

Volunteer Car Driving – What's in it for me?

What are the benefits of being a volunteer car driver?

Being a volunteer driver is a wonderful thing to do; you help people in need, people who are not able to get to appointments, to the shops or to leisure activities. You help make their life richer, more varied and healthier. You enable them to no longer feel stuck in their home, often isolated and perhaps lonely.

So is helping others the only reason to volunteer as a driver?

When you talk to volunteer drivers it is important, but rarely the only reason. This means it is perfectly OK to ask "What's in it for me?" before you start.

What some of our drivers have said:

"The mileage expenses help keep my car on the road. I have recently been unemployed, I now have several part time jobs, and need to keep my car but find it difficult to afford all the costs: volunteer driving helps." Kelly (49)

"After my wife died I felt lonely and isolated; volunteering gave me a reason to get out the door" says Bill (71). "I felt useful again and it gave me confidence to go out . . . Thank you for helping change my life".

"When I retired I needed an excuse to get out of the house to not do the redecorating." Hubie (70)

"I have had a wonderful working life, well paid, privileged . . . now I want to put something back. It makes me feel good." Alan (65)

"I worked as a carer and after redundancy needed to keep up my skills and my CV" (Brian) 45, "The reference I got helped me get another job. Result."

What do you need to be a volunteer driver?

- A current driving licence.
- Your own car, in good condition, fully insured, taxed and with a current MOT.
- A willingness to have criminal records check carried out (CRB).
- Time.
- Remember you do not have to do any journey you do not want to do.
- You can always say no.

What will you get in return?

You will be paid expenses, under most circumstances this is 45p per mile, for fuel and the costs of running your car. In almost all circumstances this will not affect your tax or benefits position. You can talk through your circumstances with your local scheme co-ordinator.

So what's in it for you? It can help you to:

- Get out of the house and make new friends
- Keep your car on the road
- Keep active in your community
- Take advantage of opportunities to learn new skills
- Get back into paid work
- Feel good about what you are doing.

Become a volunteer car driver today!

To find out about your local scheme, or for someone who can speak about car schemes at an event, just ask Jo at North Devon Access Services Project 01271 866300, jo@ndvs.org.uk