

# Wiltshire Link Schemes Good Practice Guide 2021 Edition:

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Link Schemes and Community First

COMMUNITY  
**FIRST**



# About this Guide

This Guide has been produced by 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.

Please note this Good Practice Guide is for guidance only. Each Link Scheme must review and amend documents, information, processes and policies to match their circumstances and needs.

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 Information Guide B. Community First 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.

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.

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 Information Guide G (Section 5). These may occasionally change, but full notification and support will be given to Wiltshire Link Schemes to meet any new requirements.

**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.**

Please check [www.communityfirst.org.uk](http://www.communityfirst.org.uk) for updates and news.

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The Wiltshire Link Schemes Good Practice Guide 2021 is produced by Community First and replaces the previous (2016) Good Practice Guide.

Researched and edited by Mike Read Associates.



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# A1: 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 42 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's 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. This is often referred to as the Patient Transport Advice Centre (PTAC) please see the contact number below.

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<sup>1</sup>

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..

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.

**Transport is provided by volunteers using their own private vehicles. All 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. Both Zurich and Wrightsure Insurance includes Motor Policy Compensation for loss of excess and no claims bonus in the event of an accident See Information Guide 5: Risk Management, Insurance and GDPR (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

<sup>1</sup> The current contact telephone number for PTAC is 01278 727410.

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.

[www.connectingwiltshire.co.uk/getting-around/  
bus/bus-timetables-maps](http://www.connectingwiltshire.co.uk/getting-around/bus/bus-timetables-maps)

**Email:** [buses@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:buses@wiltshire.gov.uk)

**Telephone number:** 01225 713 565

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.

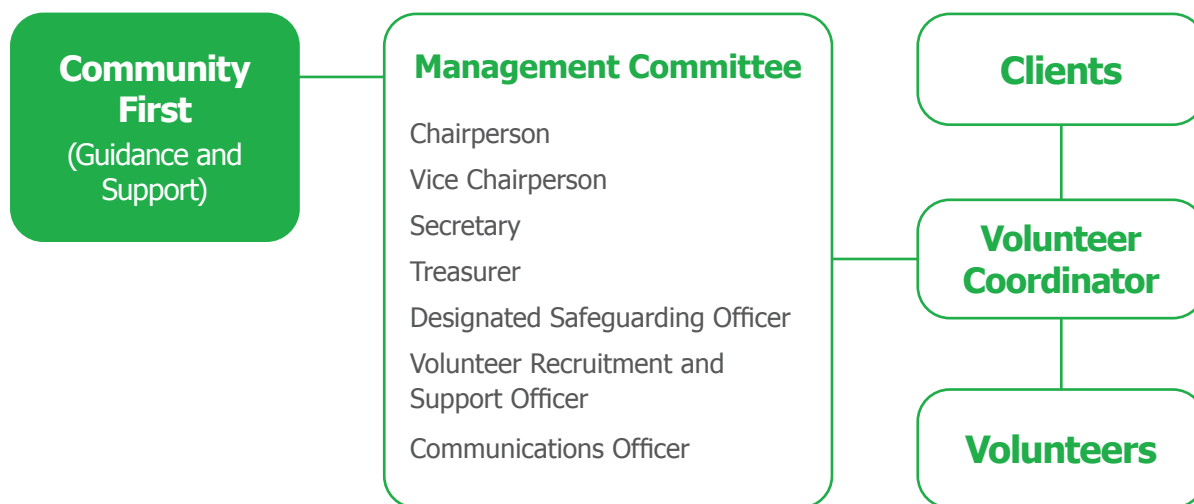
The service should specifically exclude 'personal care' i.e. any assistance with washing, dressing, toileting or bathing as these tasks should only be carried out by trained personnel.

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 Community First may be contacted for advice if necessary.

## A2: 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.

#### Designated Safeguarding Officer/Protection of Vulnerable Adults Officer:

Works to ensure that the clients of the Scheme are protected from harm. May be a trustee.

#### Volunteer Recruitment and Support Officer:

Advertises for volunteers, inducts and supports volunteers in their role. May be a trustee.

#### Communications Officer:

Publicises the activities of the Link Scheme and assists in fundraising and recruitment of volunteers. May be a trustee.

General committee members. May be trustees.

### Volunteer Coordinator

Provides the link between volunteers and clients and reports to the Management Committee. There may be more than one person in this role.

### 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.

## A3: How can Community First help?

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

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### Community First can also provide the following:

Information 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 from Community First:

- Updates on legislation changes and good practice.
- Training and support meetings for Link Co-ordinators.
- 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.

Community First also host Regular chairpersons' meetings, addressing operational and legal issues.

Co-ordinator networking meetings are also held throughout the year.

## Wiltshire Link Schemes Good Practice Guide 2021 Edition:

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### Link Schemes and Community First

#### Other Information Guides:

1. **Guide A:** Link Schemes and Community First
2. **Guide B:** Setting up a Link Scheme
3. **Guide C:** Link Management Committee and Trusteeship
4. **Guide D:** Link Coordinators
5. **Guide E:** Volunteer Recruitment and Support
6. **Guide F:** Volunteer Activity and Guidance
7. **Guide G:** Funding and Grants
8. **Guide H:** Gift Aid
9. **Guide I:** Risk Management and GDPR
10. **Guide J:** Operational Policies
11. **Guide K:** AGMs and Other Meetings

#### Contact Us:

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The above guides are available to view and download on our website along with an Annex including guidelines, templates and other resources:

**[www.communityfirst.org.uk/transport/link/link-scheme-gpg](http://www.communityfirst.org.uk/transport/link/link-scheme-gpg)**

