**Mearns Kirk Helping Hands**

**Use of Own Vehicle Policy**

This policy applies to those paid staff and volunteers who use **their own vehicles** **as part of their duties** with Mearns Kirk Helping Hands (MKHH).

**Driver Safety**

Driving licenses will be inspected before you start your role with MKHH, to ensure there are no recent or serious driving convictions. Your license must be full, not provisional, and preferably without endorsements. If you do have any penalty points, MKHH will decide on a case by case basis whether we consider you suitable for the role.

**Fitness to Drive**

By law you must notify the DVLA if you suffer from a medical condition or disability that may affect your driving, or you develop such a condition or disability which may affect your ability to drive. The DVLA will make the decision as to your fitness to drive. Failure to notify the DVLA of such a condition or disability is a criminal offence, punishable by a fine of up to £1000. You can also invalidate your insurance if you do not follow a GP’s advice not to drive.

**Disclosure Checks**

If you will be regularly driving “vulnerable” people as part of your role MKHH will request a Disclosure Background (PVG) Check. Your Group Leader, the Volunteer Coordinator or the Project Manager will talk through this process with you.

**Vehicle Safety**

***MOT***: MKHH will ask to see an MOT test certificate if your vehicle is over 3 years old, to ensure your vehicle is safe to drive.

***Seat Belts***: Your vehicle must have front and rear seatbelts which must be worn at all times by both drivers and passengers. Passengers over the age of 14 are legally responsible for the use of the seatbelt; for those under 14 drivers are responsible to ensure seatbelts are used correctly.

**Insurance**

The owner of the vehicle is responsible for arranging insurance. Legally, only third- party insurance is required, but it is good practice to have comprehensive insurance.

**Owner Drivers**

You must tell your insurance company that you will be driving in a volunteering or work related capacity; if you do not your policy may be invalidated which could result in your being personally liable for any damages or injuries sustained in an accident. You must also not receive any payment beyond legitimate expenses (see MKHH Expenses Policy), as this could be deemed as making a profit, which could also invalidate your insurance.

Some volunteer policy holders may be told by staff at their insurance company that they need to pay a business premium to cover volunteering. If this happens it is advisable you ask to speak to a senior member of staff to clarify that this is the case, as volunteers are sometimes given incorrect information. If this is the case, you may wish to consider changing providers, as many companies do not charge volunteer drivers a premium.

**The Organisation**

MKHH had Public Liability Insurance and so is covered for any claims the car insurer will not cover. This also covers volunteers, staff, and those they are transporting when the vehicle is not moving, such as getting in or out of the vehicle.

**Miscellaneous**

***Breaks:***

Drivers should rest for at least 15 minutes every 2 hours within a journey, and between journeys.

***Alcohol:***

Drivers should be aware that, even many hours after drinking, you can still be over the legal limit or unfit to drive. Alcohol takes time to leave the system, and as everybody is individual (and factors such as age, health conditions etc all affect the rate at which alcohol is processed) there is no safe and simple way of calculating how long this may take. *Please refer to NHS Choices “How Much Alcohol Can I Drink Before Driving” for further information on this topic.*

***Luggage:***

Luggage, shopping and equipment such as walking frames should be put in the boot or secured to prevent injury.

***Pets:***

If requested, pets can be carried with clients at the discretion of the driver, so long as the animal does not affect the safe running of the vehicle. Guide dogs for blind and deaf clients should be taken in the vehicle unless there are good reasons for not doing so.

***Seating:***

The seating capacity of a vehicle as stated by the manufacturer and insurer should never be exceeded.

***Accidents, illness or injury:***

In the event of an accident, you should notify the emergency services and MKHH immediately. If the person you are driving becomes ill or is injured during the journey you should first seek immediate medical help before notifying MKHH (either your Group Leader, the Volunteer Coordinator or the Project Manager).

***Vicky Attwood***

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