecasts of expenditure against planned activity.
- Analysis and contingencies.

D Link Co-ordinators

D.1 Link Co-ordinators: An Overview

A Link Scheme is operated by a Co-ordinator or a team of Co-ordinators operating from their homes using a dedicated telephone line, either landline or mobile, with an answering machine or voicemail. The Co-ordinator is appointed by the Link Management Committee and is responsible to them. The following issues need to be taken into consideration.

1. Potential new Co-ordinators should be asked to apply using the Co-ordinators application form and a normal recruitment process should be followed.
2. Induction training should be given and a Co-ordinators induction pack issued. Training should be given on the use of the computerised booking system if appropriate.
3. In addition to the primary Co-ordinator, Link Schemes are encouraged to appoint relief Co-ordinators or operate teams of Co-ordinators.
4. The position of the Co-ordinator within the Link Scheme is that of a volunteer. However, due to the importance of the role it is recommended that the Co-ordinator is regularly invited to Management Committee meetings. However, in order to avoid conflicts of interest it is strongly advised that Co-ordinators do not become voting members of the Management Committee, nor trustees of the charity **(L)**.
5. Full reimbursement of expenses incurred by Co-ordinators is acceptable in line with HMRC guidelines **(L)**. Expenses must be claimed via the Link Scheme Expense Claim Form. Any other financial consideration needs to be specified clearly as it will be treated as income by HMRC and Jobcentre Plus.
6. The Management Committee should ensure there is no intention to create a contract of employment as this would lead to conflicts with employment legislation. The template Co-ordinator's Agreement may be used.
7. Regular time off should be arranged for all Co-ordinators.
8. Training and support seminars may be offered by the Link Project. Co-ordinators and potential Co-ordinators should attend when available and appropriate.
9. Link Project staff are available to discuss any issues and provide recruitment support if required.
10. A list of suggested questions coordinators can ask clients over the phone is included in the Annex.

D. 2 Link Co-ordinator Role Description

Personal qualities

Outgoing and friendly, a warm telephone manner, a good listener, a good communicator, flexible, well-organised, able to prioritise work load, work as part of a team, interested in people, and able to work in isolation.

Roles and Duties

The Co-ordinator will typically operate from home receiving requests from clients or other services. A dedicated telephone line, either land line or mobile, will be provided, with an answerphone or voicemail.

The Co-ordinator should undertake the following.

- If possible within the constraints on the Scheme find a volunteer to respond to each request. This may take several telephone calls.
- Ensure all requests are dealt with to an appropriate timescale and a volunteer asked to take on the job.
- Observe confidentiality at all times. Clients' details should be disclosed only to volunteers or another Co-ordinator **(L)**. See section I. Volunteers' telephone numbers should not be disclosed to clients.
- When a new client requests a service, explain the anonymous donation system.
- Send a welcome letter to each new client.
- Obtain contact details for clients' family or responsible person, in case of emergency.
- Note accurate details of requests and keep records (electronic or manual) and statistics. Sample forms are available. This facilitates the collation of annual statistics required by the Link Project.
- Assess each request according to the Eligibility Criteria policy (see Section J.4) and re-direct to other services as appropriate and use suggested coordinator questions to obtain client information. Please see Annex 4 for suggested coordinator questions
- Offer guidelines on the mileage rate and approximate length of journey if appropriate. The committee should decide guidelines for donations for other services.
- It may at times be appropriate to mention to some clients, for example individuals receiving certain benefits that they may be eligible for reimbursement of travel costs e.g. from Acute hospitals. Guidelines are available from the NHS.
- Liaise with the Volunteer Recruitment and Support Officer and maintain volunteer details as supplied by them.
- Attempt to use volunteers on an equitable basis.
- Use one volunteer for more than one client where possible, e.g. for journeys to a day centre.

- Emphasise to volunteers that any requests from clients for repeat services must be passed to the Co-ordinator.
- Deal with any concerns from volunteers about clients, and if necessary refer to another agency but only with the client's permission. Report concerns to a member of the Management Committee if appropriate.
- Ensure all requests made by family members, friends or healthcare professionals are made with the client's permission.
- Operate in accordance with the Link Scheme's operational policies.
- Report to the Management Committee.

E Volunteer Recruitment and Support

This section gives guidance on ways to recruit and retain volunteers, the roles of the Volunteer Recruitment and Support Officer, and the necessary 'DBS' checks.

E.1 Volunteer Recruitment and Support: An Overview

A Link Scheme is dependent on its volunteers to sustain the service. Getting the right people, and enough of them, are basic tasks for all Link Schemes.

Recruiting volunteers can refresh and reinvigorate a Link Scheme. A positive approach, combined with clear thinking and creativity, can make all the difference to your Link Scheme and the volunteers you attract. Volunteering is a positive commitment for many people and the Link Scheme's commitment to volunteers is to provide a safe framework in which they can carry out their tasks.

The Link Project has resources available to assist with volunteer recruitment such as posters and leaflets, and display boards. To book and use any of these resources please contact the Link Project. The Link Project may also be able to provide practical advice, support and volunteer listings through partner organisations.

E.2 Volunteer Recruitment Strategy

One of the greatest strengths of Wiltshire Link Schemes is their volunteer led structure. Volunteer recruitment should be a fundamental element of the work the Management Committee undertakes every year.

Link Schemes are advised and encouraged to think about volunteer recruitment all year round. A little time spent at the beginning of each year, developing or updating a volunteer recruitment strategy can save a Management Committee a considerable amount of time and frustration dealing with crisis campaigns for volunteer recruitment should things go awry.

A volunteer recruitment strategy should be developed by the whole Management Committee but the delivery of the strategy can be led by the Volunteer Recruitment and Support Officer.

Developing a volunteer recruitment strategy does not have to be an onerous task. A little thought about the communities covered will usually stimulate ideas on activities to add to a strategy. An example of a volunteer recruitment strategy is available from the Link Project.

A volunteer recruitment strategy should be laid out on a month by month basis and list activities that could be undertaken during that period and by whom. This allows a clear allocation of tasks and allows the Management Committee the opportunity to follow up on activity undertaken, identifying what might be working and what additional resources, if any, might be needed by the Volunteer Recruitment and Support Officer. Methods from the strategy can be used at different times in the year. Some will work better than others but you might be surprised at how effective a creative twist on an old idea can be.

A comprehensive strategy that delivers a little 'drip, drip' publicity helps to maintain a profile for the Link Scheme throughout the year. This provides a strong foundation for positive recruitment campaigns that attract new volunteers at different times of the year, responding to the changing needs of a Link Scheme.

Once the volunteer strategy has been written, and messages defined, there are different ways to get new recruits. Each community is different. Different people respond to different things.

E.3 Volunteer Recruitment and Support Officer

The Volunteer Recruitment and Support Officer will have the following roles and duties.

Roles

- Support the Management Committee to deliver its annual Volunteer Recruitment Strategy.
- Recruit and induct volunteers in accordance with the Link Scheme's policies and procedures.
- Provide ongoing support to existing volunteers.

Duties

- Co-ordinate recruitment according to Link Scheme policies and procedures.
- Development recruitment materials.
- Ensure detailed, up to date volunteer records are kept according to policies and procedures **(L)**. See section I.
- Support the Management Committee to regularly review recruitment policies and procedures.
- Report to Management Committee meetings and produce a written report as required for the Annual General Meeting.
- Liaise regularly with, and support the Co-ordinator/s, including keeping volunteer lists up to date **(L)**.
- Attending any relevant Link Project training.

- Consider volunteers' need for ongoing support and training[8] and inform volunteers of training offered by the Link Project or other agencies.
- Be available to deal with any concerns or questions volunteers may have, including liaison with other members of the Management Committee if appropriate.
- Assess the level of satisfaction of volunteers and any problems arising.
- Record and investigate any complaints or grievances with the Chair or other committee member according to the Scheme's policies and procedures.

E.4 Volunteer Recruitment Process

The Volunteer Recruitment and Support Officer is responsible for the following process.

1. When receiving an enquiry, chat to the potential volunteer about their skills and aims and possible roles, and explain the relevant processes.
2. Issue the potential volunteer with an application pack which includes:
    - a role description,
    - an application form,
    - details of Disclosure and Barring Service requirements, and
    - the mission statement.
3. Receive completed application forms and send for references.
4. When completed references are returned, organise a meeting with the Chair and possibly one other Management Committee member to consider the applications.
5. If an application is to be accepted the potential volunteer should be seen by the Volunteer Recruitment and Support Officer and one other member of the Management Committee.
6. The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks should be completed at this time **(L)**. See Section E.
7. On receiving a satisfactory DBS check, write to the volunteer accepting their application. A letter of acceptance should outline the process for induction and the induction pack can be included.
8. Carry out the volunteer's induction including requesting a passport size photograph for their identity badge.
9. Check the volunteer's driving licence, car insurance and MOT document. **(L)**
10. Consider a support meeting to help people get to know each other and discuss any problems. Introduce the Co-ordinator.
11. Receive and record the acceptance slip from the induction pack.
12. Issue the Link identity badge.
13. Arrange a mentor to support the new volunteer on their first few tasks.

[8] An informal coffee morning is a good way of supporting volunteers and letting them share experiences.

E.5 Diversity in Recruitment

Link Schemes sometimes find it difficult to get a diverse range of volunteers, especially if they rely largely on word of mouth. Diversity can be important in reflecting the composition of local communities and client groups and complying with the law on equality **(L)**. The following suggestions introduce some of the issues associated with recruiting from groups which may be under-represented as volunteers.

Disabled people

People's disabilities may not be their greatest concern as potential volunteers. The concerns they have may be due to a variety of reasons, just as for anyone else.

Take a proactive approach. Publicise the fact that you are keen to welcome disabled volunteers and show that you are accessible in the broadest sense; for example, by offering to produce information in large print. It is also important to choose effective places to advertise. But remember, disabled people visit the same places as everyone else.

Young people

Recent research has produced a wish list for what young people want from volunteering.

Flexibility - the most important factor, in terms of time and commitment.

Legitimacy - they need a favourable image of volunteering.

Ease of access - many young people simply don't know how to volunteer or who to contact.

Experience - young people want relevant, useful experience and the chance to learn new skills.

Incentives - stress the tangible outcomes of volunteering - what's in it for them.

Variety - in terms of both the type of work and the level of commitment.

Organisation - volunteering needs to be efficient but informal.

Laughs - volunteering must be fun!

Older people

The early retiree has been a staple of Link Scheme volunteering for many years, and the number of active older people has increased in recent years. Some companies and organisations including Nationwide, the John Lewis Partnership and the military, support their retired staff in volunteering. A recent study of volunteering by older people suggests that organisations need to think laterally so that older volunteers are given sufficiently challenging work to do, making the most of their skills and experience.

People from minority ethnic communities

A study of the experiences of volunteering within the black and ethnic minority community suggests that partnerships between mainstream voluntary organisations and black and ethnic minority voluntary organisations are a good way to help bring black and ethnic minority volunteering into the mainstream. You might also want to target your recruitment at community organisations such as religious or cultural centres, but you should seek advice from them about the best way to proceed.

Unemployed people

People who are unemployed often have a huge amount to offer a Link Scheme and can gain a great deal from volunteering. They need not put their benefits in jeopardy, although they should tell their JobCentre Plus about their volunteering.

Unemployed people can gain skills and experience from volunteering, and it can help them to remain in touch with the world of work. They are likely to want voluntary work that provides them with a chance to gain skills and experience that will be helpful in getting paid work.

E.6 Inductions

Induction is the process of preparing volunteers for a clear relationship with the Scheme, and a good understanding of how a 'Good Neighbour' service works. It should make new volunteers feel comfortable and ready to start. It should also ensure they understand the Scheme's history, ethos, structure and procedures so that they will contribute productively to the Scheme's work and have a positive volunteering experience. Even if a volunteer is already highly skilled, induction is essential.

A Link Scheme induction should provide answers to two main questions:

1. Why should I be volunteering for this Link Scheme. What is the Link Scheme's cause and what is it trying to achieve?
2. How will I be volunteering? What is expected of me and how should I do it?

Poor induction can lead to volunteers leaving soon after being recruited. Most Link Schemes provide an induction pack. Make sure your induction pack is tailored to your Scheme and is interesting to read.

E.7 Advertising for Volunteers

When recruiting volunteers try to sell the benefits of volunteering with a Link Scheme. As with any advertising it is critical to have a clear message. If a recruitment message is not clear you may recruit clients not volunteers.

The nature of this message will depend on your Link Scheme and the roles you want volunteers to take on. However, in general it should include the following.

- What the voluntary role is (e.g. driver, 'good neighbour', co-ordinator or committee member).
- What the Link Scheme does and what it wants to achieve.
- How a new volunteer can make a huge difference, and benefit personally.
- How flexible volunteering may be.
- How to find out more.

Most methods of recruitment elaborate on these five elements of the basic message. They are about ensuring that potential recruits are informed, motivated, and know how to get involved.

Motivations

It is useful to think about the possible motivations that people might have for becoming a volunteer. This can help design volunteering opportunities and influence recruitment messages.

Motivations for volunteering for a Link Scheme might include the following.

- Commitment to the aims of a Link Scheme. It is important to emphasise how their contribution will make a difference to clients and communities.
- Meeting people and making new friends. Volunteering can be a very sociable activity.
- Giving back to their communities and addressing a specific problem in the community. Some people want to use their skills for a good cause at a very local level and neighbours helping neighbours can be a very appealing concept.
- Keeping active and connected - more older people are now volunteering.
- Gaining 'work' experience and learning new skills
- Using existing skills.
- Having fun.
- Feeling useful.
- Getting out of the house.

Making it easy

Putting oneself forward as a volunteer can be quite daunting. People might not be sure what they are getting into and might be worried, for example, that they won't be up to it or that the commitment will end up being greater than they want. Therefore it is important to be flexible when taking on new recruits. Spend some time finding out what people are looking for, and what they have to offer.

Word of Mouth

Word of mouth is the best method of attracting new volunteers. Most volunteers are recruited by existing volunteers, or committee members, or via clients or supporters. Make sure everyone connected to your Scheme knows that you are trying to recruit and what the opportunities are. Consider sending a letter to existing volunteers along with a few small leaflets for them to distribute to friends and acquaintances. Opportunities to pass on information arise regularly in daily life when with friends, at school, at church or at the allotment. We can all create opportunities and possibilities. Make the best of these opportunities and utilise the volunteer resources available.

If existing committee members and volunteers are happy and motivated they will be more effective in recruiting new volunteers.

Do not rely on word of mouth for all your volunteer recruitment needs because you are likely to recruit 'more of the same'. Existing volunteers will tend to recruit people similar to themselves, and diversity is important.

Talks

Try to identify all the possible sources of new volunteers, e.g. parent and toddler groups, employment clubs, or the local WI. Setting up a talk or presentation can be a good way to introduce the Link Schemes to a new pool of potential volunteers. The Link Project can provide a video about what a Link Scheme does on a memory stick or CD. This gives a quick overview of what a Link Scheme does. The Link Project video can also be viewed online.

You might need to repackage the message to make it more appealing for different groups. Try to be as well-briefed as possible about the people you will be talking to and what is likely to appeal to them about volunteering. Existing volunteers or clients can provide effective inspiration. Remember your recruitment messages.

Make sure you bring printed information to support your talk, giving people the chance to go away and think before committing themselves. Be clear about how people can get involved or how to find out more if they are interested.

Events

Events such as Volunteers' Week or Carers' Week are great chances to recruit new volunteers. Perhaps consider having an exhibition stand in a shopping centre or as part of a pre-arranged event.

There are many places and events at which stalls can be set up, such as:

- In the local high street,
- at a local library,
- at fetes and carnivals,
- at career and recruitment fairs, and
- at railway stations.

Do consider whether permission is needed. Some Link Schemes play the Link Project video on a laptop to help explain the scheme.

Websites and Social Media

Increasingly, people use the internet to look for volunteering opportunities in their local area. Consider having your own website or Facebook page to advertise any vacancies. The Link Project can offer support. The Link Project also has its own website which has a 'Volunteering Opportunities' page Link Schemes can use and various social media opportunities. Volunteer adverts can be placed on the Link Scheme website and social media by contacting the Link Project. Schemes are also encouraged to contact Volunteer Centre Wiltshire. Linking to the Link Project video would also help explain the scheme.

Local Press and Radio

Coverage in local media might range from feature articles to brief news stories. Try to build a good relationship with local newspapers and radio stations, stressing the human interest of Link Schemes and the added value of local people getting involved to help the community.

A steady stream of coverage about a Link Scheme, its work and its volunteers will raise profile and aid recruitment. Press coverage can also be used as a form of public recognition for volunteers' work. Consider placing articles regularly in local village magazines, and distributing your own newsletter.

Celebrate the work you do as a Link Scheme. If you regularly write articles about the good work you are doing, that sense of pride and success will attract new volunteers. People want to volunteer for positive experiences, if you can show them the benefits of volunteering for a Link Scheme and keep the ongoing profile of the Scheme high, volunteers will probably not be far away. Examples of articles and many other resources are available from the Link Project and on the Link Project website.

Volunteer Centre

Wiltshire has an excellent Volunteer Centre. They put people in touch with organisations who need volunteers and may be able to provide further advice and support on working with volunteers. They are also able to put volunteering opportunities on the national volunteering database 'Volunteer Connect'. Link Schemes will need to register with them to access their services.

You can contact the Volunteering Centre on **0845 034 5250**
volunteer@developecs.org.uk
www.volunteercentrewiltshire.org.uk/.

Local Companies

When assessing your local area for possible sources of new volunteers you might come across local companies whose employees are keen to get involved. Try to get the support of someone senior in the company, for example to allow you to address a staff meeting. Once employees are volunteering, the company might also be willing to offer other kinds of support.

Posters and Leaflets

Posters and leaflets focussing on volunteer recruitment might need to follow other awareness raising as they may not have much impact unless people already know about Link Schemes. However, posters and leaflets can spread a message to a wider audience. Leaflets are a handy and attractive way of providing information to potential recruits. When designing printed information remember the recruitment messages and consider who the target audience is. Keep it simple and reflect the nature of the volunteering opportunity in the design.

Consider placing printed information in any of the following.

- Schools and colleges.
- Libraries.
- Town halls and other public buildings.
- GP and dental surgeries.
- Sports and leisure centres.
- Religious centres.
- Shop windows.
- Bars.
- Job Centres.
- Golf clubs.

Posters can stay up and leaflets be available for a long time, so try to ensure the information will not go out of date, and be aware that enquiries may continue to arrive over a long period.

E.8 Retaining and Supporting Volunteers

It is easy for Link Schemes to end up on the 'recruitment treadmill', constantly looking for more volunteers and better ways to recruit. This can make it easy to ignore the other end of the process - volunteers who are leaving. It is not always possible or desirable to keep the same volunteers for a long period of time, yet it is worth looking at what can be done to reduce the 'churn' of volunteers.

The better and more efficiently volunteers are treated, the better they will feel about the Link Scheme that they are donating their time to. Key things to bear in mind are clarity and consistency. Steps can be taken to make opportunities valuable enough for existing volunteers to want to stay.

Volunteers should know where they stand. This means:

- fully inducting volunteers,
- keeping volunteers advised of what they can expect,
- keeping volunteers advised of what the Link Scheme expects,
- having effective, up to date policies in place that volunteers are aware of and can access if needed,
- having a named Management Committee member to go to with problems,

- having clear problem solving and complaints procedures, and
- taking equal opportunities and diversity seriously.

Create a rewarding volunteer role

Building volunteer retention into your Link Scheme should start before volunteers are even recruited. Very few people are going to stay long in a volunteer role where they are not used by the service for which they volunteered.

The key is to think creatively about how you can use the volunteers you have in a way that is rewarding. For instance, is your Link Co-ordinator ensuring that all volunteers are being offered a similar or suitable number of journeys?

When drawing up a volunteer role description think about what is there in the role that would attract and keep volunteers? A chance to learn new skills? Meeting new people? What does the role have to offer in the medium to long term?

Be aware of volunteers' motivations – see Section E.7. An informal chat at the recruitment stage can be a helpful way of discovering a person's motivations. If a volunteer's needs are not met then the volunteer will either move to another organisation or into a different activity altogether. Most of us like to feel that we are a part of something. If volunteers feel marginalised they are less likely to want to continue volunteering.

Changing motivations

It makes sense to find out about volunteers' motivations and to monitor how well they are being fulfilled. Remember motivations can change over time, which makes communication with volunteers very important. Someone might start volunteering to give back to their community, but decide to stay because they enjoy the company of the people they support. Staying in touch with volunteers helps keep them involved in new developments and new volunteering opportunities that arise.

Ongoing support

It is very important for volunteers to have ongoing, good quality feedback and support, and for volunteers to know who to contact if they have problems.

If volunteers do have concerns it is better they have a chance to express them, before they decide to leave. They may need to change their level of commitment to meet other needs. The earlier you know about such issues the easier it is to find an acceptable solution.

Reward and recognition

There are ways to reward or recognise volunteers, such as certificates, parties, volunteer events, etc. But more important than the big gestures are the everyday things that let volunteers know they are valued. A simple 'thank you' goes a long way.

Volunteers should feel that they are an important part of the Link Scheme. They should be involved in decision making, and their achievements should be recognised. There are many ways of making volunteers feel involved and welcome.

Different people value different forms of recognition, so the following are suggestions for both formal and informal methods. Feel free to invent your own.

Formal

- Volunteer events, for example, as part of Volunteers' Week.
- Certificates. These could be an annual 'thank you', or after a fixed term, such as completion of a specific number of volunteering hours.
- Invitations to meetings that affect them, or to working groups.

Informal

- Saying 'thank you'.
- Making sure volunteers have enough tasks to do.
- Planning social events for volunteers.
- Consulting on informal matters.
- Being inclusive.

Exit interviews

One way to find out why a volunteer is leaving is to ask them. 'Exit interviews', questionnaires or informal chats might reveal issues in your organisation that need addressing.

Some questions you might ask are these.

- Did the Link Scheme give a clear picture of what was expected of them when they volunteered?
- Did they receive task or role descriptions?
- Have any problems and issues they raised been dealt with efficiently and effectively?
- Did they have a designated person to talk to about any concerns or problems they might have, and was this person easily accessible?
- Was the Scheme clear about reimbursing expenses to volunteers?
- Are there clear lines of communication within the Scheme?
- Were they clear about the contribution they were making to your Scheme, its service users and the wider community?

Even if there is no apparent problem, exit interviews are a useful tool for monitoring how you engage volunteers within the Link Scheme. Remember that people leaving the organisation are likely to be more candid than they would otherwise be.

E.9 Disclosure and Barring Service Checks(L)

As part of their commitment to good practice Link Schemes ask all volunteers to have an Enhanced DBS check. All new applicants should be informed of the process and supplied with copies of the DBS Confidentiality Policy and the Recruitment of Ex-offenders Policy (see Section J).

- A Link Scheme undertakes to follow the DBS code of practice[9] and comply with the Data Protection Act 2008 **(L)**. See Section I.
- Individual Link schemes are responsible for undertaking DBS checks for volunteers. The Link Project currently has an agreement with Wiltshire Council to undertake DBS checks through their DBS Team, using an online portal. DBS checks for volunteers are currently free of charge although there is an administration charge. The Community Transport team at Wiltshire Council has provided extra funding to cover this administration charge. The Link Project is invoiced directly by Wiltshire Council so Link Schemes should not be invoiced directly. The Link Project currently pays the administration charge from Link grants, however this may be subject to change and new schemes should check with the Link Project before contacting Wiltshire Council.
- Schemes may wish to use an alternative checking service but must be aware that administration fees may still be applicable and the Link Project may not be able to reimburse costs incurred.
- At least two Management Committee members should be assigned as 'evidence checkers', sometimes referred to as verifiers, to complete the DBS procedure. Contact the Recruitment Department at Wiltshire Council on **01225 718 040** or recruitment@wiltshire.gov.uk. Each evidence checker/verifier will be given their own login to the DBS Wiltshire website.
- Volunteers must provide suitable ID from a list provided by Wiltshire Council. The evidence checker/ verifier must see original ID documentation not copies.
- The evidence checker/verifier and the volunteer fill in the online form. The volunteer enters their name, address and ID with the evidence checker/verifier present. Then the applicant confirms their personal details (which can either be done there and then with the evidence checker/verifier or remotely from a home computer), and the application is sent off.
- When making a DBS application on behalf of a new volunteer or trustee within the 'Position Applied for' section of the DBS (online) application you will need to ensure that the application covers checks relating to people working/volunteering with adults (select 'Adult Workforce').
- There is no set time period for an application process. Wiltshire Council recruitment department can view details online to check the progress of an application.
- The volunteer receives notification of the result through the post, and informs the Volunteer Recruitment and Support Officer of the decision. If there are no

[9] www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/143662/cop.pdf

disclosures the volunteer is able to start working with the Link Scheme when their induction is complete. The Link Scheme is not automatically notified of the result, but can check via the DBS system.

- In the event of the check coming back with a 'positive disclosure', i.e. something on a person's record which may raise a question over them working with the Scheme, the Link Chairperson will be informed. The Chairperson and the second nominated committee member evidence checker interview the applicant. The applicant will also be able to speak to the police liaison officer at County Hall.
- DBS checks should be renewed for each volunteer every 3 years; alternatively schemes are encouraged to sign up to the DBS update service. The update service is Free of Charge for volunteers and managed directly by government https://www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service. The update service lets applicants keep their DBS certificates up to date online and allows employers to check a certificate online. A template DBS Update Service declaration for volunteers is included in the Annex.

F Volunteer Activity and Guidance

This section gives an overview and guidance on the roles and responsibilities of volunteers and the activities that they might undertake.

F.1 Link Volunteer Role Description

Main Duties

To carry out tasks which could be expected of a good neighbour, at the request of the Link Co-ordinator. These requests will take into account the volunteer's availability and the services they are prepared to offer as in their application form.

A volunteer will be expected to do the following.

- Understand and operate according to the Link Mission Statement **(L)**.
- Maintain client confidentiality at all times.
- Wear the Link identity badge.
- Display the Hospital Parking Card whenever appropriate.
- Hand donation envelopes to clients.
- Return donation envelopes as agreed.
- Submit expense claims regularly.
- Advise the Co-ordinator of dates when unavailable.
- Refer clients needing further help to the Co-ordinator.
- Report any concerns about clients to the Co-ordinator.
- Protect privacy by not disclosing their telephone number to clients unless previously agreed with the Co-ordinator.
- Be aware of health and safety in respect of themselves and the client.
- Be familiar with Link Scheme policies.
- Undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service check **(L)**.
- Undertake training if appropriate.

F.2 Link Volunteer Drivers (L)

The Link Scheme is grateful for the time volunteers give as drivers and hope that it is an enjoyable experience for them. The following guidelines are intended to promote the safety of Volunteer Drivers and clients.

Volunteers, driving, and their vehicles

- The Link Management Committee has a legal responsibility to ensure that vehicles used on Link journeys are safe and legal **(L)**. Vehicles must have current MOT, tax and appropriate insurance, and the Volunteer Driver must have a current, valid, driver's licence.
- Volunteer Drivers should be made aware that they are required to confirm these details and happy to be contacted by a Committee Member to do so, on an annual basis. **(L)**
- MOT, tax and insurance checks can be made online using the Volunteer Drivers car registration number and vehicle make. It is important to ask the Volunteer Driver's permission to make these checks as if you do not have permission you may be in breach of section 55 of the data protection act 1998.
    - Checking that a valid MOT and Vehicle Tax is in place can be made via https://www.vehicleenquiry.service.gov.uk/ .
    - Checking insurance is in place can be made via http://ownvehicle.askmid.com/
    - Drivers licence checks including information about penalty points and disqualification can also be retrieved online but it is up to the volunteer driver to share their information electronically. They can do this through via https://www.gov.uk/view-driving-licence
- If a Volunteer Driver incurs any motoring convictions they must inform the Volunteer Recruitment and Support Officer. Any convictions acquired will be considered by the Management Committee and the suitability of the Volunteer Driver to continue will be assessed. **(L)**
- Volunteer Drivers are responsible for their own fitness to drive including their eyesight, and awareness of the effects of any medication they are taking, the effects of alcohol and tiredness **(L)**.
- Community First strongly recommend volunteer drivers are asked to have a SAGE driving assessment (or equivalent) upon reaching 79 years old and then repeated every 3 years in line with the driving licence renewal . Community First also encourage all Link Schemes to discuss the subject of driving assessments with new and existing volunteer drivers of any age.
- Private cars are subject to legislation regarding smoking, and Link Volunteer Drivers must observe recent changes to legislation regarding smoking in a car with anyone under 18 years, which came into effect on 1st October 2015. **(L)** The Management Committee should also request that clients' views are respected

if the Link Volunteer Driver smokes. Clients wishing to smoke in a Volunteer Driver's vehicle should also ask the permission of the Volunteer Driver.

- All Volunteer Drivers and passengers should wear appropriate seat belts at all times. **(L)**
- Volunteer Drivers must comply with all driving legislation and the Highway Code. **(L)**

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents has produced a Volunteer Driver's Handbook available at www.rospa.com.

Insurance for Link Volunteer Drivers

- Volunteer Drivers should be strongly advised to inform their insurance company that they are using their vehicle as a volunteer driver. The Link Scheme should provide the Link Volunteer Driver with a list of insurance companies which are committed to supporting Volunteer Drivers by not raising premiums as a consequence of volunteer driving activities. Information regarding companies who sign up to the Association of British Insurers Volunteer Driving – the motor insurance commitment - can be found at www.abi.org.uk
- Each Link Scheme must have Public Liability insurance which protects both volunteers and clients. The main elements of the policy should include the following.
    - Cover to protect against responsibility for personal injury or damage to property due to negligence up to a maximum of five million pounds.
    - Personal Accident cover to benefit volunteers if they sustain an injury while engaged in Link Scheme activity. Full benefits would apply to anyone between the ages of 16 - 75 and reduced benefits to anyone between 75 and 85. The insurer should be informed if volunteers are over 85 years.

  This cover may vary from Scheme to Scheme. Details of the policy are usually available from the Treasurer. See Section I for more on insurance. **(L, F)**

Parking

- The Link Project has negotiated parking concessions for volunteers that change on a year to year basis. The Management Committee should ensure that the most recent 'Link Parking Guidelines' document is available to all Volunteer Drivers. It is available from the Link Project and can be found on the Wiltshire Link Scheme website.
- The Link Volunteer will be responsible for any parking fines incurred as a result of not following the Link Parking Guidelines.

Claiming Expenses

- Any mileage allowance received by Volunteer Drivers should be tax free, subject to HMRC limits. **(L)**
- Volunteer Drivers should ensure that they log their full mileage and time on their expense claim form. Travelling expenses are currently paid at rate of up to 45 pence per mile and Volunteer Drivers may also claim for other out of pocket expenses. **(L)**

- Expense claim forms should be submitted to the Treasurer by the end of each calendar month.
- Donation envelopes should be handed in, unopened, to the Treasurer at the same time as expense claims.
- The Treasurer will arrange payment and provide a fresh claim form and more donation envelopes.

Booking a Journey: How the System Works

When a client calls for help, the following procedure is followed.

- The Co-ordinator checks the volunteer records to find:
  - the volunteer nearest to the client or most suited to the task, and
  - whether the volunteer can undertake the task.
- The Co-ordinator rings the volunteer to check on availability and to give the client's location.
- If the volunteer is available, the Co-ordinator logs the details of the task and rings the client to confirm acceptance, give details of which volunteer to expect, and to explain the donation system.
- The volunteer arrives at the requested time at the client's home.
- At the conclusion of the task the volunteer offers the client a donation envelope. This should be sealed in the presence of the client.
- If the client asks for a 'follow-on' task to be done this should be booked through the Co-ordinator. For insurance reasons it is important that all tasks are logged.

F.3 Non-driving Link Volunteers

The Link Scheme is grateful for the time non-driving volunteers give and hope that it is an enjoyable experience for them. The following guidelines are intended to promote the safety of non-driving volunteers and clients.

For volunteers undertaking non-driving tasks it is extremely important that they are made aware of boundaries from the outset. This forms an important part of the risk management process. It is good practice to have a clear and consistent written document outlining the 'do's and 'don'ts' of the volunteer roles they are undertaking. Some suggestions around 'dos' and 'don'ts' for befriending and the 'good neighbour role' are given below.

Do

- Be prepared to listen and let the client talk.
- Observe confidentiality at all times but if a client asks you to keep something confidential tell them that if it causes you concern you will inform the Link Co-ordinator.
- Let the Link Co-ordinator know if you have to cancel a visit.
- Keep to set days and times for visits unless discussed with the Link Co-ordinator.

- Be helpful and sensitive.
- Leave immediately if you feel unsafe or uncomfortable and inform the Link Co-ordinator.
- Inform the Link Co-ordinator of any concerns or incidents such as regarding behaviours or deteriorating health.
- Respect the client as an individual.
- Keep any dogs on a lead
- Follow safety guidelines when using power tools and preferably use the volunteers own tools.
- Keep a record on any accidents in an accident book

Don't

- Accept gifts from clients.
- Open or administer medication.
- Purchase un-prescribed medicines.
- Undertake any form of personal care e.g. toileting, washing, dressing.
- Perform any tasks that you do not feel comfortable with and never do tasks that require a professional tradesperson.
- Lift or move heavy objects.
- Become involved in family disputes or personal affairs.
- Enforce religious or political opinions on a client.
- Give personal contact details to the client unless discussed first with the Link Co-ordinator.

These lists are not exhaustive and will depend on the task undertaken by the Link Volunteer and the Link Scheme involved.

Simple risk assessment of good neighbour tasks

Following discussion with Wrightsure, whom the Link insurance policy is arranged through, it is advisable that Link Schemes carry out a simple risk assessment before a good neighbour task is carried out. This assessment should be logged by the Link Scheme.

Personal Care

- Under no circumstances should a volunteer be involved in the personal care of a client at any time. This type of support is beyond the remit of a Link Scheme and the training of the volunteers, and poses too great a risk to the clients, volunteers and Link Scheme itself.

A Hints and Tips Guide for home visits and outdoor work is included in the Annex.

F.4 Guidance for Supporting Clients with Complex Needs

Wiltshire Link Schemes are increasingly being asked to support clients with complex physical and behavioural issues. These guidelines are intended to inform the Management Committee and be the foundation of local procedures on how best to support and protect these clients, as well as volunteers and the Link Scheme itself.

Manual Handling

- Volunteers Drivers are generally not trained in manual handling techniques. The Link Project advises that only clients who are able to move themselves into and out of a Volunteer Driver's vehicle should be supported via the Link Scheme transport service.
- Transport can be offered to wheelchair users provided that they are able to get themselves into and out of the vehicle without volunteer support. It is essential that a suitable Volunteer Driver (and vehicle) undertakes the journey as they will usually be required to physically handle the wheelchair on behalf of the client.
- While a 'helping arm' may be offered on occasion, general manual handling of clients, for example, into and out of chairs in the home, is not advised. Common sense should be used when supporting people who are frail. The important issue is to ensure the safety of both the client and the volunteer.
- Many Link Schemes find it difficult to turn away clients with severe mobility issues, but volunteers are the most valuable asset that a Link Scheme has and if they are hurt as a result of undertaking work, other vulnerable clients that could have been supported will have to go without help.

Mental Health Issues

- Where support is of a non-transport nature, for example shopping or befriending, it is recommended that Link Schemes have policies in place to support volunteers to undertake such work. These might include (but are not limited to):
    - Safeguarding/Protection of Vulnerable Adults policy and DBS checks**(L)**,
    - Lone Working policy, and
    - Cash Handling policy.

The Link Project can provide sample policies.

Dementia

- Support can be offered to clients with varying degrees of dementia. The level of support should be decided on a case by case basis dependent on the client's needs.
- Independent escorts can remove barriers that might prevent clients with dementia from accessing the service. For example, a client who is known to have advancing dementia may need an independent escort to accompany them on a journey to take responsibility for the client's behaviour and allow the Volunteer Driver to drive safely. It is recommended that the Link Scheme arrange the transport directly with the client where possible to ensure that they are able to fully understand a client's needs.
- Link Schemes need to recognise that the needs of a client with dementia will change over time and they need to have robust policies in place which allow them to respond should those needs affect the safety of the client or volunteers.
- It is acceptable for Link Schemes to refuse support if they are unable to provide the Link Service in a way which is safe for the volunteer and the client.

Behavioural Concerns

- The Link Scheme service is open to the most vulnerable within our communities and all clients should be treated equitably and with respect. There may be occasions where a client exhibits behaviour that puts both the client and volunteer at risk. On-going support for clients exhibiting this behaviour should be decided on a case by case basis dependent on the client's needs.
- Clients exhibiting inappropriate or unsafe behaviour should be given the opportunity to address and adjust the behaviour in question before the Link service is withdrawn. However in cases where the Management Committee deems the behaviour to pose too great a risk to the volunteer or the client then the service may be withdrawn immediately.
- Independent escorts can be a way to remove barriers that might prevent clients with behavioural issues from accessing the service. For example, a client who has previously used Link services and has exhibited behaviour that has placed both the client and driver at risk should have an independent escort to accompany them on the journey to take responsibility for the clients' behaviour and allow the Link Volunteer to drive safely. It should be the responsibility of the client/service provider requesting the transport to provide the independent escort, not the Link Scheme.

- It is recommended that the Link Scheme arranges the transport directly with clients where possible (rather than through a third party) to ensure they are able to fully understand a client's needs. If booking the journey through a service provider such as a healthcare professional, ask if the client needs any additional support and ask them to provide an escort where appropriate.
- Link Schemes strive to help as many people as possible, but it is important to recognise that Link Schemes are not able to meet the needs of everybody and a Link Scheme might not always be the most appropriate service to help. It is acceptable for Link Schemes to refuse support if they are unable to provide the Link service in a way which is safe for the volunteer and client.

F.5 Risk Assessments

All activities undertaken by a Link Scheme, including those outlined above, should be fully risk assessed and risk assessments should be reviewed on an annual basis. See Section I.

F.6 Guidance for Health Related Journeys

The most frequent requests made to Link Schemes are for transport assistance to medical appointments. There are alternatives for some patients, although arrangements are different across the county. While these journeys are priorities both for individuals and Link Schemes, consideration should be given to the following.

- Has the client requested transport via the Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service (the old ambulance car service)?
- Is it possible that there are non-driving volunteers who would be willing to accompany a client on the bus?
- Link Schemes are receiving more requests to undertake journeys to hospitals some distance away. These requests should be carefully considered both in terms of time and financial resources. Non- Emergency Patient Transport eligibility is the same for these journeys as for others.
- Patients who have had a general anaesthetic should not be transported by a volunteer unless they have an independent escort. This is also advisable for patients who have had conscious or twilight sedation.
- Clients with oxygen cylinders may be transported if the volunteer and Coordinator agrees. Precautions should be taken; ideally the oxygen cylinder should be secured in the boot of the car (but not left there for long periods), however where it is needed for use during the journey this may not be possible. In order to prevent the cylinder from becoming a missile it is essential that it is secured within the vehicle. A no smoking policy should be strictly enforced and a warning sign indicating that the vehicle is carrying oxygen should be displayed in the window. In addition it is sensible to keep a window open for ventilation so that oxygen does not accumulate in the car and avoid using

a fuel station while the oxygen is in use. It may also be advisable to inform the vehicle insurance company.

- Patients undergoing chemotherapy or radiotherapy may be entitled to transport through the Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service. If frequent journeys are required sharing the load with the Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service is an option.
- Clients receiving certain types of benefits may be refunded under the Healthcare Travel Cost Scheme. Details of this scheme can be provided by Reception at each hospital.
- Relatives and friends visiting patients can be asked to travel with someone attending an appointment.
- Link Schemes are not an emergency service and should not respond to requests from surgeries or community hospitals to take people in for x-rays or other assessments at short notice.

F.7 Procedure for handling serious illness or accident during tasks

1. The volunteer should immediately contact the Coordinator, who will help to call further assistance, i.e. police, ambulance, etc. Should the Coordinator be unavailable, the volunteer should firstly call the Chairperson and if unavailable, another member of the Management Committee.
2. The Coordinator should inform firstly the Chairperson and if unavailable, another member of the Management Committee to attend the incident and provide support for the volunteer.
3. If the health of the client has been affected by the incident, the Coordinator, Chairperson or Management Committee member should inform any close family member of the client, or any person responsible for the client.
4. Following the incident the Chairperson and Volunteer Recruitment and Support Officer should provide on-going support for the volunteer, if necessary.
5. Contact to be maintained with relatives of the client, if applicable.
6. After the event the procedure should be reviewed and if necessary, revised.
7. It is important for the Link Scheme to have contact details for a client's family or other responsible person, in case of emergency.

G Funding

The Link Project, backed by Wiltshire Council and NHS Wiltshire, is committed to ensuring that all Wiltshire Link Schemes remain fully operational and well-funded. If any Scheme has any financial concerns or is experiencing any type of financial difficulties, please contact the Link Project for support.

G.1 New Link Schemes

Grants are available from funding partners to set up new Link Schemes in Wiltshire. The size of the grant will depend on the size of the proposed Link Scheme. This grant funding is managed by the Link Project on behalf of the funding partnership. Application forms and further information can be requested from the Link Project. See also Section B.

G.2 Grants and Donations

The Link Scheme service is free to clients **(L)** but they are asked to make a voluntary, anonymous donation in return for the services they receive.

Link Schemes obtain a significant proportion of their income in donations from clients. However, there is usually a shortfall between the cost of their journeys and the donations received. On average Link Schemes recover 90% of mileage expenses in donations.

Annual grants are available from the Link Project to support schemes operating with less than six months annual running costs.

Financial responsibility for the Link Scheme rests with the Management Committee not its volunteers or its clients.

G.3 Guidance on Donations

The intention of this section is to provide guidance on how to operate an inclusive and appropriate donations policy that allows all clients to access the service whilst ensuring the Scheme's financial sustainability. A sample donations policy is available from the Link Project.

- A robust and effective donations policy is central to the service provided by a Link Scheme and is also a requirement of grant aid from the statutory authorities. When setting your donations policy please remember the underlying ethos of the Wiltshire Link Schemes:

  'While no direct charge is made by Wiltshire Link Schemes for the service they deliver, they do depend on the donations they receive in order to continue to operate'.

- Link Schemes are able to set their own donations policies but must take into account the following principles to minimise associated risk.
  - Be consistent. What applies to one client must be applied to all clients.
  - The support offered is not a means tested service. A client's ability to donate more should not be judged or the Link Scheme could risk severe legal consequences as a result of operating in a discriminatory way.
  - Donations must remain confidential from drivers. Not only does this ensure that clients of all financial standings are able to confidently utilise the Link Scheme but it ensures that drivers are protected against claims of operating for 'reward and hire' **(L)**.
- If a Link Scheme is concerned about the level of donations it is receiving, the Link Project recommends they occasionally remind their clients, perhaps on an annual basis, of the cost of running the service and give guidelines outlining suggested donations. This could be done by:
  - newsletters,
  - a letter directly to each individual client,
  - the co-ordinator informing clients from a standard example list, and
  - an announcement at meetings and AGMs.
- The Link Project does not recommend:
  - volunteer drivers directly telling clients the 'cost' of a journey, nor
  - the carrying of lists which give costs or tariffs to show clients.

It is essential that donations are seen as donations and that they cannot be misconstrued as charges, payments or tariffs, as this could have an impact on the personal car insurance of the Volunteer Drivers who may be seen as offering a service from reward and hire **(L)**. The best way to protect your Volunteer Drivers against this kind of risk is to ensure that the donations remain anonymous and confidential with a robust donations policy and procedure in place.

Journeys outside Wiltshire

Wiltshire Link Schemes are being asked more frequently to support clients to attend medical appointments at hospitals outside Wiltshire. For most Wiltshire Link Schemes this may have a severe financial impact. To mitigate this impact as much as possible, a Link Scheme may implement a policy asking for a donation for all journeys over a set mileage (the Link Project suggests 50 miles). This requested donation must be equal to or less than the actual cost of the journey to the Link Scheme.

For example:

- The journey is a 63 miles round trip.
- Link Scheme mileage rate = 45p/mile.
- The Link Scheme is able to ask for a donation of up to £28.35, i.e. 63 x 45p.

If a Link Scheme decides to implement this policy, then it must be implemented in full, for all clients.

G.4 Grants from the Funding Partnership

A Funding Partnership has been established between Wiltshire Council, Wiltshire NHS Clinical Commissioning Group and Community First (via the Link Project).

Annual grants

Annual grants are available from the Link Project to supplement income received through donations and fundraising activity. The amount of grant that can be claimed is based on the number of journeys and tasks completed over a one year period. To be eligible for operational grant support Link Schemes are required to have no more than six months unreserved running costs in any account/s and to have certain policies and procedures in place. The full criteria and documentation requirements are set out on the application form as agreed by the funding partnership. For full details see Section G.5.

Development and Innovation Grants

Grants of up to £1,000 are available throughout the year to help schemes invest in their development or trial a new idea. Grants may cover a range of non-revenue activities including equipment, marketing and feasibility studies.

Emergency Grants

If any Scheme has any financial concerns or is experiencing any type of financial difficulties, please contact the Link Project. Emergency grants are available in exceptional circumstances.

G.5 Statutory Funding Grant Aid Criteria

Service Level Agreement

The funding partnership has negotiated a Service Level Agreement under which Community First (via the Link Project) will distribute grant aid to Wiltshire Link Schemes.

Link Schemes are able to apply for one off grants allocated to Link Schemes according to the number of journeys and tasks carried out.

Journeys and Tasks undertaken per year	Maximum grant available
Over 2,000	£5,200
Over 1,000	£3,600
Over 500	£2,600
Under 500	£1,200

Figures relating to the population and miles travelled will be used as 'back up' criteria.

Schemes which are adversely affected by the above criteria or who are experiencing financial difficulty will be assessed individually and may be eligible for a one-off payment to assist with any deficit.

The following grant funding criteria apply.

1. Providing a service to the local population (within the defined area covered by the scheme) which meets the general requirements as set out in Section A.
2. Meeting standards of Good Practice, and providing evidence if requested.
3. Confirming that the scheme meets all legal and regulatory requirements.
4. Equal opportunities policy on place.
5. Complaints procedure in place.
6. Grievance procedure in place.
7. No balance, in any account, of more than six months unreserved running costs[10].
8. Link Co-ordinator role description, support procedures and contract in place.
9. Volunteer Recruitment and Induction procedures and ongoing volunteer system in place.
10. Donations policy in place.
11. Volunteer expenses procedure in line with all relevant HMRC regulations.
12. Protection of Vulnerable Adults policy in place.

[10] New Link Schemes (i.e. those who have been operating for less than 3 years from the launch date) will be exempt from the general rule on reserves. Application forms from these Schemes will be assessed according to their individual situation.

13. All Link Scheme volunteers, and all those trustees and committee members likely to be in contact with clients, are DBS checked. Preferably all trustees and committee members should be DBS checked.
14. Recording and providing data annually on all trips and tasks undertaken as requested by the Link Project.
15. Forward to Community First with the grant application:
    - Annual Report of Chairperson.
    - Annual Report of Co-ordinator.
    - Most recent annual accounts, independently examined (unaudited accounts accepted).
    - Proposed budget for next financial year.

G.6 Development and Innovation Grants

Small development and innovation grants are now available for all Wiltshire Link Schemes. These funds are administered by Community First on behalf of the funding partnership via the Grant Fund. All decisions are based on the guidelines below.

- A maximum of £1,000 can be applied for to cover the total costs of a project or towards part funding of a project.
- Grants can be for specific projects (including publicity) and/or items of equipment to be purchased which will be of benefit to the individual Scheme.
- A minimum of two separate quotes for work requested or equipment should be obtained where appropriate and submitted with the application form.
- Applications can be submitted at any time of the year and each will be dealt with on its own merits.
- Normal grant criteria as in Section G.5 apply, however, reserves will be taken into account but having more than 6 months does not preclude you from applying
- A current financial statement should be submitted.

G.7 Alternative Sources of Funding

Link Project staff are able to provide funding advice on request.

Further funding advice can also be sought from:

Wiltshire Community Foundation, Sandcliffe House, 21 Northgate St, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 1JX
01380 729284
www.wiltshirecf.org.uk

G.8 Local Town and Parish Councils

Wiltshire Link Schemes are strongly supported throughout Wiltshire by local government. As a result local town or parish councils are a good source of additional funding and should be approached to financially support a local Link Scheme. The Parish or Town Council can contribute through their powers under the Local Government and Rating Act 1997 s26.

G.9 Local Fund Raising

There may be a need for some local fund-raising to supplement income from donations and grant aid. A small fund raising event can:

- raise money,
- provide an opportunity for committee members, volunteers and users to get together,
- raise the profile of the Scheme,
- provide an opportunity to recruit volunteers, and
- be good fun!

Some ideas to begin with

- Stalls at local events.
- Coffee mornings.
- Bring and Buy.
- Selling Christmas goods e.g. through the Webb Ivory catalogue.
- Selling promotional goods e.g. pens, key fobs, sweatshirts, t-shirts.
- Collection tins can be left in reasonably secure locations, e.g. doctors' surgeries, libraries, local shops, pubs.

Regular events

Individual Link Schemes often run their own regular events which combine fundraising with bringing everyone together and sometimes with submitting mileage claims and paying out expenses.

Other organisations

Other local organisations may consider supporting the Link Scheme from their local fundraising drives, e.g. carnival committees, hospital leagues of friends, darts teams, churches.

Community First has produced a Fundraising Guide with a range of fundraising tips and ideas. Please contact the Link Project for a copy.

H Gift Aid

H.1 Gift Aid: an overview (L)

- All financial donations made by a UK tax-payer can qualify for gift aid **(L)**.
- There are two Gift Aid schemes, the 'Main Scheme', and the 'Small Donations Scheme' for small cash donations of £20 or less up to a threshold of £5,000 of donated 'Small Donations' per Link scheme per year **(L)**
- The donor must pay income tax or capital gains tax equal to the amount being claimed by the charity **(L)**.

H.2 Gift Aid in Practice (L)

- Before your Link Scheme can claim Gift Aid on a donation made by an individual you need to obtain a Gift Aid declaration from that donor and advise them that they will need to pay at least as much UK Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax (for the tax year in which they donate) as all the charities they donate to will reclaim on their donations **(L)**.
- You need to nominate someone in your charity, perhaps the Treasurer, to be an authorised official or nominee **(L)**. This means that they can claim/receive money on behalf of your Link Scheme.
- Gift Aid can also be applied for on donated expenses from volunteers and donations from other sources where tax is payable.
- The Treasurer will need to record the amount of donations made by each donor and reclaim the tax using the appropriate form **(L)**.
- You must be able to show that your Gift Aid claims are accurate and that all the conditions of Gift Aid are met. The records must also provide an audit trail linking each donation to an identifiable donor who has given a valid Gift Aid declaration.
- Link Schemes wishing to take advantage of Gift Aid need to devise a system which continues to protect the anonymity of the donor. A simple system should be able to keep track of donations from particular clients with only the treasurer being aware of the amount donated.
- A Link Scheme must keep records of donations received and the Gift Aid declarations relating to those donations (including any that are cancelled) for six years **(L)**.

- Linking cash donations to Gift Aid declarations is essential and needs care. The Link Project suggests that once a client signs a Gift Aid declaration, they are allocated a unique 'Gift Aid' number.
- The Link scheme may then issue several 'Gift Aid numbered' envelopes to the client to use when they wish to make a donation. This will enable the Treasurer to easily link the donation to the declaration. Another way of creating this link is to print a section on all donation envelopes 'Gift Aid Number: _____________' and asking those who have signed a declaration to add their number, again creating a simple audit trail and a link for the Treasurer.
- A gift aid declaration form can be sent to regular clients who may be taxpayers. If the form is returned, the treasurer would then allocate a number to the client and send them notification of it requesting that they should in future write it in the corner of the donation envelopes.
- You can reclaim tax from HMRC on the 'gross' equivalent of donations. The basic rate is currently 20% which means you work out the amount of tax you can reclaim by dividing the amount donated by four. This is because you actually claim their value *before* tax was deducted at the basic rate. This means that for every £1 donated, you can claim an extra 25 pence.

H.3 HMRC (L)

- HMRC may ask to see the declarations so you must keep these records to support your Gift Aid claims. It is important to remember that every donation included in a claim must be supported by a Gift Aid declaration.
- HMRC provides 'model' Gift Aid declaration examples[11]. By using a model declaration, and making sure your donor completes it in full, you can be confident that the declaration meets HMRC requirements. You must also keep a record of declarations that have been cancelled by the donor, including the date the cancellation takes effect. A suitable example declaration for Link Schemes can be found at the end of this section.
- You do not have to register as a charity to claim Gift Aid but a Link Scheme must be recognised by HMRC as a charity for tax purposes before HMRC will accept a Gift Aid claim.
- To register as a charity for tax purposes with HMRC you need to ensure that your managers are 'fit and proper persons' and that they make a declaration to this effect. A manager is anyone in your charity with control over the finances, so certainly the Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary, and anyone on the Management Committee with control over expenditure. You will need to keep the 'fit and proper person declarations' (do not send them to HMRC unless they ask for them) while the person is with your Link Scheme and for four years after they leave.
- You complete the registration form at: www.gov.uk/charity-recognition-hmrc.

[11] www.hmrc.gov.uk/charities/gift_aid/declarations.htm

- Once HMRC recognises you as a charity for tax purposes, they set up a record so that any claims you make can be processed. HMRC will give you a reference number to use on all claims and correspondence. You will only be able to claim relief from the date from which HMRC recognises your Link Scheme became eligible. This date is known as the effective date. HMRC will tell you what this is when they send you the reference number.
- For more help you can contact the Charities Helpline. Select option two for registering a charity for Gift Aid or charitable status.
  8.00 am to 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday,
  Closed weekends and bank holidays
  0845 302 0203
- Once your Link Scheme has been registered you are automatically eligible to start making claims under the Main Gift Aid Scheme.

H.4 Making a Gift Aid Claim – Main Scheme Only

- Advice on making a claim, how to sign up, enrol and use the Charities Online service is available online.
- To make claims you need to record the donations you receive on a schedule spreadsheet and attach it to your online claim. Schedule spreadsheets are also available online. You can use the schedule to record donations from individuals, or from sponsored events. You can also add together or 'aggregate' donations of £20 or less from different donors and show them as a single entry on the spreadsheet, provided that the total donation on one line is not more than £1000.
- You must have valid Gift Aid declarations for all the donations shown in the schedule spreadsheet, which you should retain for your records for at least six years.
- Donations that qualify for the Main Gift Aid Scheme can be claimed on gifts of money from individuals, sole traders or partnerships, in any of the following forms:
  - cash,
  - cheque,
  - direct debit,
  - credit or debit card,
  - postal order,
  - standing order or
  - telegraphic transfer.
- Gifts made by cheque only count as received once the cheque has cleared. Your Link Scheme can accept gifts of money made in sterling or any foreign currency.

H.5 Payments that do not qualify (L)

Payments that do not qualify for the Gift Aid Main Scheme include the following.

- Donations of money from a company.
- Donations in the form of a loan waiver or debt conversion - for example an individual may lend money to your Link Scheme and then, at a later date, agree that it does not have to be paid back - this is not a gift of money it is the waiver of a loan.
- Gifts made on behalf of other people for example a membership subscription paid on behalf of somebody else - this is a gift of membership from the payer to the member not a gift made to the Link Scheme.
- Gifts that come with a condition about repayment.
- Gifts with a condition from the donor that the charity buys goods or services.
- Payments received in return for goods or services - these are not gifts - for example payment for a raffle ticket.
- A 'minimum donation' where there is no choice about payment - this is simply a fee for goods or services, it is not a gift.
- Gifts made using 'charity vouchers' or 'charity cheques'.
- Donations received before the date that HMRC recognises your Link Scheme as a charity for tax purposes.

H.6 The Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme

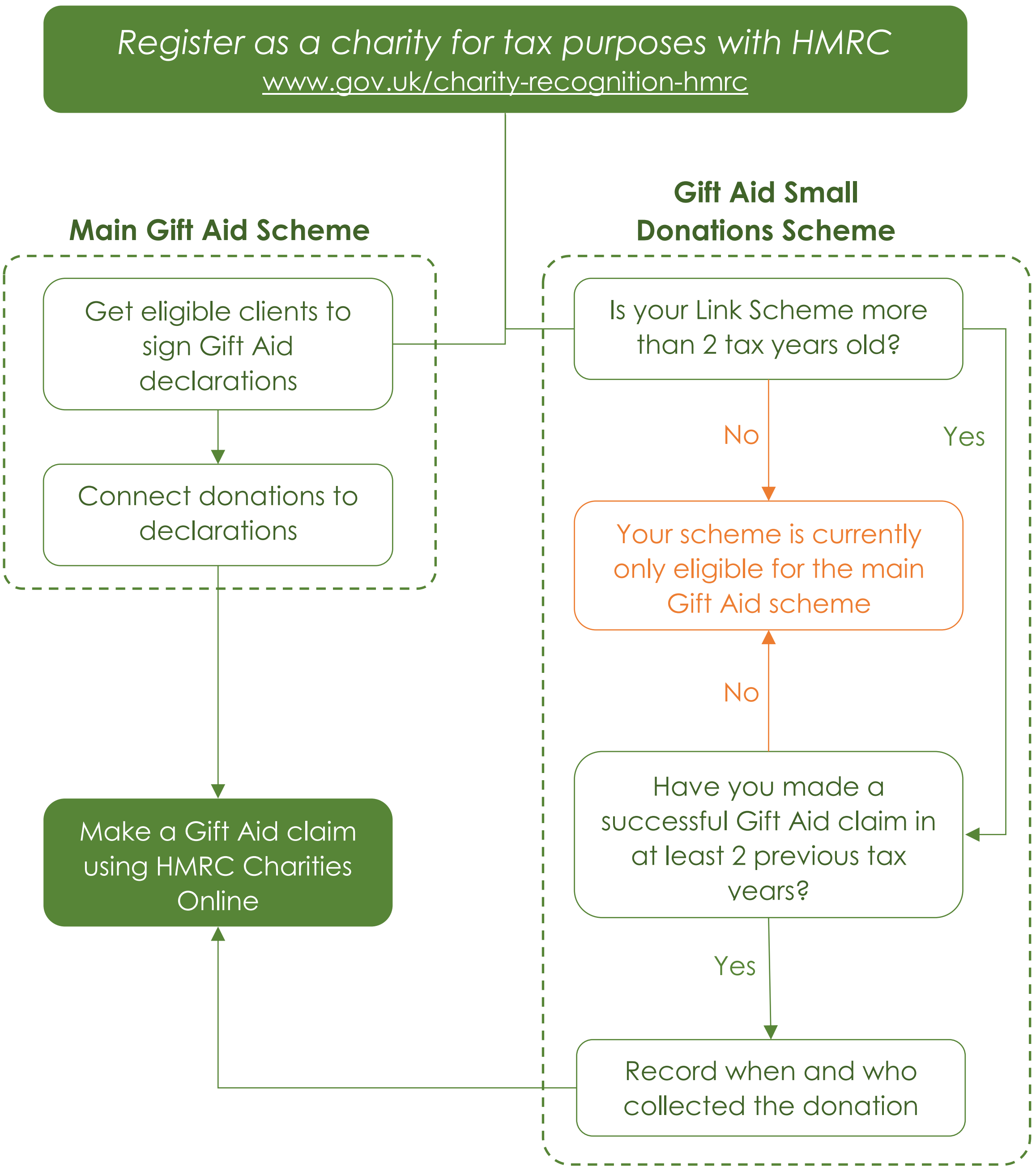
Once you have fulfilled a few criteria, the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme is a somewhat simpler scheme that allows Gift Aid repayment to be received on small cash donations of £20 or less up to the threshold of £5,000 of donated income per Link scheme per year.

This section offers practical guidance for Link Schemes, but is not a complete set of information. For full HMRC Guidance refer to www.hmrc.gov.uk/charities/gasds/basics.htm.

- In order for a Link Scheme to use the Small Donations Scheme it must have:
    - existed for at least two complete tax years before the year you want to claim for, and
    - made a successful Gift Aid claim in at least two of the previous tax years (there must not be a period of two or more tax years between those claims or between the latest claim and the year in which you are claiming).
- To be eligible Small Donations must be:
    - small, i.e. £20 or less,
    - cash – in coins or notes (standing orders and cheques are not eligible) and 'giving' donations only. Money from raffles, tombola's, and other income that would not qualify for Gift Aid cannot be included.

- Cash donations via envelopes from clients are the most common examples of qualifying donations for Link Schemes. Unlike the Main Gift Aid Scheme you will not need to maintain an audit trail for these donations.
- In the tax year (6th April to 5th April) each Link Scheme can claim only up to £5,000 received as small donations. This will be worth an additional maximum amount in cash terms to the Link Scheme of £1,250. So in total £5,000 worth of small cash donations would be worth £6,250.
- This does not remove the need for one off Gift Aid envelopes. Some donors will want to be able to give even small donations through Gift Aid. One-off envelopes should still be available for those who wish to give more than £20.

H.7 Wiltshire Link Schemes - Gift Aid Flow Chart



This flowchart is intended for guidance only.
Please refer to www.hmrc.gov.uk/charities for further information.

H.8 Gift Aid Declaration
For past, present and future donations

Name of Link Scheme:	

Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts of money made today and in the future.

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year.

I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give.

Donor's details

Title		First name or initial(s)	
		Surname	
Full home address			
Postcode			
Date			
Signature			

Please notify your Link Scheme if:

- You want to cancel this declaration
- Change your name or home address
- No longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.
- If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code

I Risk Management, Insurance and Data Protection

This section outlines the basic principles and strategies to help Link Schemes manage risks. It should help the Management Committee identify major risks, decide how to respond, and make an appropriate risk management statement in their annual report.

I.1 An Overview

- Risk is an everyday part of a Link Scheme's activity and managing it effectively is essential if trustees are to achieve their objectives and to safeguard their funds and assets.
- The Management Committee should regularly review and assess risks faced by their Link Scheme in all areas of its work, and plan for management of those risks.
- Risk management should also identify opportunities to improve the Link Scheme, and help ensure strategies are in place to manage change and development.
- The risks a Link Scheme faces depend on the size, nature and complexity of the activities it undertakes, and on its finances. As a general rule, the larger and more complex or diverse activities are, the more difficult it will be to identify the major risks and put proper systems in place to manage them. Trustees of large, complex Link Schemes may need to explore risk more fully than the outline given here.

I.2 Charity Commission Advice

- The Charity Commission provides useful guidance on risk management. This includes the processes involved, the legal requirements **(L)**, and a model risk management system to help charities work through the process. They also provide a risk register template and examples of the most common risk areas for charities, their potential impact and the possible steps to mitigate them.

- Charity Commission guidance is that while small charities are not legally required to have a risk management statement, it is a matter of good practice. The responsibility for producing the statement lies with the Management Committee acting as charity trustees.
- The risk management statement should identify the major risks. The Charity Commission defines a major risk as 'one likely to occur which would have a severe impact on operational performance, objectives or reputation of the charity'.

I.3 The Steps Involved in Good Risk Management

There are four steps.

1. Identifying risks that apply to the Link Scheme.
2. Assessing their likely impact.
3. Deciding how to respond.
4. Monitoring and reviewing whether the response is adequate.

Identifying the risks

- The Management Committee, in consultation with the Co-ordinator and volunteers should consider the specific risks for their own Link Scheme.
- It may also be helpful to categorise risks, perhaps using the following categories.
    - Governance (e.g. problems with the Management Committee, compliance with Charity Law and grant conditions).
    - Operational risks (e.g. more demand for the service than volunteers can provide).
    - Financial risks (e.g. insufficient income).
    - External risks (e.g. problems with phone coverage, or bad weather).

Assessing their likely impact

- A simple way to do this is to use a matrix in which likelihood and impact are estimated for each risk. In other words the likelihood they will happen, and the scale of the impact – how bad it would be – if they do. You may wish to do this for 'the next year' and the next 'five years', or other periods you think sensible.

	Impact (I)			
Likelihood	Severe (4)	Significant (3)	Limited (2)	Minimal (1)
Very likely (4)				
Fairly likely (3)				
Fairly unlikely (2)				
Very unlikely (1)				

I – Risk Management, Insurance and Data Protection

Deciding how to respond

- The risk matrix should help prioritise which risks require most attention. Different responses are possible, such as the following.
    - Avoiding an area of work (e.g. not allowing volunteers to undertake long journeys).
    - Insuring against risks.
    - Instigating financial controls.
    - Establishing new policies.
    - Improving and monitoring recruitment procedures.
    - Seeking support from third parties.
    - Accepting that some risks remain as part of the Scheme's activities.
- Following good practice is an excellent part of good risk management.

Monitoring and Review

- You should prepare a statement outlining the Scheme's risks and responses, for inclusion in the annual report.
- Progress should be formally reviewed and the statement updated on an annual basis.

I.4 Risk Policy

- All the steps above should be guided by a Risk Management Policy. The Policy should set out how the Link Scheme will carry out the four steps outlined above.
- In order to establish a policy there needs to be a high level of communication within the Management Committee and each member will need a thorough understanding of the following areas.
    - The Link Scheme's objectives, philosophy and strategy.
    - The work of the Link Scheme and its extent.
    - What the organisation is trying to achieve.
    - Charity legislation and the requirements of funders.
    - Past mistakes, problems and successes.
    - How and where the Link Scheme operates.
    - An awareness of services available to the Link Scheme.

I.5 Insurance (L)

- Volunteers involved in a Link Scheme may expose themselves to risk from time to time. Volunteers may risk personal injury arising from the course of their volunteering or loss or damage to their own property. It is in everyone's best interest to ensure that adequate insurance cover is provided.

- Link Management Committees or Link volunteers can be found legally liable if something goes wrong **(L)** (see Section C.10 trusteeship).
- The Link Scheme may have a responsibility not just for damage, loss or injury experienced by volunteers but also for any loss, damage or injury caused by negligent acts of volunteers **(L)**. A Link Scheme could be held liable if a volunteer acts improperly or in an incompetent way, and the Link Scheme is directing the activity of the volunteer **(L)**.
- No Link Scheme can afford to operate without adequate insurance and run the risk of a claim for damages being taken against them. However it is equally important that the Management Committee takes steps to minimise the risks of a claim **(L)**. The insurance company should be informed of all tasks that the volunteers will be undertaking and where activities will take place.

Employers' Liability Insurance

- Link schemes must have employers' liability insurance to protect your Scheme against claims for any injuries suffered while people are working for you, either as volunteers or paid staff. Volunteers could be covered under Employers Liability Insurance or Public Liability Insurance, so check your policy to ensure that they are covered, otherwise your charity could have to pay compensation out of its own funds in the case of a claim.
- The Employer's Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969 states that employers must…
    - Have a minimum insurance cover of £5 million for injury or disease suffered or contracted by employees while carrying out their duties.
    - Buy employers' liability insurance from an authorised insurer. That is an individual or company working under the terms of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000. The Financial Conduct Authority maintains a register of authorised insurers.
    - Display their insurance certificate prominently in their premises, showing that a valid policy is in force and the minimum level of cover purchased.
- Although Link Schemes might not employ staff the Charity Commission states:

    'For insurance purposes, charities are advised to treat volunteers in the same way as they do their employees and to ensure that they are covered by the usual types of insurance a charity might buy, such as employers' liability or public liability cover'.

- All Link Schemes are also advised to have an insurance policy which includes cover for the following.
    - Public Liability.
    - Personal Accident.
    - Money Cover.
    - Legal Expenses.
    - Motor Policy Compensation.
- Further guidance on insurance for charities is available from the Charity Commission.

LINK Group Insurance Scheme

- The Link Project has brokered a competitive group scheme which provides comprehensive cover through Wrightsure Services Ltd underwritten by Ansvar, a division of Ecclesiastical Insurance. Full policy documents and exclusions are available on request from the Link Project.
- It is not a requirement to purchase insurance through the group policy.

Link Group Scheme Policy Details

Policy	Cover
Public Liability	£5m (£100 excess applies)
Employers' Liability	£10m
Money Cover	£2,000 maximum (£75 excess applies)
Legal Expenses	Indemnity Limit £100,000
Motor Policy Compensation	Up to £250 loss of excess and/or No Claims Bonus per driver
Personal Accident	For ages 16-65 £10,000/£100 per week For ages 66 to 75 £10,000/£50 per week For ages 76 to 80 £5,000/£25 per week For ages 80 to 85 £5,000/no weekly benefit

Following an incident or accident that potentially lead to a claim:

Lynda Minns, Wrightsure Services (Hampshire) Limited
01329 820764
lyndam@wrightsure.com

The Group Insurance Combined Policy Number is CCP6115344.
Please quote this number in any correspondence with Wrightsure.

Policy Notes

- Community First is only able to offer a complete policy i.e. all elements of cover are required to complete a proposal: Public Liability, Employers Liability, Money Cover, Legal Expenses, Motor Policy Compensation, and Personal Accident. Community First is unable to offer a mix and match policy.
- There is a common renewal date of 1st May each year.
- Community First (Wiltshire Link Schemes) will be named as holding the main policy.
- Each scheme will be noted within the policy and receive their own Employers' Liability Certificate.

- Each Link Scheme will be liable individually for any claims made, and future premiums will be subject to any claims made by individual Link Schemes, so as not to affect the overall group rate.
- Community First will pay the premiums as group policy holder and recover premiums from Link Schemes. Community First will apply an administration fee to process payments.
- Claims will be dealt with in the first instance by Wrightsure, and Ansvar will deal with the claim subsequently.
- Link Schemes will be fully responsible for providing the correct information about their scheme and checking that the insurance cover is adequate for their requirements. Community First will accept no liability if schemes find they are under insured.
- Schemes will be required to inform Wrightsure of any changes to their policy. Community First will take no responsibility for or accept liability for a scheme's failure to make necessary changes or updates to their policy.

Additional Cover

Although there is no Good Practice requirement for Link Schemes to take out additional types of insurance, Link Schemes may wish to consider the following.

Fidelity Guarantee

- This is cover to make good the loss to a charity arising from fraud or dishonesty on the part of any of its employees where they are handling the charity's cash or other valuables.

Trustees and Directors Indemnity

- Trustee liability or indemnity insurance is a policy that would protect trustees from personal liability arising from honest mistakes or wrongful acts.
- Trustee indemnity insurance (TII) covers trustees from having to personally pay legal claims that are made against them (by their charity or by a third party), for a breach of trust, or a breach of duty or negligence committed by them in their capacity as trustees.
- It is important to note that the main difference between TII and other types of insurance taken out for the benefit of the charity is that TII directly protects an individual trustee, rather than the charity itself.
- The Charity Commission States:

  'TII is regarded as a form of personal benefit to a trustee and a charity will need a proper legal authority before it can buy it using its own funds. Many charities have long had this type of authority in their governing documents, but if not, s.189 of the Charities Act now provides a general power to buy TII using charity funds. The cost must be reasonable and trustees must be sure that TII is in the best interests of their charity.'

- Trustees are able to buy TII out of their own pockets if they wish; this would not require any legal authority.

Computer Breakdown

- Cover is available for repair and replacement of computer equipment. The Link Project is able to get quotes for additional cover, but these will not be held under the group policy and group discounts will not apply.

Driving

- You should have a system for ensuring that all Volunteer Drivers have current, valid insurance and driving licences, and where appropriate completed SAGE Driving assessments or similar.

I.6 Data Protection (L)

The Data Protection Act 1998 came into force on 1 March 2000 and covers how personal data (e.g. name, address, phone number) are processed. Data includes manual records as well as those kept on computer. In May 2018 new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) replaced the Data Protection Act and all Link Schemes are legally obliged to be compliant. GDPR governs the processing of any PII (personal identifiable information) this includes: names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses and bank details. GDPR encourages organisations to be more transparent about why they collect data, the ways they use it and letting and letting individuals know their rights about their data. Data protection legislation relates to anyone whom you keep personal data on – clients, volunteers, supporters. In order to be GDPR compliant, Links therefore need to consider both the data already held and managing new data. Link Schemes are required to have a robust data protection policy.

- Detailed written guidance on GDPR is included in the annex
- The processing of data is regulated by the Information Commissioners Office www.ico.org.uk and a lot more information can be obtained from them if in any doubt about data protection and GDPR . Fines can be imposed by the ICO for non-compliance.
- The Link Project and Link Schemes are regarded as "not for profit" organisations and therefore are exempt from registration with the ICO. (See exemption-from-registration-for-not-for-profit-organisations.pdf[12] for more information).
- Even though a Link Scheme can claim an exemption, you may decide to make a voluntary registration.
- If a Link Scheme relies on an exemption from registration, it must still comply with the eight Principles of Good Data Handling on the following page(see below) and respond in 30 days to a written request to provide the information that would have been included in the public register if they had registered.
- The main requirements are as follows **(L)**.
    - Only keep information which is necessary for the running of the Link Scheme e.g. client's name, address, telephone number(s).

[12] ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1567/exemption-from-registration-for-not-for-profit-organisations.pdf

  - Information should be accurate, up to date, amended when necessary and kept in a safe place. Also, if held on computer, password protected.
  - Records should be kept no longer than necessary and destroyed when no longer needed i.e. shredded, or deleted entirely from computers.
  - Information should not be disclosed to anyone else except with volunteers' or clients' permission.
- For more information about GDPR, contact the ICO.
  www.ico.org.uk
  0303 123 1113
  01625 545 745
  registration@ico.org.uk

Principles of Data Protection

The Eight principles of Data Protection are as below.

Personal information must:

1.	Be fairly and lawfully processed.
2.	Be processed for limited purposes.
3.	Be adequate, relevant and not excessive.
4.	Be accurate and up to date.
5.	Not be kept for longer than is necessary.
6.	Be processed in line with the data subjects' rights.
7.	Be secure.
8.	Not be transferred to other countries without adequate protection.

Sensitive personal data ***(L)***

- Schedule 2 of the Data Protection Act defines data such as an individual's physical or mental health or condition, racial or ethnic origin, criminal record and political beliefs as sensitive personal data. The presumption is that, because information about these matters could be used in a discriminatory way, and is likely to be of a private nature, it needs to be treated with greater care than other personal data.
- If you are collecting and processing information about a client's health condition for instance, you will need to read carefully the guidance from the ICO on sensitive personal data at ico.org.uk/conditions-for-processing.
- If you are processing sensitive personal data you must satisfy one or more of the conditions for processing which apply specifically to such data, as well as the general conditions which apply in every case. The nature of the data is also a factor in deciding what security is appropriate.

J Operational Policies

Policies are essential to the day to day running of any Link Scheme and help it respond to any unexpected events. Some operational policies are also necessary for eligibility for the annual grant. This section gives examples of good practice polices or guidelines for the management committee. Link schemes should amend adopted policies to better reflect the work undertaken at a local level. The Link Project has pro-forma policy documents available and is able to offer support to any Link Scheme wishing to amend or update their operational policies.

The Management Committee should review and update all policies on an annual basis. **(L)**

J.1 Client Complaints Policy

Link Schemes offer a good neighbour service to any person within the local community who is in need either because they are e.g. elderly, disabled, on low incomes, single parents or perhaps are temporarily in need because of illness. Each request for help should be dealt with fairly and promptly, with each Scheme aiming to provide a quality service at all times. The service is subject to the availability and skills of the volunteers.

A complaints procedure should be in place for any user or potential user who feels dissatisfied with the way they have been treated.

The complaints procedure should be made available to anyone wishing to make a complaint.

Guidelines for the Management Committee

- A copy of the complaints procedure should be available to anyone who requests it.
- The steps to be taken to proceed with the complaint will vary according to the circumstances, but the final decision will rest with the individual Link Scheme.
- All complaints should be dealt with within 7 working days of receipt unless this is impossible due to the absence of Link Scheme members. If this is the case the complainant should be informed when the matter will be dealt with.
- Complaints of a serious nature are rare but need to be dealt with effectively and sensitively. Any complaint which alleges behaviour constituting illegal activity or physical, mental or sexual abuse should be notified by the Co-ordinator to the Chairperson as soon as possible and definitely within 24 hours. In the absence of the Chairperson another member of the Management

Committee must be informed. The Management Committee member must inform the Link Project by the next working day.

- A written record of the complaint should be kept for a minimum of twelve months and in accordance with data protection guidelines.
- The confidentiality of those involved should be respected at all times.
- The feelings of all sides of the dispute should be considered.
- The matter should be reported at the next available Management Committee meeting.
- Complaints received by Community First will be directed to the individual link scheme immediately

Complaints Procedure for Clients

Link Schemes provide a volunteer service to those in need in their communities and the Management Committee, Co-ordinators and volunteers aim to provide a quality service at all times. If at any time you are not satisfied please use the following guidelines to make a complaint.

1. In the first instance please telephone the Link Scheme Co-ordinator to discuss the issue and resolve it if possible. The Co-ordinator will record the complaint and the solution if it has been possible to reach one and will pass the details to the Chairperson.
2. The initial complaint may be made to the Chairperson or Volunteer Support Officer if you prefer.
3. If it has not been possible to resolve the issue on an informal basis the Chairperson and Volunteer Recruitment and Support Officer may wish to telephone you or arrange a meeting to confirm the details of the complaint and try to resolve it.
4. The Chairperson and Volunteer Recruitment and Support Officer will inform the volunteer of the complaint and take their views into account as appropriate.
5. Once the issue is resolved you will receive a written record of the original complaint and the outcome unless you indicate that you do not require this.
6. Unless you are advised otherwise the complaint will be dealt with in 7 working days.

Complaints received about Link services by Community First

These will be referred immediately by Community First to the Link Scheme concerned.

J.2 Volunteer Grievance Policy

Guidelines for the Management Committee

- A process should be in place which is followed for the recruitment of all Link Volunteers. An application form is completed by each potential volunteer, references are sought and driving details are confirmed before volunteers are recruited.
- All volunteers should be given the opportunity to attend training courses and other events where they are given the chance to meet, socialise and share experiences and information with other Link volunteers. All expenses should be reimbursed.
- Generally Link Scheme 'members' are the Management Committee and volunteers, and that is generally assumed to be the case in this Good Practice Guide. Be careful about your definition of membership and whether 'members' are allowed to vote. Different schemes may vary somewhat in their approach.
- All volunteers are generally members of the Link Scheme and have a right to vote at the Annual General Meeting and any Special Meetings. Any volunteer wishing to serve as a Management Committee member should approach the Chairperson.
- The Volunteer Recruitment and Support Officer will represent volunteers at Management Committee meetings.
- Any issues of concern may be discussed in confidence with the Volunteer Recruitment and Support Officer and may be referred to the Management Committee if necessary.
- A Link Volunteer Grievance Procedure should be in place for any volunteer who feels they have been unfairly treated.

Grievance Procedure for Volunteers

Any volunteer who feels they have been unfairly treated should follow the guidelines below.

- Contact the Volunteer Recruitment and Support Officer who should deal with the grievance promptly, fairly and confidentially. Another member of the Management Committee may be approached if the grievance concerns the Volunteer Recruitment and Support Officer. The grievance may be communicated orally or in writing.
- The Volunteer Recruitment and Support Officer (or Management Committee member) may request confirmation in writing if they feel it is necessary.
- The Volunteer Recruitment and Support Officer (or Management Committee member) will respond to the grievance within 24 hours either offering a resolution or outlining the procedure and time scale for dealing with a more complex grievance. The Volunteer Recruitment and Support Officer should report the grievance to the next Management Committee meeting.

- Every effort should be made to resolve all grievances within 7 days of receipt. If this is not possible the volunteer should be notified in writing.
- If no solution can be reached between the Volunteer Recruitment and Support Officer and the volunteer, the matter must be referred to the Management Committee.

Any volunteer who feels that their grievance has not been dealt with satisfactorily may contact

The Link Project, Community First, Unit C2, Beacon Business Centre, Hopton Park, Devizes, SN10 2EY
01380 722241
linkproject@communityfirst.org.uk

J.3 Equal Opportunities Policy

Guidelines for the Management Committee

Link Schemes are aware that discrimination exists within society as a result of prejudice on grounds of race, culture, religion, gender, sexuality, disability, age and class. A Link Scheme should commit to ensuring that it enables all sections of the community served to participate in the Link Scheme in an equal and fair way **(L)**.

The Equal Opportunities Policy should apply to all volunteers including Officers and members of the Management Committees as well as to all users of the Link Schemes (see also the Eligibility Policy).

Volunteer recruitment procedures should be in place and opportunities for discussion and support arranged on a regular basis. It is hoped that all volunteers will feel they belong to a Link Scheme that believes in and practices an anti-discriminatory approach to its members.

J.4 Eligibility Policy

A Link Scheme provides a 'Good Neighbour' service to those in need in their local communities. It is, therefore, impossible to tightly define those able to use the service due to varying local conditions. Each request for a service will be dealt with on its own merits by the Co-ordinator responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Scheme.

The following principles will be taken into account:

Transport

Transport by volunteers driving their own cars may be provided for those who:

a) are unable to access public transport due to infirmity, or
b) have no reasonable alternative transport due to lack of public transport, or

c) are not eligible for the non-emergency patient transport service for medically related journeys, or
d) consider the non-emergency patient transport to be inappropriate for their personal needs, and
e) can get in and out of a private car safely with a minimum of assistance.

It is often necessary for Co-ordinators to prioritise requests. Normally journeys for medical appointments are given priority. Requests are accepted subject to the availability of a volunteer.

The service is not restricted to a particular age group or those with a physical or mental infirmity.

It is advised that Link Schemes do not carry children due to the legislation regarding child car seats.

If schemes do carry children it should be noted that for children under the age of 14 years the driver is responsible for ensuring all child restraints are in use in accordance with the law. 'Child restraint' means any type of baby seat, child seat, booster seat or booster cushion. The driver can be fined if a child under 14 years does not wear a seat belt or child restraint as required.

'Good Neighbour'

Care may be offered to those in the community who need the services of a 'Good Neighbour'. This is subject to the skills being available within the volunteer group to carry out the request.

J.5 Donations Policy (L)

The donations policy is central to the service provided by a Link Scheme and is also a requirement of grant aid from the statutory authorities.

- Link Schemes offer 'Good Neighbour' support to those in need in local communities. Clients are not charged for the service they receive **(L)** but are invited to make a donation towards costs. This donation is placed anonymously in an envelope and is entirely voluntary.
- Link Schemes offer help to the most vulnerable and the service should be available to all regardless of means.
- Volunteers cannot legally collect a payment. All donations must be placed in envelopes provided and passed to the Treasurer.
- Guidelines may be given as to the cost of any journey.
- Journeys undertaken on behalf of statutory bodies or other voluntary agencies may be charged for at the current mileage rate plus an amount for administration. Issuing an invoice will be necessary.

Financial responsibility for the Link Scheme rests with the Management Committee, not its volunteers or clients.

J.6 Vulnerable Adults Policy (L)

Guidelines for the Management Committee

The Link Scheme recognises its duties in relation to vulnerable adults. The service provided is accessed mainly by elderly clients, disabled people and some experiencing learning disability and/or mental health problems.

- The Link Scheme will operate according to Good Practice Guidelines to minimise the risk to vulnerable adults and to carry out its duty of care.
- The Management Committee should ensure it has received the latest advice from Wiltshire Council and follow guidance in the government publication No Secrets[13] and legal safeguarding duties placed on local authorities through the Care Act 2014
- The Link scheme should provide information to Safeguarding Adults Boards as requested
- If the Link scheme or volunteer has any concerns about an 'Adult at Risk' being abused they should make referral to the Social Care Help Desk or the Wiltshire Police – Safeguarding Adults Investigation Team (SAIT).

Social Care Help Desk

Tel: 0300 456 0111

Email: customeradvisors@wiltshire.gov.uk

Wiltshire Police (SAIT)

Tel: 01380 826350

J.7 Disclosure and Barring Service Confidentiality Policy

- Disclosure Notices will only be accessed by two nominated Management Committee members. Disclosure information will not be passed on to anyone outside the organisation.
- The Disclosure Notice is used for the sole purpose of assessing recruitment of a volunteer to the Link Scheme.

[13] See: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/no-secrets-guidance-on-protecting-vulnerable-adults-in-care

- The Link Scheme will record the type of disclosure, the date of issue and the reference number on the individual volunteer's record sheet. The Disclosure Notice will then be destroyed by shredding or burning.

J.8 Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy

- As part of its commitment to good practice the Link Scheme has a recruitment policy and an equal opportunities policy which ensure that all applicants will be treated fairly.
- All front-line volunteers – drivers and those providing 'good neighbour' services - will be required to have a DBS check and any information disclosed will be assessed **(L)**.
- A criminal record will not automatically preclude a volunteer from being accepted, but the information will be discussed with the applicant pending a decision being made.
- Regard will be given to the Link Scheme's risk assessment which aims to ensure service delivery and safety for clients.

Any information concerning offences can be discussed with the relevant Management Committee members prior to the application for DBS Disclosure and will be subject to the same confidentiality policy as the DBS Disclosure Notice.

J.9 Document Retention Policy

The following are the time periods for which records should be retained.

Document	Period of Retention	Comments
Constitution	Permanently	
Minutes	Permanently	
Records of accounts	6 years from the year end	
Banking Records cheques, paying in books and bank statements	6 years	
Investment certificates	Permanently	
Expense accounts	6 years	
Petty cash records	7 years	
Accident books	3 years from the date of each entry	
Health and Safety records	3 years	
Insurance policies	3 years after lapse	
Insurance claims correspondence	3 years after settlement	
Accident reports and relevant correspondence	3 years after settlement	

K – AGMs and Other Meetings

Donations granted and relevant correspondence	6 years	
Volunteer records	1 year after resignation unless query on volunteer's record e.g. accident	See Section I.6
Records of Gift Aid donations received and the Gift Aid declarations relating to those donations (including any that are cancelled)	6 years	See Section H
Client records	1 year after last request	See also Data Protection Guidelines

J.10 Data Protection Policy

Link Schemes are committed to a policy of protecting the rights and privacy of individuals. We need to collect and use certain types of Data in order to carry on our work of running and providing the Link services . This personal information must be collected and handled securely.

The Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) govern the use of information about people (personal data). Personal data can be held on computers, laptops and mobile devices, or in a manual file, and includes email, minutes of meetings, and photographs. The charity will remain the data controller for the information held. The trustees, staff and volunteers are personally responsible for processing and using personal information in accordance with the Data Protection Act and GDPR. Trustees, staff and volunteers who have access to personal information will therefore be expected to read and comply with this policy.

The purpose of this policy is to set out the Link Schemes commitment and procedures for protecting personal data. Trustees regard the lawful and correct treatment of personal information as very important to successful working, and to maintaining the confidence of those with whom we deal with. We recognise the risks to individuals of identity theft and financial loss if personal data is lost or stolen.

A template policy is included in the Annex

K AGMs and Other Meetings

K.1 Annual General Meetings: An Overview (L)

- A Link Scheme AGM:
    - provides the Management Committee with an opportunity to explain their management to members (Link Scheme clients and volunteers),
    - provides members with an opportunity to influence who is on the Management Committee **(L)**
    - provides members with an opportunity to ask questions before voting on business items on the agenda, and
    - should be held once a year and allow clients and volunteers of the Scheme to attend.
- The governing document should state when an AGM must be held. This may be in a particular month or within a certain period after the end of the financial year. **(L)**
- When arranging the AGM, Link Scheme trustees should ensure the following.
    - Notice of the AGM together with relevant documents are sent out at least 21 clear days in advance of the meeting. In order to achieve this the notice should be sent out at least 20 working days beforehand **(L)**
    - Satisfy themselves that the venue for the AGM is easily accessible for all members **(L)**. Establish what facilities should be provided to allow for full participation by all those attending (e.g. a crèche or special facilities for people with disabilities).
    - Check that the notice and any proposed resolutions are drafted in plain language. This will ensure there are no misunderstandings about any matters being proposed. If you have a multi-lingual membership, you may need to draft the notices and proposed resolutions in the appropriate languages.
    - Give the full names (whenever possible) of officers or charity trustees that are standing for election (or re-election) in the notice of the AGM. A brief description of the person seeking election should also be enclosed. This may cover their relevant expertise, the dates they were first appointed to the trustee body, etc.
    - In order to create a clearer record and promote the independence of each trustee, the election/re-election of each trustee should be the subject of a separate resolution.

K.2 AGM Notice (L)

- Your governing document may specify the information to be contained in the notice calling an AGM. It is strongly recommended, as a minimum, that the notice calling the AGM sets out:
  - the date and time of the meeting,
  - the venue,
  - details of the business to be considered (which will probably be mandatory items at this stage as members' resolutions may not have been received),
  - an invitation to members to propose resolutions, and
  - if appropriate, requests for nominations (or the names of proposed nominees) for officers to be elected.

K.3 Quorums (L)

Your governing document should specify the quorum applicable to each type of meeting, including the AGM. Link Schemes should think carefully about the number of people needed for a quorum. It needs to be appropriate to the size of the Link Scheme. For most Link Schemes a quorum of 10-15% is appropriate. If the quorum is too high, any absences may make it difficult to have a valid meeting. If it is too low, a minority may be able to impose its views unreasonably **(L)**.

The quorum for a Management Committee meeting should be a minimum of one-third of the total number of the Management Committee plus one (e.g. 6 Committee members will have a quorum of 3).

If a meeting does not have a quorum, it cannot make any decisions. If a quorum cannot be achieved regularly, or that specified in the governing document is unworkable, the trustees should contact the Link Project for advice.

K.4 The Role of the Secretary

Establishing a timetable

It is advisable to set up a timetable for organising an AGM. Working back from the date the meeting is to be held, the Secretary may need to identify:

- the date notices have to be sent out,
- the date documents need to be received to be circulated with the notice,
- the date and time of any pre or related meeting, for instance prior to laying the report and accounts before an AGM the trustees will need to meet and approve them, and
- if election of officers is to take place, the date by which nominations have to be received.

Venue

The venue needs to be chosen with care. These are issues to consider.

- Is the proposed venue large enough to accommodate the number of people who are entitled to or expected to attend?
- Is the venue accessible by road and public transport?
- Is adequate car parking available, at a reasonable cost?
- Is the venue suitable for people with disabilities, e.g. does it have wheelchair access, large print signs, induction loops, etc.
- Are additional facilities needed such as a crèche, translation services or a signer for people with hearing difficulties? If so can these be provided at the proposed venue?
- If catering facilities are required, are those at the venue adequate?
- Are there enough toilets?
- Does the venue have appropriate equipment available, e.g. flip chart and paper, overhead projector, slide projectors, microphones?
- Does the venue provide enough chairs and tables?
- Are facilities for secret ballots available?
- Is there additional capacity available to cater for exceptional attendance?

Agenda

- Every meeting will benefit from a formal agenda which lists the items of business. Prior to calling the meeting the Secretary would normally discuss the proposed agenda with the Chairperson and Management Committee. The Secretary is advised to check the governing document to see what issues must be covered for each type of meeting, e.g. the approval of financial statements or the re-election of officers.
- The order of proceedings needs to be planned, adequate time allowed for each item and the Chairperson made aware of the need to keep to the timetable in order to ensure that all matters are covered within the allotted time. It may be useful to indicate on the agenda how much time is expected to be allowed for each item. It is also useful to state clearly when the meeting will finish.
- It is helpful to indicate whether an item of business is for discussion or whether a decision needs to be taken.

Documents

- The Secretary is advised to check that all relevant papers and supporting materials are made available to the trustees and/or members in good time.
- The papers placed before the meeting should:
  - comply with any applicable rules or regulations of the charity on the presentation of papers, and
  - be received by the Secretary and distributed in good time.
- It is recommended that all supporting documentation is clearly marked to show:
  - the nature and date of the meeting,

    - the agenda item to which it relates, and
    - page numbers on lengthy documents.
- It may also be useful to give each document an identifying number.

Preparing the venue for the meeting

- When planning the meeting the Secretary will need to consider how to set out the room and what equipment is needed for the meeting. For example, at an AGM there may need to be a table on which copies of papers, accounts and publications for the members are set out. A projector may be needed if there is to be a talk.

On the day of the meeting

- The Secretary will need to make sure that:
    - there are spare copies of all documents needed for the meeting,
    - arrangements for any vote or poll are in place,
    - the meeting is properly convened,
    - there is a quorum,
    - apologies for absence are noted, and
    - all decisions made at the meeting are clearly minuted.
- If it appears that a matter has been overlooked, or a clear decision has not been made when this is needed, the Secretary should draw this to the attention of the Chairperson.
- It should be remembered that decisions reached at a trustees' or members' meeting are collective decisions and the decision is binding upon all the Link Scheme's trustees and members. It is for this reason that all trustees and members are encouraged to participate in all debates.

K.5 The Role of the Chairperson

The Chairperson usually checks that the Secretary has sent out the notice, an agenda and supporting papers in good time and in accordance with any agreed timetable.

During a meeting

- Welcome all participants. Ensure 'housekeeping notices', e.g. emergency procedures in case of fire are explained, suggest people with disabilities position themselves near an exit, etc.
- The Chairperson needs to see that the items on the agenda are covered within the timescale set for the meeting. The minutes of the previous meeting is usually the first item on the agenda. The Chairperson signs the minutes after checking with those present that the minutes are a true and accurate record.

- The Chairperson should offer all those attending and voting at the meeting an equal opportunity to speak on each item and encourage them to participate fully in the meeting.

Potential problems

- The Chairperson is strongly advised not to allow any one person to dominate the meeting. It may be harder to prevent a dominant group of people from controlling the Link Scheme's business. Possible solutions include:
    - establishing 'ground rules' for the meeting,
    - ensuring participation by all Link Scheme trustees and members,
    - enforcing any procedural rules,
    - ensuring trustees acknowledge the role of the Chairperson in exercising control over the meeting, and
    - increasing the quorum of the meeting using the procedures in the governing document so that a wider group of the Link Scheme trustees and members has to attend meetings for business transacted to be valid.
- If the meeting needs to come to a decision on an agenda item, the Chairperson should make sure that all trustees and members understand what the decision means to the Link Scheme, e.g. agreeing to a grant of money. Whether the charity is required to have an AGM or simply organises a users' meeting, the charity trustees are only bound to act on decisions taken by the members where the governing document directs that those matters have to be decided at such a meeting.
- At a general meeting the Chairperson should make it clear to members which decisions (if any) voted upon by the members are binding on the charity trustees. It may be that the voting is merely a recommendation to the charity trustees.

Adjournment of a meeting

- This may happen when either the meeting itself or part of the business of that meeting is postponed until another time or indefinitely. The governing document may provide for length of time, notice, and reconvening of adjournments.
- In any of the following circumstances the Chairperson (usually with the consent of those present) may adjourn the meeting.
    - There is an event beyond the control of the organisation, e.g. a fire alarm requiring evacuation.
    - The meeting becomes so unruly either as to make the situation dangerous to those attending or so that to continue the business of the meeting becomes impossible.
    - If the meeting resolves to adjourn. This usually only occurs if there is insufficient information to make a decision.
- Depending on the circumstances, and the provisions of the governing document, an adjournment may be:
    - to a later time in the same day,

- to a later date and the same place,
- to a later date and another place, or
- for an indefinite period.

An adjournment is only a continuation of the meeting and the notice that was given for the first meeting holds good for it. However whenever possible, a fresh notice should be sent to all those entitled to attend an adjourned meeting, particularly where the meeting is adjourned without a new date, time and venue having been fixed. No new business should be introduced at an adjourned meeting unless notice of such new business is properly given. At the beginning of any re-convened meeting the minutes of the earlier meeting are recapped by the Chairperson to avoid any confusion or unnecessary duplication of debate.

K.6 During an AGM

The Management Committee should adopt the following.

- All members of the Link Management Committee attend the AGM.
- They are seated facing the members.
- The Chairperson does not propose his or her own (re)election.
- Any individual Link Management Committee member does not propose, second or advocate a resolution in which she or he has an interest.
- The Chairperson allows sufficient time for members' questions during the meeting.
- The Chairperson explains the effect and purpose of each proposed resolution before putting it to a vote and whether the decision of the AGM is binding on the Link Scheme trustees.
- Members who have put forward proposed resolutions are entitled to draft and have circulated with the notice of the meeting an explanation of their resolution and any other supporting documents.
- The Chairperson allows an opportunity for the proposer of any resolution to address the meeting.

K.7 Extraordinary and Special General Meetings (L)

- EGMs and SGMs are held for non-recurring business that requires approval by the members between AGMs. Whilst these will often be called by the Link Scheme trustees to transact business such as alterations to its governing document they may also be requested by Link Scheme members. SGM is an equivalent term to EGM sometimes used by unincorporated associations.
- Members can ask Link Scheme trustees to call an EGM if they feel that the trustees are not fulfilling the charity's aims and objectives, or where they feel the charity is not being administered effectively. The members can use an EGM to seek explanations from Link Scheme trustees for a course of action, or to encourage fuller discussion on an issue. The governing document should set out

the number of full members required to request an EGM, and how this should be done. If the request is properly made, the Link Scheme trustees cannot refuse.

Who can attend an EGM?

- The same people who are allowed to attend an AGM are usually entitled to attend an EGM. The governing document should be checked for any differences. The ability to call EGMs underlines the importance of keeping up-to-date membership records as a meeting can be called at any time.

During the EGM

- The business of the EGM will be detailed in the notice. Examples of items to be dealt with at an EGM include:
    - alteration of the governing document,
    - winding up the charity
    - merging the charity with another or others, and
    - discussion of an issue brought by members

During the meeting, similar issues of good practice apply as they do to AGMs.

Further details on holding meetings can be found in the Charity Commission booklet: 'Charities and Meetings: CC48'[14]

K.8 Amending a Constitution (L)

- If you need to amend your constitution, this can only be done at an AGM or Special General Meeting. If your constitution already includes 'power of amendment', amendments can be adopted by the Chairperson signing amendments, and recording the adoption in the minutes. Otherwise the Charity Commission will have to give permission. **(L)**

[14] www.gov.uk/government/publications/charities-and-meetings-cc48

Annex

The following documents are available from the Link Project

Mini-guides

Mini-guide for Management Committees

Mini-guide for Co-ordinators

Mini-guide for Volunteers

Guidelines

- Health related journeys
- Drivers
- Hospital Parking
- Safeguarding flowchart
- Suggested co-ordinator to client phone questions
- Guidelines for home visit and outdoor working
- GDPR Key points

Templates

- Accounts
- Application form Co-ordinator
- Application form/pack (volunteers)
- Annual audit form
- Audit form Good Neighbour
- Budget for a new Link Scheme
- Budget for an existing Link Scheme
- Client welcome Letter
- Co-ordinators Agreement
- Driver's Letter to Insurance Company
- Gift Aid Acknowledgement
- Gift Aid Declaration (including client notes)
- Induction Pack Co-ordinators
- Induction Pack General Volunteers

- Insurance Group Proposal
- Log Sheet for Requests
- Main Grant Application Form
- Model constitution for a Link Scheme
- Monthly Statistics Form – By journey and task type
- Reference request letter
- Risk Assessment form
- Small / Development Grants Application
- Volunteer Recruitment record sheet
- Volunteers expenses sheet – portrait
- Volunteers expenses sheet – landscape
- DBS Update Service Volunteer Declaration

Policy Templates

- Complaints procedure
- Donations
- Eligibility criteria
- Equal Opportunities Statement
- Grievance Procedure
- Handling Serious Illness or Accident
- Protection of Vulnerable Adults
- Data Protection

Design Templates and Examples

- Donation envelopes
- Identity badges
- Publicity leaflets
- Logos

Other Resources

- The Essential Trustee CC3
- Charities and Meetings CC48
- RoSPA –volunteer drivers handbook
- DBS Code of Practice

Logos

- Link Project
- Wiltshire Link Schemes