

What Does An Escort Do?

Volunteers escort/accompany service users on one-off or regular journeys that the service user would otherwise find difficult to complete.

What Else Might Be Involved?

In order to escort a service user, you will need to befriend them, which means you will need to be able to listen, engage in friendly conversation and respect their views. You may need to push their wheelchair, for which training will be given. A trip may involve going to the coast for a day, taking someone to hospital or accompanying them on a shopping trip. Some volunteers use their own cars to escort service users.

VSL support sessions for all volunteers (held 3-4 times each year) form an integral part of the volunteer role and you will be informed of these through our regular newsletters or by letter.

Is There A Minimum Commitment?

We hope that the majority of our volunteers will be with the Organisation for a minimum of three months. If you only assist service users on a regular basis, we would hope you could stay with us for 6 months. There is no maximum length.

How Frequently Will I Escort A Service User?

The length and frequency will vary depending on the individuals' needs and can be flexible around your commitments.

We ask the volunteer to inform the Organiser of any changes, which must be discussed and agreed with the Organiser and the service user.

Who Will I Escort?

Service users requiring an escort will have some form of physical disability. Their needs will be discussed with you and guidance given. All of our service users live in the Forest Hill & Sydenham area.

Volunteers will be matched with service users when their Disclosure and Barring Service checks are returned and according to preferences and geographical location.

How Are We Introduced?

Volunteers are given an id card or a letter to take with them on their first trip as proof of identity. The Organiser will phone both the volunteer and the service user after the trip to see how it went and address any potential issues.

Do I Need Experience?

No. However, an ability to listen, engage in friendly

conversation and respect other's views is essential.

The Organiser is here to support you in your voluntary work and therefore welcomes feedback whether it is about any concerns you may have or just keeping up to date on your progress.

Volunteers Responsibilities

As a volunteer escort for VSL you will be expected to;

- Allow the service user to talk whilst you 'listen actively'.
- Develop a trusting relationship to support and, where appropriate, enable the service user to pursue social activities and life skills. (Regular service users).
- Engage in friendly conversation. It is important not to impose your opinions and beliefs on the service user.
- Be sensitive to the needs of service users who are in wheelchairs and attend wheelchair pushing training offered by VSL.
- Respect others' views.
- Be able to communicate clearly and effectively.
- Where possible, attend all relevant training and support sessions.
- Inform the Organiser of any concerns that arise.
- Be punctual: if you are unable to keep an appointment, you must inform the service user or VSL in good time (48 hours in advance when possible).
- Inform the Organiser of any unattended appointments
- Inform the Organiser of any change to the length, frequency or nature of visits. (Changes need to be agreed by VSL for monitoring and insurance purposes)
- Agree to abide by the Equality and Diversity Policy of VSL.
- Maintain confidentiality at all times.
- Comply with VSL's risk assessment guidelines.

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