



*A very warm welcome and a huge thank you for joining our team of volunteers.....*

## Some answers to your questions.....

**WHAT:** You're probably wondering what's involved and what is expected of you. Our office volunteers talk to clients either in person or on the phone, answering queries and adding bookings, bus or car, to the computer system. Our drivers collect a client, usually from home, and take him or her to an appointment, wait for them and bring them home. The client may give a voluntary donation to the driver for FISH, although some people pay directly to the office. Our drivers can claim back their mileage costs at 45p per mile. Our home visitors visit clients in their own homes, after they have been 'matched' with someone of similar interests by the Home Visiting team leaders. Our minibus drivers take people on the FISH minibus for excursions and essential shopping trips. Some of our volunteers have offered to do small handyman jobs around the house for our clients. FISH also runs a regular monthly tea party, which volunteers bake for and serve the tea.

**WHEN:** Whenever it's convenient for you! Please let us know if you are only available on certain days in the week – even if you are only free one morning a week, it will help. Home visitors are free to work out their own routine for visiting.

**WHERE:** Our office volunteers work from 9.30 to 11.30 on weekdays, either in the office or at home.

Our drivers can take clients to appointments as close by as Sonning Common Health Centre and as far away as Bracknell, Windsor, Oxford and even London; some prefer to stay closer to home while others are happy to take the longer haul bookings. Blue badges (free parking for disabled clients) are available to borrow in the office, as are wheelchairs. An Octabadge will be issued to drivers who are happy to drive clients to Oxford hospitals. Enclosed are maps of local hospital parking with extra parking for volunteer drivers highlighted in pink.

Home visitors will usually visit their clients in the client's home, although some visitors have also taken clients out to museums, tea rooms or the FISH Tea party.



**WHO:** As with any organisation, our clients are a varied group, many live on their own, and some walk with a stick or use a wheelchair or walking frame. If you are a driver, please let us know whether you can carry these items in your car and whether there are likely to be any accessibility issues – such as a particularly high or low car.

**HOW:** There may be several reasons for a client to phone the FISH office. They may be asking for transport to an appointment, or to go on the bus, or because they need shopping done or some medication delivered, or a small handyman job done. An office volunteer enters the job on the computer system. If the job needs filling within the next 24 hours, the office volunteer will call down our driver/shopper list to find someone to fill the booking. If they are unsuccessful, or the appointment is further away, the booking details will be circulated to all drivers at midday, by email, along with any other unfilled bookings. A driver can accept the booking by clicking on the job number (a hyperlink). This displays the full job details and has 2 answers to be completed. Once this has been correctly completed the system generates an email to the driver confirming all the booking details. It is often helpful, if you feel comfortable with it, to call the client the day before your pick-up just to confirm details. If the call is a shopping request the same procedure applies; any unfilled shopping bookings are circulated to our shoppers. FISH also has a 5-person, dedicated team picking up and delivering medication every weekday afternoon (and sometimes on Saturdays!)

**ID Badges** Please wear your ID badge at all times when on duty for FISH. If you don't have one yet, please supply a digital passport-style photo to the office manager.

**ADMIN:** Drivers will be given a driver job sheet to complete for their trips, and more are available online or in the office. It is fairly self-explanatory, but, if in doubt, please ask. Please always enter your mileage – even if it is an estimate and you are not planning to claim for it. If you wish to claim for it, you can either receive cash from the office or we can pay it directly into your bank account. If you do not wish to claim for it, it can be treated as a donation to FISH and we can also claim Gift Aid on it (as long as you have completed a Gift Aid Form). You will also receive a list with suggested donations commensurate with the distance travelled to each location. This is just a guide, and not all clients can afford the suggested amount, but you may find it useful to have in the car to show to clients who may be unsure of how much they might give. You may also wish to take some small envelopes from the office for clients who wish to be discreet about what they give.



**Car parking** – Drivers should not have to pay for parking. At RBH, take your ticket and your ID badge to the main desk on Level 2 to get it validated. At other hospitals there is often designated volunteer parking, but, if you have to pay, please claim it back from the office on your job sheet.

**Car Insurance** – You will need to inform your car insurance company that you will be transporting passengers for FISH. There should be no additional cost to you, but some insurance companies may place restrictions on how often you drive or the distance that you cover.

***FISH Volunteer Centre is managed by a committee, please feel free to approach us with any ideas you may have to help FISH better support the community. Richard McQuillan, our chairman, can be contacted via the details below – or just pop into the office and talk to the office volunteers.***

***We also run a mini-bus which offers group outings, mystery tea tours and essential shopping trips to local supermarkets – these are always popular. We are always looking for more drivers to join the driving team***

***The FISH Team is extremely grateful to you for your offer of help and support, and hope you will find volunteering with us a rewarding experience. We ask that you take care to respect the confidentiality of any discussions that you have with, or information you have about, our clients.***

***Kind regards***

***FISH***

Enclosed:

