

Your questions answered...

What types of journey are involved?

Any journey except those normally carried out by the Ambulance Service such as hospital appointments. Journeys are usually local and would usually involve a short waiting time, for example whilst you passenger does their weekly shop or sees their doctor. If a longer wait is involved such as a visit to relative we will organise for you to call back at a pre-arranged time to collect your passenger; or if this is inconvenient for another volunteer driver to collect your passenger.

How much notice do I get?

Basically as much as possible but never less than 48 hours. And remember if it's not convenient you can always say no.

Do I get paid?

This is a voluntary scheme so we do not pay drivers, However you are able to claim a mileage allowance of 14p per mile to and from the passengers home and 30p per mile whilst carrying the passengers. The passenger pays their 30p per mile directly to you at the end of each journey and you submit a monthly claim for the additional 14p we pay.

How is the scheme organised?

All passengers are registered with us. When they require a journey they phone us with at least 48 hours notice and we in turn phone round our registered drivers to find someone willing to fulfil the journey. All booking are done through our office.

How safe is the system?

Obviously when dealing on a one to one basis with vulnerable people we have to check the volunteers we use. Every driver has to submit two referees who we follow up on. We also are obliged to carry out a Criminal Record Bureau check on all our drivers. And finally we ask you to sign a confidentiality agreement.

Does my insurance cover me?

Provided you have fully comprehensive car insurance you are covered to carry passengers for expenses only. We issue you with a standard letter and form to forward to your insurance company for them to sign confirming this. We have separate insurance that covers any losses to your 'no claims' bonus should you be unfortunate enough to have to claim whilst carrying one of our passengers.

What about tax on my expenses income?

Our scheme falls within the Inland Revenue's tax free mileage rate so there is no need to inform the Inland Revenue nor will they claim any tax from you for the expenses we pay.

Is it safe?

The scheme has been running for many years without problems. The Cheshire Community Car Scheme is part of Cheshire Community Council and is supported by Cheshire County Council and Chester City Council. We are insured for claims for injury to the volunteer drivers or their passengers whilst engaged in working for the scheme.

What do I get out of it?

Our volunteer drivers tell us it can be very rewarding helping people in their local community in this practical way. Some drivers have become good friends of ours and our passengers over the years they have been volunteering.



Some examples:

John has been a volunteer driver with us for five years. Here's what he has to say:

"I retired from the Police Force in 1995 and had some spare time. Living in a small village I thought this scheme would help me get to know some of the locals whilst putting something back into the community. One of my regulars is Betty, a frail old lady, who's only son was paralysed in a road accident a few years ago. I take her once a week the 20 miles there and back to visit him. I usually take a good book to read and a flask while I wait the couple of hours she's in with him.

Somebody else in the village is Davey who lives on his own and has problems walking any distance. I usually take him once a month to the supermarket and we have some quite lively conversations in the car – usually about football or the state of the roads."

I also enjoy the out of the blue calls and have met some lovely people over the years. I can thoroughly recommend the scheme."

One of our newer volunteer drivers is Pat:

"Now the kids are at school full time this scheme seemed an ideal way to do my bit. I can do as much or as little as I can fit in round my busy life. It's so nice to see how pleased my passengers are with just this little bit of help with their lives. It really gives you a good feeling."

Names have been changed to protect privacy.

