



Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment for the activities of Houghton Regis Helpers

Date: 21 November 2025

Risk	Probability	Impact	Mitigation
Road Accident while volunteer is transporting client or accompanying client	Low	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driver & vehicle safety policy issued for compliance by all volunteers. • Only experienced volunteer drivers over the age of 25 utilised. • Only drivers with a full UK driving licence who have completed the national 2-year probationary period for new licence holders can volunteer as a driver. • Phoneholder to report any client or volunteer concerns about unsafe driving or vehicles immediately to the Chair of Houghton Regis Helpers • Any unsafe driving or vehicles reported by clients will be immediately reviewed and drivers removed from the list of available volunteers when considered appropriate. • Any unsafe driving or vehicles reported by volunteers who are accompanying clients in their own vehicles will be immediately reviewed and future requests from the client may be denied
Client harmed due to frailty, illness or infirmity (e.g. falls when getting in or out of car)	Medium	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers will not attempt to lift or support ill or infirm clients without appropriate training or help. • Volunteers will not provide help for which they are not medically qualified or trained. • Should a client be taken ill during the course of a home visit or when being transported by vehicle, volunteers will immediately summon medical help. • Clients who are considered too ill or infirm will not be transported by vehicle but referred to alternative arrangements via trained social services, the Hospital Patient Transport Service or NHS staff. • Wheelchair users will not be transported by our volunteer drivers in their own vehicle. Volunteers may accompany wheelchair users in adapted taxis or other vehicles if they feel confident to do so.

Client harmed through incorrect prescription collection	Low	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers will be provided with the name of the patient, address, date of birth and any exemption codes for non-payment of prescriptions • Volunteers will check name of pharmacy to collect prescription from and will carry ID badge when visiting the pharmacy • When collecting a client's medication, volunteers will ensure the dispensed items bear the correct name & address before delivery to the client. • Medications will be handed to an appropriate person and not left on a doorstep or in a porch. If delivery is not possible the volunteer will contact phone-holder for advice.
<p>Volunteer harmed through manual handling or use of tools & equipment</p> <p>Damage to client's property during indoor or outdoor tasks involving the use of equipment or manual handling</p>	Low/Medium	Medium/High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When agreeing to any task, volunteers must be realistic about their abilities and experience. • Volunteers will not undertake any task which is deemed too high risk or requires referral to a professional service • Volunteers will not take on tasks for which they are untrained, inexperienced or ill equipped. • Volunteers will not attempt to lift any heavy objects without appropriate experience, help or support. • When transporting heavy equipment, such as a lawnmower, volunteers will only do so if experienced and will request assistance if the equipment is too heavy for one individual • Volunteers using their own vehicles to transport tools and equipment do so at their own risk and have the right to refuse • Volunteers to wear clothing and footwear appropriate to the task being undertaken. • Clients will be requested to sign a disclaimer against pursuing a claim for any accidental or unintentional damage to property when volunteers carry out a task at the client's request and with the client's acceptance of risk • When assisting clients, volunteers will not use tools, appliances, cleaning liquids, chemicals, unless they are qualified or experienced and feel confident to do so. • When using ladders volunteers must comply with Work at Height Regulations 2005. Volunteers will avoid the use of leaning ladders especially for heights over 2 metres. If using a stepladder, for example to fit a curtain rail, volunteers will check the ladder is safe and only use the top steps if there is a handhold. • Volunteers using outdoor electrical equipment are supplied with an rcd (residual-current device) • Volunteers will not take on any task that is outside the scope of the group's insurance schedule. • Volunteers involved in the use of tools and equipment issued with a first aid kit if they do not have one

Volunteer harmed by domesticated or wild animal, reptile or bird	Low	Medium/High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers should not undertake a task involving a client's pet, such as dog walking, unless they have sufficient experience and confidence to do so. • Clients will be given a copy of the group's pet policy to ensure understanding and agreement on the terms on which pet care may be given. • Volunteers should remain alert to risks while undertaking any task where there is potential harm to, or injury from, a domesticated or wild animal, reptile or bird • Volunteers will report such incidents
Abuse, physical violence or sexual assault of client by volunteer	Low	Medium/High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All volunteers who will have contact with clients, either in the client's home or transporting them, will undergo Enhanced DBS checks • All volunteers must comply with the Policy for the Safeguarding Adults at Risk • All volunteers will undergo DBS checks as appropriate and complete Level 1 Safeguarding training. • Volunteers will remain aware of their own actions and safety, and keep alert to avoid placing themselves or clients in potential situations where allegations could be made • Any complaint from a client to either a volunteer or the phoneholder will be immediately reported to the nominated person and acted upon and, in appropriate cases, the police will be informed if the client has not already done so. • Committee members and volunteers will ensure all clients are treated equally in accordance with Houghton Regis Helpers Safeguarding Policy and the Equality & Diversity Policy, and in line with the declared aims and values of the scheme.
Abuse, physical violence or sexual assault of volunteer by client	Low	Medium/High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An initial visit by two volunteers, one of whom will be a committee member, will be carried out for all new clients to assess their needs and identify any potential safeguarding issues • Houghton Regis Helpers retains the right to refuse, or withdraw, help for clients who have been, or are potentially, abusive • Volunteers must refuse to complete a task when confronted with abuse, threats or violence from a client or other person and must report this fact to the nominated person and/or the phoneholder • If the volunteer feels he/she is at immediate risk of harm he/she will inform the police immediately • Houghton Regis Helpers will decline all future requests for help from any client who has been abusive, threatening or violent. • More than one volunteer will be allocated to a particular task when it is considered acting alone would render a single volunteer vulnerable. • Group phone holders keep a record of which volunteers are out on jobs, with whom and were. They have the personal phone number of each volunteer who is advised to confirm when they have completed the job.

Theft, fraud or improper use of funds by volunteers	Low	Medium/High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers will undergo Enhanced DBS checks, where current legislation applies • Volunteers will not accept payment of any kind for their services other than the nominal charges agreed (for mileage / gardening) or any other reimbursement of authorised expenses – for which receipts will be issued • Volunteers must take care when purchasing items for clients and handling clients' money to avoid any misunderstandings or allegations • Volunteers will always provide a receipt for money given to them for purchasing items on a client's behalf • When shopping for a client volunteers will not include any personal shopping – separate receipts must be obtained • Volunteers receiving donations from clients will ensure they are handed to the Treasurer or another member of the Committee at the earliest opportunity and that records are kept. • Volunteers will treat clients' property with respect and will not undertake domestic tasks for which they are not qualified or experienced and confident. • Any complaint from a client to either a volunteer or the phoneholder will be immediately reported to and acted upon by the committee and, in appropriate cases, the police will be informed if the client has not already done so.
Volunteer experiences stress or overwork	Low/Medium	Medium/High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The phoneholder and committee will ensure that tasks are shared between all volunteers and that no client becomes unreasonably dependent upon a single volunteer. • Tasks within the committee will be shared so that the running of the group does not fall upon a few key volunteers. • Volunteers will be encouraged to report any excessive demands on their time. • Any volunteer who suffers stress or distress will be offered counselling and support as appropriate
Breach of client confidentiality by volunteer	Low/Medium	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers will ensure that all information obtained about clients and the service provided to them is kept strictly confidential. • Clients will not be identified by name during any committee meeting or minutes. • Care will be taken to ensure Houghton Regis Helpers activities are not the cause of town gossip thus increasing the vulnerability of clients.
Group or individual volunteer identity used by third parties to reach and	Low/Medium	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers will always carry and show their identity card when asked to do so • Identity cards will always include a photo matching the volunteer carrying the badge. • When arranging the help with the client, the phone holder will provide full details including the name and expected arrival time of the volunteer coming to support them. • No volunteer should make a first visit unannounced.

exploit vulnerable residents			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the client prefers, a code word can be agreed which volunteers will use when introducing themselves
Client or members of the public becomes ill as a result of poor food hygiene	Low/Medium	Medium/High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers will only prepare food for clients in extenuating circumstances and must ensure that all the necessary practices for ensuring food hygiene are followed. • If volunteers putting away shopping spot clear evidence of dangerous client food hygiene (such as unsafe refrigeration or long out of date food) they will bring it to the client's attention, and/or to the attention of the client's emergency contact, so that appropriate steps can be taken. Client permission to dispose of dangerously out of date food will be sought. • When preparing and serving food at community events volunteers must adhere to the risk assessments applicable for food safety and hygiene • Disclaimer notices relating to possible allergens in foods will be displayed at community events where volunteers are preparing and serving food • At least one volunteer who has a Food Hygiene qualification will be present at community events when Houghton Regis Helpers are preparing and serving food • Volunteers must follow all the necessary practices for ensuring food hygiene at all times and report any illness