



## Health & Safety Policy

### *Overall Policy*

The welfare of all those connected with or affected by the activities of Ivybridge Caring are very important to us.

Our Health and Safety Policy has been produced, not only to comply with the legal obligations imposed upon us, but equally importantly to address the moral responsibility we have in this respect.

However, a policy can only be effective if everyone is familiar with the contents, understands what is required of them individually and observes the essential guidelines.

The guidelines are there for our universal benefit and whilst specific responsibility for Health and Safety rests with the Committee, it is expected that everyone who is part of Ivybridge Caring will accept that they each play an important role in ensuring that the policy is adhered to. To remain relevant and effective, policies need to develop over time to meet changing circumstances and the Committee welcome the valuable input to this process which could be provided by those engaged in our activities.

### *Code of safety conduct*

Your safety is paramount to us. In order to achieve a safe culture within the organisation, volunteers must follow the health and safety rules and guidance of the organisation. In particular you should:

- Never attempt to carry out work of a dangerous nature
- Never be afraid to question or report the use of equipment or practices.
- Ensure that you understand and follow the health and safety instructions you are given. If in doubt — ask. Your co-ordinator will discuss with you any specific hazards you may face in carrying out your role and the measures taken to combat or minimise the risks to your health and safety
- You must report all accidents, including near misses, no matter how trivial. It is essential that your co-ordinator is aware of all incidents so that appropriate measures can be taken to ensure your safety and the safety of those affected by your activities.
- Never "volunteer" to undertake duties outside your role as a volunteer without consulting your co-ordinator. If you are unclear as to whether you should be helping a client in a particular way ask your co-ordinator or a member of the committee.
- Notify your co-ordinator without delay if you spot a hazard whilst undertaking your role. Your co-ordinator will consider what, if any, health and safety measures should be taken
- Attend training events updating health and safety advice whenever possible
- Always report a change of circumstances, either involving the client you are supporting, or involving yourself, which could impact on your role.

## *First aid and accident reporting*

### *Accident Reporting*

All accidents, however minor, must be reported to your co-ordinator who will complete an accident report form (near misses, potential hazards and any damage must also be reported immediately)

All accidents (near misses, potential hazards and damage) will be investigated by your coordinator who will take responsibility for ensuring that corrective action is taken where appropriate to prevent a recurrence.

The Committee/Trustees responsible will notify the appropriate authorities where necessary. If a serious accident occurs whilst working with a client, call the emergency services.

### *Infectious diseases*

If a volunteer is aware that he/she has an infection even a sore throat or cold, it should be reported in confidence to their co-ordinator. Their co-ordinator will consider whether any extra special measures are necessary to ensure the health and safety of the volunteer and any clients supported. The disclosure of an infection will not of itself preclude the volunteer from acting as a volunteer.

If a client has an infection, this information will only be disclosed to the volunteer if it is felt that the volunteer needs to know, to ensure the health and safety of the volunteer which cannot be reasonably met without disclosure. Any disclosure will be discussed and agreed with the client.

All volunteers must be familiar with and adopt good hygiene practice to minimise the risk of spreading infection

### *Mobile phones*

Mobile phones should not be used when driving; please switch off your phone before starting your journey. Use of a mobile phone with a hands-free facility is also not recommended as it can cause a distraction. The phones can be set up to take messages which can then be checked at the start or end of a journey when the car is parked. It is illegal to use mobile phones whilst driving.

### *Personal safety*

We do all we can to ensure you are never exposed to any risks. However, situations can arise where the volunteer finds himself/herself at risk. Volunteers should always give priority to their own personal safety. Ivybridge Caring will do all it reasonably can to minimise any risk to volunteers. Prior to allocating a Volunteer the Client Co-ordinator will assess all clients taking into consideration any possible 'risk situations'.

## *Guidelines for volunteers:*

## Your personal safety is paramount

- If in any doubt about a situation — walk away
- Do not be enticed into an argument
- Never try to touch someone who is angry — this may worsen the situation
- Discuss any relevant information about a client with your Co-ordinator
- Do not give out your home address or telephone number unless previously agreed with your Co-ordinator
- Never stay in a situation where you think you may be at risk. Don't feel you have to stay because of your commitment to the client
- Be aware of personal space — yours and others! Encroaching on people's personal space can make them aggressive. If other people are too close to you and making you uncomfortable, ask for more space or move away

## *Working Environment*

- A client's home can never be entirely free of hazards but an awareness of the importance of safety matters, together with care and consideration can reduce risks to a minimum.
- Your Co-ordinator will highlight any specific hazards observed within the family home prior to your visits.

## Animals

You will be advised by your Co-ordinator prior to your initial visit whether or not there is a possibility of contact with an animal(s) during your visits. If this is a matter of concern, you will not be placed with the client. Where a volunteer is happy to visit a client who has animals, it should be made clear to the client, that although the volunteer is happy to visit, animals should still be controlled and if necessary placed in another room during the visit.

- Be assertive — ask for the householder's co-operation e.g. by keeping the animal in another room
- Announce your visit — and check safeguards are in place
- Report concerns to your Co-ordinator
- Be aware that pets may be unpredictable. Not all pets appreciate being patted and stroked!

## *Lifting and handling loads*

We do not expect our volunteers to lift or move objects. If you are asked to lift an item which you are uncomfortable with, please refrain from doing so.

## *Transporting clients*

It is your responsibility to ensure that your motor vehicle is roadworthy and that you are properly insured to transport clients.

**NB: Volunteers must notify their insurers if they use their own transport for Ivybridge Caring, whether or not they carry a client.**

If you are likely to transport a client in your motor vehicle:

- It is essential that all passengers are secured by a seat belt. You must comply with the law concerning seat belts:
- You **MUST** wear a seat belt if one is fitted. There are few exceptions to this and the **DRIVER** is liable to prosecution if a child under 14 years does not wear a seat belt. Please **do not** transport children without first contacting your Co-ordinator, as there are extensive guidelines governing this activity which you must be made aware of.

### *Lone working policy*

- Always carry a mobile phone.
- If your plans change, inform someone as soon as possible.
- We do not expect our Volunteers to visit their clients after 6.00pm.
- Do not make impromptu visits.
- In the unlikely event that you are in a difficult situation whilst visiting a client, call the designated office number and use the code word "sunshine" used so as not alert the client to the purpose of your call and to alert us that you need our help, i.e. "Hello sunshine".

### *Maternity*

If you become aware that you are pregnant, please advise your Co-ordinator of your condition. Such information will be treated in the strictest confidence. Your Co-ordinator will assess what adjustments, if any need to be made to your volunteering role to ensure that any additional health and safety issues are addressed.

### *Fire*

On discovering a fire in the home of a client, you must:

1. Leave the premises with the client, as quickly as possible.
2. Call 999.
3. Do not re-enter the premises until advised by the Fire Service that it is safe to do so.

If you are with a client in premises other than their home, that you are unfamiliar with i.e. a supermarket, please ensure that you are aware of the location of all exits.

### *Stress*

Volunteering can be very rewarding. However, if you are distressed or upset after visiting your client, do discuss your feelings with your Co-ordinator, who is there to support and help you.