



# **FiSH Neighbourhood Care**

## **Volunteer Induction Information**



**The Queen's Award  
for Voluntary Service**

### **FiSH Neighbourhood Care**

**Barnes Green Centre, Church Road, London SW13 9HE**

Telephone: 020 8876 3335/6 Email: [info@fishhelp.org.uk](mailto:info@fishhelp.org.uk) Website: [www.fishhelp.org.uk](http://www.fishhelp.org.uk)

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# FiSH Volunteer Induction

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## 1. WELCOME

Welcome to **FiSH Neighbourhood Care**, a registered charity covering Barnes, Mortlake, and East Sheen. We are very pleased that you have joined us as a volunteer and hope that you will enjoy working with us.

## 2. WHAT IS FiSH?

FiSH Neighbourhood Care offers **F**riendship, **i**ndependence, **S**upport and **H**elp to residents in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, for those living in Barnes, Mortlake, East Sheen and the surrounding areas. The acronym **FiSH** is used to publicise the work of our Charity and will be used as the abbreviation throughout this induction pack.

### 2.1 Our vision and mission statements

#### Our Vision

To inspire a caring community where older people, live fulfilling, independent lives knowing that help given willingly by volunteer neighbours is at hand.

#### Our Mission

To combat loneliness and social isolation in older and vulnerable people living in Barnes, Mortlake, and East Sheen, enabling them to live independent and dignified lives. We connect the community through a volunteer network offering friendship, support, and practical help.

### 2.2 FiSH Board:

FiSH is overseen by a Board of Trustees who have overall control and legal responsibility, directing how it is managed, and ensuring it acts in the public interest. They set strategy, ensure compliance with laws and governing documents, manage assets responsibly, and must act in the best interests of the charity. The Chair of the Trustees can be contacted by email on [Chair@fishhelp.org.uk](mailto:Chair@fishhelp.org.uk)

### 2.3 FiSH Volunteers

Volunteers are the heart of FiSH Neighbourhood Care, and we will do everything to support you to make sure that you have an enjoyable and rewarding volunteer experience. Our volunteers are involved in a diverse range of roles and FiSH Neighbourhood Care always tries to match their skills and interests with the role they choose. Volunteering opportunities take place at a variety of times, some are set regular times, many are flexible.

- Operate the FiSH Helpline, weekdays
- Provide door to door transport in private cars.
- Collect and deliver shopping for the housebound
- Assist with FiSH minibus outings in one of the accessible buses
- Provide help with gardening & carry out miscellaneous odd jobs
- Provide a befriending service on the phone or face to face at a client's home
- Support Coffee Corner, our social listening project in selected public locations
- Support our regular Retro Café in Sheen
- Support the Picasso Art classes.
- Carry out administrative duties in the office and/or serve as Trustee Directors
- Support Singing for the Brain sessions for those with early-stage dementia
- Bake cakes and help serve teas at our regular activities and events

## 2.4 FiSH Events

FiSH also runs several events each year, such as concerts, Open Gardens, social gatherings and a stall at the Barnes Fair. We may ask you if you would like to help at one of these events. Please do not feel at all obliged to do so, but it can be a very pleasant way to meet some of your fellow volunteers and a good way of helping to raise vital funds for FiSH.

## 2.5 FiSH office & contact details

The work of the volunteers is coordinated from the FiSH Office located in Barnes Green Centre. The FiSH Office operates under the leadership of the FiSH Director, Arlene Coutts and a small staff.

<b>Arlene Coutts</b>	Director	<a href="mailto:director@fishhelp.org.uk">director@fishhelp.org.uk</a>	020 8876 3335
<b>Laura Clayton</b>	Office Assistant	<a href="mailto:laura@fishhelp.org.uk">laura@fishhelp.org.uk</a>	020 8876 3336
<b>Liz Dallas Ross</b>	Befriending Manager	<a href="mailto:befriending@fishhelp.org.uk">befriending@fishhelp.org.uk</a>	020 8878 8100
<b>Sally Godstone</b>	Transport & Projects Assistant	<a href="mailto:sally@fishhelp.org.uk">sally@fishhelp.org.uk</a>	020 3745 3341
<b>Deborah Carter</b>	Transport & Projects Manager	<a href="mailto:bus@fishhelp.org.uk">bus@fishhelp.org.uk</a>	020 8876 3765

## 3. THE ROLE OF FiSH VOLUNTEERS

As detailed above, there are several different ways that volunteers can get involved with FiSH. Whatever role you take on, it is providing a valuable service in our local community and you can do as much or as little as you wish.

### 3.1 What FiSH expects from you

'Voluntary Care' can be taken to mean a great deal so there must be limits to what our volunteers can be expected to do for those whom we help. Much depends on what our volunteers consider reasonable, but a good yardstick is perhaps described as what a caring and concerned neighbour might be expected to do for someone who asks them for help.

We do not ask our volunteers to do cleaning, or to undertake personal care such as assistance with bathing, taking to the toilet or administering medication, anything other than simple repair jobs and no lopping of trees or large shrubs. These tasks are not covered by our FiSH insurance and are more appropriate to professional help. We have a list of some tradespeople and companies who can offer these services.

### 3.2 Our responsibility to those we help

The welfare of those we help is a major concern to us and so we ask you to help by:

- being reliable in trying not to let people down
- being honest with us if there are problems
- treating those we help with courtesy, dignity and respect

### **3.3 Volunteer Code of Conduct**

We rely on FiSH volunteers to conduct themselves in a manner that maintains the integrity of FiSH, its standing in the community and with other bodies, and to always act with courtesy and consideration for others.

Volunteers are expected to respect and promote the policies and procedures of FiSH agreed by the FiSH Board, including our Equal Opportunities Policy. All FiSH policies are available in the office to consult if needed.

Volunteers are expected to work within the spirit of our confidentiality policy, respecting both client confidentiality and information which is confidential within the organisation in relation to financial, personnel, and strategic management issues. Please do not take photographs or post on social media without proper consent from the client, and FiSH. Care must be taken to safeguard any PIN numbers that may be given to you if you are authorised, by a client, to use a credit or debit card on their behalf while acting as a FiSH shopping volunteer. The same applies to Keysafe numbers used to enter clients' homes.

### **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

FiSH is committed to treating everyone with dignity and respect. We welcome volunteers and support clients regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or background. We ask all volunteers to uphold this commitment in their role.

Any matters of concern should be raised with the Director so that we can act promptly and protect the needs of our clients and our volunteers.

### **3.4 Handling money**

If you are given cash by a client, when acting as a FiSH shopper, you must sign for the money received and provide a till receipt(s) and account for any change when you return with the shopping.

If money is collected during a FiSH event it should be returned to the FiSH office in a sealed envelope for processing as soon as possible, together with a signed slip of paper showing how much was collected. Wherever possible the slip should be countersigned by a second person.

### **3.5 Medication**

Volunteers may be asked to collect and deliver prescription medication to housebound clients. Volunteers must not:

- Provide advice about medication
- Open packaging or organise medication
- Administer medication
- Collect over-the-counter or non-prescription medication

If you have any concerns about a client's medication, please inform the office.

### 3.6 Giving advice

Volunteers should not take on the responsibility of giving financial or legal advice to a client (or indeed another volunteer) in their role as a FiSH volunteer. This is particularly true in the case of financial advice. Please refer the client to the FiSH Neighbourhood Care office.

### 3.7 Donations & gifts from those we help

If someone wishes to make a donation, please accept this on behalf of FiSH and put it in an envelope to pass it on to the FiSH office. Please note on the envelope the name of the donor. Where appropriate the office will write back to the person thanking the donor.

Some people may want to give you a small personal gift, but we would prefer that you encourage the client to make a donation to FiSH instead. However, if they insist, we recommend that only "consumable" gifts such as a cake or chocolate may be accepted as a token of thanks. Please let the office know if you have any concerns. Volunteers should only accept money that will be given as donations to FiSH and make this clear to the clients they are helping.

### 3.8 Confidentiality & telephoning clients

In order to protect your privacy please do not give your home address or telephone number to any person you help on our behalf. Instead, ask that all contact with you be made through FiSH via our Helpline, our Befriending Co-ordinator or another of the office staff. In return, to protect those we help, many of whom are vulnerable and living alone please, do not discuss their circumstances with anyone other than FiSH staff members. We always value any feedback concerning users, volunteers or staff.

If a FiSH volunteer has been booked for a particular task, we do not give the volunteer's personal details to those we help, and ask that all contact with our volunteers is made through the helpline or office.

However, it may be necessary for volunteers to phone clients direct, prior to their task date or for shopping lists. If you do, you are asked to **protect your own personal phone number by dialling 141 prior to the number that you are calling.**

### 3.9 Contacting our office or helpline

If you have a concern regarding a visit or a particular client, you can phone the office and talk to the Director or one of the team on the numbers listed above on 2.5.

If you need to speak to the Helpline for details about your task, please phone **020 8876 3414** between 9am and 1pm, Monday to Friday.

If you find that you cannot do a job after initially agreeing to do it, please let us know as soon as possible by phoning the Helpline on **020 8876 3414** or by calling the office on **020 8876 3336**.

The FiSH Office is usually staffed from 08:30-17:00 Monday to Friday. If you have a problem out of office hours (e.g. perhaps when doing a job where a difficult situation arises) please call Arlene on 020 8876 3335/ 07716 187562.

### 3.10 Requests for extra help

If someone asks you to do something extra to the job that our office has described to you, your response must depend on completing your scheduled task first, and then whether you personally want to do extra. Bear in mind our "caring and concerned neighbour" yardstick.

If you do agree to do extra tasks or make a detour to your agreed task to include more help:

- You must inform the office as it is important for FiSH to keep an accurate record of work undertaken, so statistics can be updated and for insurance purposes.
- If you do not have time or feel that someone is trying to take advantage of your generosity, do not be afraid to say "no" and suggest the person wanting extra help get in touch with our Helpline again.

### 3.11 Handling referrals

If you are approached about a new person who would like help from FiSH, we would ask you to ring the office and they will make arrangements to contact them.

### 3.12 Safeguarding

FiSH is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of older and vulnerable people. Many of those we help may be living alone, experiencing loneliness, or facing health challenges. Their safety and wellbeing is always our priority.

As a FiSH volunteer, you may sometimes notice something that concerns you. This could include:

- Signs of physical, emotional, financial or neglectful abuse
- A client appearing unusually withdrawn, frightened or confused
- Concerns about self-neglect
- Worries about exploitation by others

You are **not** expected to investigate or resolve safeguarding concerns yourself.

If you are worried about someone's safety or wellbeing:

1. Report your concern as soon as possible to the FiSH Director and safeguarding lead, Arlene Coutts.
2. Make a brief note of what you observed or were told.
3. If someone is in immediate danger, call 999.

All concerns will be treated seriously, sensitively and confidentially.

FiSH has a Safeguarding Policy available on its website.

### 3.13 Data Protection and Personal Information

FiSH holds personal information about clients and volunteers so that we can organise support safely and effectively.

We are committed to handling personal information responsibly and in line with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

As a volunteer, you must:

- Only use client information for the purpose of your FiSH role
- Not keep personal records about clients at home
- Return or securely destroy any written notes once a task is complete
- Never share client details with friends, family or on social media
- Report any accidental loss of personal information to the office immediately

If you are unsure whether something is appropriate to share or record, please contact the office for guidance.

## **4. OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO YOU**

### **4.1 FiSH volunteer identity card**

Your FiSH identity card shows that you are one of our DBS-checked volunteers. All volunteers must wear their FiSH ID cards as it gives reassurance to clients, particularly when calling at their homes, even though your visit will be arranged by our helpline or other FiSH staff and the person should know who you are and when you will call.

*Please ask the office to send you an identity card if you have not already been given one.*

### **4.2 Support, development & training**

FiSH offers training in moving and handling, safeguarding, and first aid throughout the year. FiSH would appreciate you undertaking at least one training session within the first six months of your becoming a FiSH volunteer. Training sessions are a good way of sharing experiences and meeting other FiSH volunteers. If you would like any particular training that you feel would be relevant to our work, we always welcome suggestions.

### **4.3 Health, safety & welfare**

FiSH is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our staff and volunteers. Although volunteers are not employees, we aim to provide the same level of care and protection as far as reasonably practicable. We follow good practice guidance from the Health and Safety Executive.

Your safety comes first. Please:

- Only undertake tasks you feel comfortable and safe doing
- Raise any concerns with the office before starting a task
- Report accidents, incidents or near misses as soon as possible
- Withdraw from any situation where you feel unsafe

We do not expect volunteers to put themselves at risk under any circumstances.

Volunteers working alone: All staff and volunteers will always give priority to their own personal safety in respect to how they carry out their roles and responsibilities. If you feel threatened at any time, withdraw from the situation. Volunteers will only visit a befriending client following an initial visit and introduction by a designated member of the befriending team.

Risk Assessment: Risk assessments will be carried out by members of staff who are qualified to assess risk and have an in-depth knowledge of the job or task in question.

We are always happy to help you if you feel that there are issues or concerns that you would like to raise, or offload, or feel that something in your volunteering work for FiSH needs bringing to our attention. Please do contact the Director (8876 3335), Office Assistant (8876 3336) or Befriending Manager (8878 8100) if you would like to have a chat; or write to them at the FiSH office.

#### 4.4 Insurance and risk assessment

FiSH maintains Public Liability and Employers Liability Insurance for all employees and volunteers working on our behalf. The policy covers the work of volunteers carried out in accordance with the Code of Conduct, Policies and Procedures. It covers all normal 'jobs' that are requested through the FiSH office or Helpline.

Our policy is not a Motor Insurance policy. All driving volunteers must have a valid Motor Insurance policy that provides cover for all driving jobs carried out for FiSH. Also, our policy is not a 'Handyman' policy. If a volunteer carries out a job at the client's home, please note that our insurance only covers light house and garden work, examples of which are changing a light bulb, lawn mowing, hedge-trimming and weeding. Working on a small step-ladder up to approximately 4 feet from ground level is covered. Work at greater heights or using larger ladders is not permitted. There is no cover for any work that would be considered to be 'DIY'. Under no circumstances will a volunteer be asked to do electrical, gas or plumbing work.

Insurance is very important both to the employees and volunteers and to the Charity. Volunteers are asked to raise any uncertainties they might have with the FiSH office before a job is undertaken.

#### 4.5 Out-of-pocket expenses

You can claim out-of-pocket expenses for your volunteer work with us.

A car mileage allowance of 45p a mile can be paid to cover your petrol expenses - details are given on the Information Sheet for Drivers. An expenses claim form can be downloaded from our website.

#### 4.6 Volunteer Status

Volunteers are an essential and valued part of FiSH. However, volunteering with FiSH does not create a contract of employment. Volunteers are not employees and are not entitled to wages or employment benefits. The volunteering relationship is based on mutual trust, flexibility and goodwill.

### 5. THANK YOU!

Finally, you should receive a lot of verbal thanks for the help you give, and in some cases donations to FiSH to show appreciation. But please bear in mind that some people find it difficult or embarrassing to say, "thank you".

However, rest assured that all your efforts are always very much appreciated by the FiSH trustees and staff.

## FiSH Neighbourhood Care

Address: **FiSH, Barnes Green Centre, Church Road, Barnes SW13 9HE**

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