



Supporting people to
continue their love of reading
from their own home.

This Pack

We recognise that some of you have been doing this role for many years and that you are the experts on the ground. We have a legal responsibility to keep you and the people you support safe and secure. We have created this volunteer pack so that you have all the information you need in once place.

Our pack aims to:

- Highlight what you can expect when volunteering with us and what we expect in return
- Define your Home Library Service volunteer role
- Provide you with some essential information to help keep you and your client safe
- Summarise training that is necessary to complete as a HLS volunteer
- Answer some frequently asked questions

We advise that you don't attempt to digest the whole booklet in one sitting. Please dip in and out at your own pace. It might feel like information overload now, but we guarantee it will help all of you for different reasons at some point.





What should I expect as a volunteer?

- A clear role description so you understand what your responsibilities are and what is expected of you.
- Ongoing support from a staff member who has been identified as your Volunteer Manager.
- An induction and training so that you can do your role well.
- To volunteer in a safe environment. We have a duty of care to make sure you are as safe as possible.
- Reimbursement of travel expenses. We believe that no volunteer should be out of pocket.
- To be treated fairly and to have your privacy and confidentiality respected.
- To be recognised for the time and skills you dedicate to the service and the local community. You may not feel you need to be thanked but we like to offer opportunities to show our gratitude.

"I really appreciate and look forward to the thank you events that the team hold. It's nice to feel valued and recognised for my contribution. The last event I went to I got to chat to other volunteers I might not otherwise have met, and it's made me feel part of the larger volunteering family"

What does the Library Service expect from our HLS Volunteers in return?

This is what we need from you...

- To respect and value all other volunteers, members of staff and service users and adhere to our equal opportunities policy.
- Attend training that has been identified by your Volunteer Manager as essential and relevant to your role. It may seem irrelevant and an extra hassle but it's usually required by law.
- To meet at least annually with your Volunteer Manager for a review session, for 1:1 updates and support. This should hopefully be enjoyable, and it may even involve tea and cake.
- Report any health and safety, GDPR or safeguarding concerns to your Volunteer Manager as soon as possible. This helps protect us all!
- To undergo a DBS check when you first start your role and to refresh it every 3 years. This won't cost you anything and your Volunteer Manager will support you with this.



"It's really reassuring to know there is a dedicated person looking after me who I can turn to for support and who has my interests at heart"



Your role

As a HLS volunteer your role will involve some or all of the following:

- Delivering books (cover books and talking books) to people in their homes who are unable to get into their local library.
- Arranging a mutually convenient time to visit your clients to drop off new books and collect previously read ones.
- Choosing books based on your clients reading preferences
- Returning read books back to the library (there are no overdue charges for HLS clients).
- Reporting any cause for concerns to your Volunteer Manager.
- Taking leaflets to the clients about other support networks available, if / when provided by the library.



More than delivering books!

We recognise, however, that what you do, can be so much more than this. For some clients you could be the only visitor they receive during the week. Others, you may have been visiting for years.

It is understandable therefore that you might want to sit down, have a chat and maybe even a cup of tea... and we are more than happy about this and encourage you to do so, if both yourself and the client would like to. But while you do this please consider essential boundaries to keep everybody safe.

"I've always loved reading myself, and it's a joy and a privilege to be able to carry on this service to people who can no longer come from their own homes into the library."



Boundaries you need to be aware of and make sure you put into place.

It's not pleasant to think of the worst-case scenario but as a County Council staff we need to consider all possibilities. To protect both yourself and your clients and to make sure that you both feel safe, comfortable and have a positive relationship, please follow these guidelines below.

- **Personal Care** - You should not offer help or support with any aspect of this including: cooking, helping someone to the toilet, shopping or administering medication etc. In some cases, your clients may ask you for help with such tasks or you may notice that they may benefit with some additional support. If this happens, please speak to your Volunteer Manager who will then be able to speak to the client about referring / signposting them to additional services and help them get any further support they might need.

"My client was struggling to do everyday tasks such as cooking and cleaning and asked me to help her. I wasn't comfortable with this and felt she needed more support. We had a chat and she was happy for me to speak to my Volunteer Manager about her situation. The library service was then able to signpost her to other services and she now has a care worker who comes out to her home to support her a couple of hours a day"

- **Money** - Don't ever exchange money with the client. This includes lending them money, borrowing money from them for yourself or using their money to make purchases for them on their behalf / request (e.g. doing a food shop for them / online transactions).
- **Friends?** - Be mindful that although a friendship may have developed it is still a 'managed relationship' and is therefore open to scrutiny by others. Do not embark on a relationship with a client that could lead to accusations against you, e.g. sexual or romantic relationships, financial involvement. We recommend you do not visit or meet up with your client outside of your Home Library Service volunteer role and it is not appropriate to bring a family member or friend to your visit to the client's home.

If you would like to discuss any of these boundaries in more detail then your Volunteer Manager will be happy to do so.

"I would occasionally pop down to the shops for my client if she was low on essentials such as milk and bread. One day she got a bit confused about how much change she was expecting, as she thought she had given me a £10 when she had actually given me £5. She got quite upset with me and was suggesting I had kept some of her change. Luckily the situation got quickly resolved when she checked her purse and found the £10 note in there but the whole incident left me upset. It also made me realise that offering to do this was not part of my volunteering role and left me open to accusations."





Health and safety information for your role!

Health and safety can never be made pretty, so here is the essential information to give you an understanding of how we can work together to keep you safe in your role.

- Your Volunteer Manager will have completed a risk assessment for the Home Library Service role and this should be read and signed by yourself during your induction and as and when it is updated. It will also be available for you to review during your annual catch up meetings. If you need to refresh your memory, please just ask.
- Your Volunteer Manager will always visit the client in their home first to assess that it is a safe environment for you to volunteer in.
- You may need to take a handful of books to your client. Please be careful when lifting these and do not carry more than you are able to. Please speak to your Volunteer Manager if you think you would benefit from a bag / trolley to transport the books in and we can provide that for you.
- If your circumstances change, (e.g. your health), which may affect your ability to undertake this role safely, then please speak to your Volunteer Manager.
- If your client's circumstances change (e.g. they get a dog) and you are not comfortable continuing with your visits, then please speak to your Volunteer Manager.

Lone working as a Home Library Service Volunteer



The HLS role does involve visiting clients alone in their home, and this is classed as lone working. Please read our top tips in keeping safe. We are obliged to ask you to follow them when you volunteer.

- Please identify a family member or friend who can act as your 'buddy'. You should let your buddy know what time you have arranged your appointments for with your HLS clients, so they know where you are.
- Where possible try and make sure your buddy is different from your emergency contact (this is the person you chose on your registration form).
- Give your buddy your contact details and the details of your emergency contact. Ensure that you also have your buddy's details too.
- You should contact your buddy within one hour of leaving your clients address so that they know you are safe and OK.
- You should inform your buddy that if they do not hear from you they should endeavour to try and contact you instead.
- If there is no response your buddy should try and contact your emergency contact.
- If contact has still not been made and your buddy has real concerns for your safety, they should request police intervention.
- It is your responsibility to ensure that you have identified a buddy and that you inform them of your Home Library Service meetings.

These procedures are designed to maximise your safety.





Training for Volunteers



As part of your HLS role you will need to complete two pieces of mandatory training:

- 1) General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data protection**
- 2) Safeguarding**

This section of the booklet is not a replacement for the full training, but we have included it to emphasise why we ask you to undertake this training and also so that the basic information is accessible to refer to if / when needed.

GDPR and Data Protection

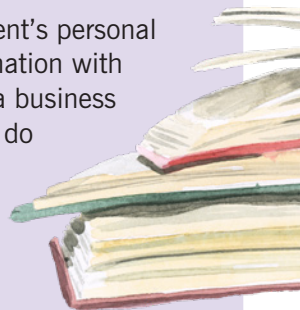
As a HLS volunteer you are protected by, and must abide by General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

In the UK, there are two data protection laws that we must follow. These are the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

You have access to personal, and in some cases, sensitive information about your clients. This includes their address and contact details but could also include information about their religion, ethnicity, health and disability. Data comes in all formats, so you may become privy to this information through conversations with your client.

Clients will expect their personal information to be looked after, and as a HLS volunteer it is your responsibility to do so by:

- Being aware of who is around when you discuss a client's personal information. You should only be discussing this information with your Volunteer Manager and only then when there is a business need (e.g. to ensure appropriate books are chosen, to do a handover if you are leaving the service, or a legal reason, such as a safeguarding or welfare issue). Don't discuss a customer's personal information with anyone who isn't entitled to it. This includes the client's family members, other volunteers and your friends and family.
- Ensuring any written information you have on the client (e.g their address) is stored safely. We recognise that you will need to keep a record of your clients addresses on you and ask that you do so in a notebook rather than a diary as this has been deemed to reduce the risk of it being stolen. Make sure you don't leave personal information unattended.
- You should always treat information like a wallet containing a large sum of money. You would do everything possible to make sure it was kept safe, so you should always take the same care with client information.



If you become aware of an information security incident or a data breach, get in touch with your Volunteer Manager who will report it to the Information Governance Team immediately. Under GDPR we must report most incidents / breaches within 72 hours of finding out, therefore, the Information Governance Team needs to know about incidents as soon as possible.

The training for this is in the form of a workbook.



Safeguarding

As part of your role you will need to undertake mandatory safeguarding training, which is a legal requirement under the Care Act. This will be done preferably within a classroom-based setting, however under some circumstances (e.g. time or travel limitations) can be completed as a work book.

What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding is the protection of children and 'at risk' adults from abuse or neglect.

What do we mean by 'at risk' adults?

Under the Care Act 2014, safeguarding duties apply to an adult who meets all the below

- Has needs for care and support (whether the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and;
- Is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and;
- As a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

This could include individuals with disabilities (physical, learning or sensory), mental ill health, dementia, drug or alcohol problems, or those who are frail due to their age:

As you read this, you may have identified how this does already, or could in the future, apply to the HLS clients that you visit and can therefore recognise and appreciate why safeguarding training has been deemed mandatory for this role.

What do I do if I have a safeguarding concern for one of my clients?

As a volunteer it is your duty to report any concerns, suspicions or evidence of abuse that you may have seen or heard, to your Volunteer Manager without delay. Remember abuse is about the impact of the act on the individual, not the intent! It is not always intentional and can instead be the result of well-intentioned ignorance or even a mistake. Despite this it is still very important that you report any concerns you may have as it will ensure that the individual and their family / carers receive the necessary support, training and equipment they may need.

We recognise that this can be an extremely sensitive subject and if you do experience any safeguarding concerns about your client and this has upset you then please speak to your Volunteer Manager for support.

"The safeguarding training was really useful and has made me more aware of the subject. It is really reassuring that the responsibility does not lie on us as volunteers and that we can, and should, take any of our safeguarding concerns and discuss them with our Volunteer Manager, otherwise it could become overwhelming."





Frequently asked questions



Hopefully this section will answer questions you have which have not been answered in the rest of this pack.

What is a DBS check and why do I need one?

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), previously called the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB), helps employers stop unsuitable people from working with children and other vulnerable people. A DBS check is required for this role as the post involves visiting adults who may fall under the 'at risk' or vulnerable definition, in their houses, without supervision, on a regular basis. As you can appreciate, we are the County Council and we have a duty of care to complete these with you. Your DBS will need to be refreshed every 3 years, but don't worry, your Volunteer Manager will help you with this!

Do I need to let my car insurer know about my volunteering and if so why?

Your local library is your 'base' for your volunteering role. If you then use your car to visit clients, we ask that you inform your car insurer. Most insurance companies will cover this area of work on your normal insurance, but some companies may require you to change to business insurance. This should not incur any additional expense but please speak to your Volunteer Manager if you have any problems. It is also your responsibility to ensure that you have the appropriate car insurance as well as an up-to-date MOT and tax.

Can I be reimbursed for my travel?

Leicestershire County Council feel strongly that no individual should be out of pocket for their volunteering. That's why we offer travel costs of 45p per mile, or full bus fares. Your Volunteer Manager will discuss this with you in your induction and if you choose to claim your mileage back they will support you with this! This will require your bank details and payments will be made by BACS. If at first you don't want to claim your mileage but then change your mind later on during your volunteering, that's fine! We offer this because we want to ensure that there are no barriers to volunteering and recognise that some people would not be able to afford to volunteer without being reimbursed.



How will Smart libraries affect my role?

There are libraries across the county which are self-access Smart libraries. Self-access means that library members will be able to use their library card to access the buildings outside of staffed hours.

Your Volunteer Manager will organise an induction to the new system should you wish to access the library outside of staffed hours.

My client has given me a thank you gift. Is this Ok?

There have been occasions where clients have provided volunteers with a thank you gift (this often occurs around Christmas time). A small gift (e.g. chocolates, flowers) given by a client as a gesture of appreciation to you can be accepted and it may cause offence to turn it down or return it. However, if you are offered a monetary gift of any kind (cash or cheque) this cannot be accepted and should be kindly turned down.

If you have been given a small gift by a client, please let your Volunteer Manager know so they can declare it on your behalf.

What should I do if I am ill or absent or am taking an extended holiday?

Please let your clients (if possible) and Volunteer Manager know. Please don't worry about it and if you are off on holiday have a great time!

Do I really have to complete the training?

The answer is yes. As part of the HLS role it is mandatory that you complete safeguarding and GDPR / Data protection training. Please have a look at our training section to understand why these are relevant to your role. Unfortunately, if you decide you do not want to complete this training you will not be able to carry on in your role as HLS volunteer, however we will always strive to support you to complete it.

We may offer you other training opportunities throughout the year (e.g. dementia awareness training). Although this training is not mandatory we like to encourage all volunteers to attend as it will help support you in your role.

Do I get a uniform?

You do not get a clothing uniform however you will be provided with an LCC lanyard and identification. It is important that you wear this during your volunteering role so that your clients can clearly identify you as a Home Library Service volunteer.

What should I do if I have a complaint about my role?

If you have a problem or complaint about your HLS volunteering role your first point of call would be to seek help or guidance from your Volunteer Manager, who will strive to support you with this and resolve any problems. In the rare circumstance an issue remains unresolved or you do not want to raise it with your Volunteer Manager, then you can contact the central volunteering team.

What should I do if I want to leave my role?

We recognise that there are many reasons why people decide to end their volunteering (e.g. retirement, moving out of the area, new commitments, want to try something new etc). If you have decided to end your volunteering role then please let your Volunteer Manager know as soon as possible. Although you are not obliged to give a notice period it would be useful if you could let us know a couple of weeks in advance as this will give us the opportunity to find another volunteer to visit the client and do a hand-over. Before you leave we ask that you hand in your LCC lanyard / badge, trolley (if you were given one) and you need to delete or shred any personal information that you may hold on the client. We may also ask to have a 1:1 with you before you leave to provide you with the opportunity to give us any feedback and so that we can formally thank you for volunteering with us. If we are unable to meet with you, we may send you a short questionnaire.





Thank you

Thank you for volunteering with Leicestershire County Councils Home Library Service (HLS). Your time, support, skills and commitment are crucial in helping us keep this service alive. Together we can continue to help housebound members of our community to stay involved with their local library and continue their love of reading.

Thank you for making Leicestershire Home Library Service possible!

If you have any questions please discuss these with your Volunteer Manager or you can contact the Communities and Wellbeing volunteering team by emailing nicola.seika@leics.gov.uk

For more information visit
www.communitycurators.co.uk