



BucksVision Volunteer Information Pack

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Welcome to BucksVision

Thank you for expressing an interest in becoming a BucksVision volunteer, and welcome to our team.

BucksVision is your local society dedicated to supporting visually impaired people across Buckinghamshire.

Our fantastic team of volunteers are a vital part of BucksVision. Becoming a BucksVision volunteer can be very rewarding, and there are many ways that you can help support BucksVision's work with visually impaired people.

This Volunteer Information Pack aims to give you some general background about BucksVision, the process of becoming a volunteer and the volunteer opportunities we offer.

About BucksVision

BucksVision is the local society that provides support and services to visually impaired residents in Buckinghamshire.

Vision

BucksVision is working for the day when all blind and partially sighted people are able to participate fully in our community, enjoying the same opportunities, freedom, responsibilities and quality of life as people who are fully sighted.

Mission

Our Mission is to make a positive difference to the lives of blind and partially sighted people in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, by providing support, advice, social activities and the skills to enable them to reach their full potential and lead independent lives.

Values

In order to achieve the above BucksVision operates under the following values:

- Service user led: Blind and partially sighted people are at our heart and influence everything that we do.
- Collaborative: We work together, within BucksVision and with partners, to ensure that we make the biggest difference.
- Innovative: We deal with challenges in a positive and imaginative way to find a way forward.
- Inclusive: We include and value people with diverse experience, abilities and backgrounds.
- Open: We are honest, candid and transparent, working with integrity in all that we do.

History

Founded in 1911 it has over 100 years experience of providing continuous support and a network of social and activity clubs across Buckinghamshire which offer peer led activities and advice.

BucksVision formed an exciting Association with Action for Blind People in June 2014. Action is a national sight loss charity and we share many of the same aims, with a focus on improving the lives of people who are visually impaired. With the confirmation of the Association and the future of BucksVision secured for foreseeable future this is an exciting time for anyone involved with the charity.

Throughout its long history, BucksVision has been a charity that relies on its volunteers. It is run by our Board of Trustee Directors, and a small team of employees. The majority of our services are carried out by nine divisions and seven activity clubs, all of which are managed and run by volunteers.

Our Commitment

BucksVision welcomes the opportunity to work with volunteers. We make every effort to ensure that you receive the appropriate support and feel valued, so that you can realise your full potential as a volunteer helping people with visual impairment. You can expect:

- To be valued and respected as a volunteer
- To be provided with a Role Description of the volunteering task you have chosen to ensure you are clear about your role and responsibilities
- To be provided with training relevant to your role, such as Visual Awareness, Sighted Guiding and Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults
- Respect from staff, fellow volunteers and customers
- A volunteers 'Handbook' that provides our policies and procedures and practical information regarding volunteering
- Appropriate steps to be taken to ensure your health and safety and you will be covered by our Public Liability insurance when engaging in BucksVision approved activities
- Continuous support and advice
- Agreed out of pocket expenses paid in accordance with our expenses policy
- Your experience of volunteering with BucksVision to be as enjoyable as possible

What we expect

BucksVision expects both new and existing volunteers to:

- Be polite, professional, reliable, confidential and respectful of customers, staff, fellow volunteers and any other representatives you may interact with as a BucksVision volunteer
- Read and comply with our policies, practices, procedures and management decisions
- Be reliable and honest in all your voluntary work
- Be responsible for all your own actions and to reflect the aims and values of BucksVision
- Carry out your voluntary role within the professional boundaries that will be set out for you in your training
- Attend one day volunteer training required by BucksVision, and any further training for your chosen role
- Agree to a criminal record check if required by your role
- Wear and produce your identity card when required to do so

Volunteering Opportunities

There is a wide range of volunteering opportunities available at BucksVision. The information below will provide you with an idea of the roles available, and what is involved. However, we are always pleased to hear of other ways in which you feel you could support us.

Audio Transcription

BucksVision offer communications in various accessible formats, including audio. This role entails reading documents such as newsletters, minutes of meetings and other items, on to an audible medium.

Our Audio Transcribers are required to have a clear speaking voices and good literacy skills, and to be organised and methodical. We will contact you on an ad hoc basis to read for us and you will be working closely with our Office Manager who co-ordinates this service.

Befrienders/Befriending Coordinators

Befrienders will visit a visually impaired person in their own home, and may be asked to read and respond to confidential correspondence, read items of interest, accompany to medical appointments, enjoy local trips together or maybe just sit and talk to offer some companionship. Visits can vary depending upon individual circumstances and the duration anything from up to an hour or two. Befriending partnerships will often grow into lasting friendships.

Bowls Groups

The Bowls Club volunteer will be trained how to assist people with sight loss to play bowls. Our Bowls Clubs are run by both sighted volunteers and visually impaired customers of BucksVision and they all have an enormous amount of fun. They play indoors during winter months and outdoors in the summer, so it is an all year round activity. Our volunteers learn how to play bowls too, so they enjoy their role even more. Our Bowls Club volunteers are often drivers as well so

that they can assist the customers to travel to and from the venues.

British Wireless for the Blind (BWBF) Agent

BucksVision BWBF Agents will meet with visually impaired customers in their homes and assess requirements regarding receipt of an audio set on a free loan basis. They will deliver the equipment to the customer and provide guidance and training in its operation.

Divisional Officers

Each Division has, at a minimum, three defined roles to include a Chair, Treasurer and Secretary.

The Chair will organise meetings, acts as the main link with Head Office, attends Head Office meetings to represent division customers, and speaks on behalf of the division.

The Treasurer will keep accounts and ensure BucksVision's finance requirements are met and act as the main point of contact for finance matters.

The Secretary will organise the programme of activities, deal with any correspondence, and take notes at meetings and AGM.

Drivers

Volunteer Drivers will collect a visually impaired person from their home and driving them to and from a BucksVision social club, bowls club or some other BucksVision activity. As this can be a regular activity, the partnership often develops into one of great friendship.

Events

Volunteers will help at designated events to promote BucksVision with display stands and publicity materials.

Eye Clinic Patient Support

BucksVision offer an information service at the eye clinics in Wycombe, Amersham, Stoke Mandeville and Milton Keynes Hospitals. Our volunteers carry out this service individually for a 2-3 hour period each week.

Volunteers provide a listening ear and signposting service to patients within the clinic setting, who may be worried or anxious about their eye condition. This is a vital service to people who may be learning of their sight loss for the first time.

This role involves liaising with hospital staff, maintaining a daily logbook on clinic activity, recording the number of patients attending clinic, recording the number of registrations and referrals to BucksVision, and replenishing stocks of literature on display.

Fundraising

You can support BucksVision and visually impaired people within Buckinghamshire by helping with collection of tins from various community locations. This role includes exchanging tins, and possible counting and recording of donations.

Office Support

BucksVision has a small team of staff; volunteers are always needed to help with general office support. Some examples would be, photocopying, preparing information packs, and helping to prepare and mail out our customer's newsletters. Volunteers with additional skills may be invited to contribute to other activities.

New 2016- Reader and Shopping Service

Our fantastic **new** Reader and Shopper service supports visually impaired people to remain independent, and offers support with everyday tasks we may take for granted. Our Reader volunteers will visit a person in their own home, to provide help with reading and writing. Sometimes this also includes 'social' reading, maybe a magazine or book that the person cannot access in another form. Our Shopper Service Volunteers will collect the person from their home, to take them shopping whilst acting as a guide and eyes to help them make their purchases. Some of our clients ask for help shopping on a regular basis, while others may request occasional help, perhaps to choose clothes or gifts. (Service available in the Buckinghamshire CC area only)

Resource Centres

We have a Resource Centre in Milton Keynes, and a Resource room in Aylesbury where volunteers welcome visitors. Volunteers explain and demonstrate the wide range of equipment that is available for people to maintain independence.

Social Groups and Activities

There are nine BucksVision Divisions across Buckinghamshire. Each Division has a volunteer run social club and/or activity group. Support is always required to help run these services, perhaps for a friendly chat, to support the groups chosen activities or to help with refreshments.

New 2016- Tandem Pilot

Tandem Pilots support our visually impaired members enjoy a tandem experience. Reliability, trustworthiness and very clear communication skills are vital for a successful tandem partnership. The tandem cycles are provided and although previous tandem experience is an advantage, training can be given. This role is currently based in Milton Keynes.

Walking Groups

Walking Group sighted guides assist our visually impaired customers to enjoy the open air and access the pleasures of walking. Volunteers will be given full training in sighted guiding techniques.

We currently have three active Walking Groups, two in Milton Keynes and one in the South East. We are looking to expand this activity within the Aylesbury area.

How do I become a Volunteer?

You should complete and return the enclosed application form, in the freepost envelope provided, to the address overleaf. Please note, you are requested to provide the names and addresses of two willing referees who have known you for a minimum of two years. It is preferable if you can supply a professional e.g. current/former employer where possible, (family members/partners will not be accepted). If you are unsure, or you think you may have problems providing an appropriate referee, please ask Samantha Lah, our Volunteer Manager, for further guidance.

We will then arrange to meet you for an informal chat to discuss the volunteer opportunities you are interested in, and explore your skills and experience. Depending on your chosen role, you may be required to complete a Criminal Records Bureau/Disclosure and Barring Service form at this meeting. This is a standard check required by all organisations where staff or volunteers have certain access to vulnerable customers.

BucksVision will not proceed with a new application if any of the following is highlighted on their Disclosure form:

- History of any form of abuse or attempted abuse of a vulnerable adult or child
- Any serious financial fraud or irregularities
- Any history of significant or habitual theft.

Other minor or spent convictions will be considered depending on relevance and risk in relation to the volunteering position.

Please be aware the recruitment process will take, at a minimum, three months. We will endeavour, throughout the entire process to remain in regular contact with you during this period, and to keep you updated as to your progress.

Contact Us

If you would like to apply to become a BucksVision volunteer please complete the application form at the back of the pack, or alternatively contact us to request one.

Please return completed application forms to:

BucksVision
143 Meadowcroft
Aylesbury
Buckinghamshire
HP19 9HH

Tel: 01296 487556

Email: reception@buckvision.co.uk

Or if you would like to discuss this pack further, or have general chat about volunteering with BucksVision, please do not hesitate to contact the Volunteer Manager:

Samantha Lah

Tel: 01296 487556

Email: slah@bucksvision.co.uk

Thank you for your interest, we look forward to hearing from you.



Volunteer Application Form

Surname		Title
First Name(s)		
Date of Birth		
Address		
Postcode	Telephone no	
Mobile no	Email	
Volunteer Role		
How did you hear about BucksVision?		
Previous work and voluntary experience(s)		

Availability: Please indicate below when you would be available to volunteer.

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Weekend	Flexible
a.m.							
p.m.							
Evenings							

Do you know of anyone else who would like to volunteer? BucksVision has many fantastic volunteer opportunities, please tell your friends.

Signature

Date

**Thank you for completing the application form.
Welcome to the BucksVision Team**