



Twyford, Wargrave & District Volunteer Centre (Twyford Volunteer Drivers) Client Guidelines

We are a small, Twyford-based, registered charity, staffed entirely by volunteers.

Who can we help?

Our clients are from Charvil, Cockpole Green, Crazies Hill, Hurst, Knowl Hill, Ruscombe, Sonning, Shurlock Row, Twyford, Waltham St Lawrence and Wargrave.

We provide transport for medical and dental appointments only (mostly in hospitals, doctors' and dental surgeries and opticians) or for appointments which have been officially sanctioned by a medical professional such as physiotherapy.

This transport is provided mainly for elderly people who would find difficulty in attending these appointments in an alternative way. A nominal charge of 45p per mile is made for this service to cover the car running costs. **We ask you only to use the service when there is genuinely no other alternative transport option.**

The service we offer is to pick you up and take you in a private car to your medical appointment. Our drivers are not always able to accompany clients from the car to their appointment, especially at locations where parking is a significant challenge eg at the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

In order to qualify as a client, **you must have the mental and physical capacity to be responsible for yourself.** If in doubt, you must take a helper (friend, relative or carer) with you. **If you need assistance getting in and out of the car and/or from the car to the place of your appointment, please bring a helper.** Our volunteer drivers are not trained or insured to assist clients and we do not have the equipment to lift or move people and we cannot take wheelchairs. If your needs go beyond what can reasonably be expected of

volunteers and you need more involved assistance, please seek advice from your GP surgery. Readibus or Keep Mobile may be able to help.

We regret we are not able to provide transport for visits to shops, hairdressers, social events, gyms or clubs or to visit friends/relatives in hospitals, care homes etc. We are unable to collect day surgery patients who have had a general anaesthetic.

Health precautions:

We may require clients to take measures to protect themselves and their driver, such as wearing a mask, using hand sanitiser and sitting in the back of the car. Drivers may decide to open car windows even in cold weather and some may not be willing to take two passengers, ie the client and a helper.

Booking a lift:

As soon as you have your appointment time, please call our office on **0118 934 3010** or email **twadvc@yahoo.co.uk**. The office is usually open between **9.30 am and 12 noon, Monday to Friday** excluding bank holidays. There is an answerphone service so if no one answers (our volunteers sometimes work from home) or you call out of hours, simply leave a clear message with your details and we will call you back. We can accept bookings a few months ahead.

You will need full details of your appointment including **the day and date, time, duration and location, including the department if visiting a hospital.** We will need to know if someone will accompany you and if you have items such as a walking frame.

We need as much notice as possible to find a driver (**ideally at least one week**). We endeavour to satisfy all requirements, but this becomes less likely if we are not given

adequate notice. Please make all bookings through our office - do not contact a driver directly.

We contact our drivers every Tuesday with a list of jobs for the following week. Once a driver has volunteered, the office will contact you, usually on the Thursday of the week before your appointment, to tell you the driver's name and the pick-up time. Your driver will aim to contact you the day before the trip to confirm the arrangement.

Sometimes we do not have sufficient volunteer drivers to help with all the requests we receive. If we cannot find you a driver, we will let you know by the day before so you can make alternative arrangements. In busy times we may have to limit our service to drop off only (where you make your own arrangements to get home after your appointment) and/or limit the number of requests clients can make per week/month.

Cancelled appointments:

If your appointment is cancelled or the date or time is changed, please tell us without delay so we can take the necessary action.

Items to take with you:

Please take your appointment letter/card, blue badge, money for parking and a mobile phone - particularly at the Royal Berkshire Hospital - bus pass, mask, hand sanitiser etc as appropriate.

Payment:

If you have a valid bus pass, we are able to accept it for payment under the Wokingham Borough Council payment scheme. We carry the majority of our clients on this basis and encourage all clients to apply for a bus pass. Please ensure you give us your up-to-date bus pass number. **If you do not have a bus pass**, please pay by cash at the end of the journey by putting the money in an envelope and handing it to your driver.

Parking charges:

It is **your** responsibility to pay all parking charges. Please make sure you take sufficient change with you in case payment is needed in a car park or at a street meter. Free parking for volunteers' cars is not always available.

Some venues no longer offer automatic parking concessions for blue badge holders. Please do not expect your driver or the charity to pay for parking.

Data protection and confidentiality:

When you join us as a client, we will ask you for information which will be held on a computer. This data will be retained and used to enable us to provide an efficient service to you when requested to do so by you. We will remove all data relating to you if we receive a written request from you to do so. This data will not be shared with any third parties.

We will only contact your emergency contact if we have serious concerns for your health, safety or wellbeing.

Donations:

We are a small, local charity and we rely on donations to keep the service going. None of us are paid, but we do have significant overheads. Unlike some other local volunteer driver organisations, we do not currently charge clients an annual fee.

We are grateful for financial donations, however small. **Payments** may be made by electronic banking to sort code 60-17-21, account number 06309518, account name 'Twyford, Wargrave & District Volunteer Centre'. **Cash** may be placed in an envelope and handed to a volunteer driver who will forward it to our office. **Cheques**, payable to 'Twyford, Wargrave & District Volunteer Centre', may be sent to the address at the top of page 1. Our drivers are unable to accept tips as this would invalidate their insurance.

Please note:

We aim to offer you the best service we can but please remember we are all volunteers. Events outside our control such as volunteer illness and shortages, adverse winter driving conditions and pandemics may make it impossible for us to deliver our normal service. Occasionally we may have to cancel a booked trip at short notice.

New clients - please allow one week between posting your registration form back to us and booking your first trip.

We look forward to helping you.