Wendover Dementia Support

Helping families through difficult times

Registered Charity no. 1182184

**The Role of the Volunteer in WDS**

All volunteers have been selected on the basis of an interview and a character reference, and have obtained the appropriate DBS check for their role as a volunteer. Every volunteer is given an induction, mentoring and training.

Volunteers have a variety of roles and responsibilities. Dementia Advisory Volunteers ( DAVs) are senior experienced volunteers who have received training to provide advice for our visitors and supervise the work of other volunteers. Most volunteers only see our visitors in the Monday Club setting where there are always senior DAVs on hand to refer to. Some volunteers are part of the home visiting team and have received extra training and support for that role. Every volunteer has read and signed our **Professional Framework** ( link) that covers issues such as confidentiality, safeguarding and professionalism.

**Professional Framework**

Dementia Support wishes to encourage volunteers to help and support visitors and their families on individual need and circumstance. We are proud of the way volunteers have used their imagination to enhance the well-being of visitors and their families. This professional framework is designed to enable those activities to continue in a safe and professional manner.

Volunteers are valued for:

• bringing additional skills and new perspectives to WDS

• enabling us to be more responsive and flexible in the charity's approach

• championing the charity's cause within the wider community

• enhancing the quality of the charity's work and of visitor experience

• promoting the wellbeing of users of services, local communities and themselves.

In order to make the most of volunteering for WDS, particularly if the volunteers want to do befriending or activity companionship, it is crucial to understand the limits, or boundaries of the role. Understanding the boundaries will help the volunteer to be more confident as it informs the approach to issues of confidentiality and professional boundaries which will help the volunteer to manage other people’s expectations.

It is important to emphasise that volunteers are being asked to use this professional framework to assess a new situation, activity or conversation. The volunteer should discuss it with a senior WDS Dementia Advisory Volunteer (DAV)

In most cases the DAV will work with the volunteer to make sure their plans are appropriate and risks minimised.

**GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

1. **Confidentiality**
2. Volunteers must hold in the strictest confidence all information of a personal nature that they learn about other volunteers, visitors and their families and carers.
3. Volunteers will not disclose information relating to the storage of money, valuables, medicines and equipment that would put the visitor or the reputation of WDS at risk.
4. **Treat all visitors equally**
5. Avoid favouritism, treating all visitors and their families fairly and without prejudice or discrimination
6. Listen to and respect vulnerable adults and their carers/families.
7. The charity is committed to encouraging a diversity of people to volunteer with them, including those from under-represented groups such as youth, people with a disability, LGBT, older people and people from black and minority ethnic communities.
8. Value and accept any feedback from visitors or their carers/families
9. **Ensure more than one adult present**
10. Ensure more than one adult present during visits or activities if at all possible
11. Visits and activities should be planned in advance with the consent of Next of Kin where possible (if the volunteer is visiting the visitor’s home)
12. **Relationships and the Volunteer**

Relationships can be complicated, and having a clear understanding of what is expected of the volunteer in the role and what is not will help ensure: -

1. The protection and safety of the volunteer and the people they support
2. A safe and consistent setting in which relationships with others can develop
3. In the event of family conflict, it is important to avoid being seen to take sides and being drawn into family situations. If in doubt, discuss the situation with WDS DAV who can give your support and advice.
4. If the visitor or their family has been previously known to the volunteer, the volunteer must inform WDS who will help establish the role so this sits within the WDS framework
5. **Saying No and feeling OK**

Saying no to the person with dementia or their carer the volunteer has got to know can be difficult. If the volunteer is clear about their role and the boundaries WDS have in place the volunteer will be more confident in maintaining these boundaries as the relationship develops. The volunteer must consider that by saying “yes” on one occasion may mean the volunteer cannot say “No” in the future

**The following is recommended: -**

* Volunteer can explain why they have to say “No” as it is WDS guidelines.
* Volunteer may say to visitor they may be upset at their refusal but repeat it is WDS guidelines
* Stick to the decision, be firm and consistent in the message
* Offer an alternative solution such as signposting to local organisation that can help

1. **The Role of the Volunteer and what they hope to accomplish including professional boundaries**
2. Volunteer will give their time to listen to the person with dementia and their carer
3. Build a relationship that helps the person with dementia and their carer feel less lonely and more connected
4. Keep in regular face to face or telephone contact with person living with dementia and their carer in agreement with WDS
5. Help person with dementia and their carer to find out about social activities and networks in their local area (signposting)
6. Help the person with dementia and their carer to feel welcome into all charity events.
7. **The Volunteer Role DOES NOT include: -**
8. Sharing personal details with the person with dementia and their carer if this not required as part of the volunteer’s role.
9. Sharing personal details of anyone connected with the charity without permission
10. Retaining or holding keys of the person with dementia or their carer
11. Providing health care - eg. dispensing medication or advice
12. Provide personal care – eg. helping with eating/drinking or with washing/bathing
13. Managing money or handling cash on behalf of the person with dementia or their carer
14. Routinely helping with general household tasks – eg. shopping, housework, gardening or minor household repairs
15. Being involved in the conduct of the person with dementia or their carer person’s affairs, eg acting as advocate or power of attorney or as Next of Kin
16. Accepting gifts from the person with dementia or their carer – it is possible to accept a gift to the value of £5 or under
17. Offering counselling or therapy
18. Providing a ‘sitting’ service, eg carer’s respite
19. Keeping secrets ( as the volunteer may need to raise a safeguarding issue )
20. Any form of manual handling of the person with dementia, which includes handling of equipment
21. Engaging in actions, including physical contact (or contact that can be seen as sexual), language or opinions that are offensive or discriminatory

**Principles as they Apply to Wendover Dementia Support**

Assess each situation on an individual basis, if necessary, with the help of WDS DAVs

**Visitors**

* Visitors living with their Next of Kin allow for the Next of Kin to give consent for each occasion. The Next of Kin can provide specific amounts of cash for any activity which should be accounted for with a receipt if possible
* Visitors living alone require more planning and steps to ensure Next of Kin consent and agreement about money or other potential issues
* Visitors living alone without Next of Kin where a patient advocate are involved require explicit consent and agreement in writing from the advocate
* Visitors who had a relationship with a volunteer prior to the WDS referral requires a discussion with a WDS DAV and possibly different volunteers allocated. This is common as all volunteers and visitors live in the same community. This includes:
* visitors who have been patients of WDS volunteers who are retired GPs
* Visitors who are neighbours or friends of volunteers
* If the volunteer friend wishes to continue to play an active role, then discussions with WDS could lead to a formal statement from the volunteer friend that they are acting outside of the WDS role. This should be stored on the database and any other volunteer should liaise appropriately.
* Retired GPs should resist any expectations to fulfil a GP role
* Visitors who have been discharged from WDS as they have moved permanently into a care home
* It is recognised that volunteers have formed a relationship with these visitors and may wish to continue visiting as a friend
* There needs to be clarity about this which could involve a statement from the volunteer on the database

**Whilst any statement that a WDS volunteer is acting as a ‘friend’ is helpful, any WDS volunteer acting as a friend should uphold the values of the WDS professional framework for their own protection and the reputation of WDS**

**Referring to WDS senior DAVs (Dementia Advisory Volunteers)**

* DAVs have received training to advise visitors and their families about day-to-day management and dilemmas
* DAVs have a responsibility to support volunteers at all times and help plan activities to ensure they are within the guidance of Professional Framework
* Volunteers should consult a DAV (urgently if necessary) in the following situations:
* If the volunteer suspects that there may be a safeguarding issue.
* The visitor or their family are requesting advice about the best way to manage a situation
* the volunteer can give information or signpost to another organisation but should avoid giving advice about what to do in any situation.
* The volunteer should avoid giving negative opinions or testimonials of other services.
* If the volunteer is feeling uncomfortable or out of their depth at any time
* If the volunteer would like to plan an activity with their visitor such as a walk, going for a coffee or any other outing.
* The DAV will help the volunteer plan that event and ensure the appropriate people have given consent and plans fall within the Professional Framework