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| A close up of a logo  Description automatically generated | **[Guidelines on Safety for Home Visits]** |
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**Safety Guidelines**

All organisations who work with individuals within their own homes or who undertake initial home assessments should put in place guidance on safety for home visits. This suggested template can provide a good starting point, but it is important that your own guidance reflects what your organisation does, who you work with and links to your health and safety policies and to training provided by your organisation.

You visit people in their own homes who need support because they are ill, may be experiencing stress, have a disability etc. Consequently, they may be unable to maintain high safety standards in their homes which could affect both them and you.

* Be aware that many accidents do occur in the home, and that sensible measures can prevent injury and even death.
* Should you come across any condition or piece of equipment around the home which seems unsafe, talk to your client about it first – bearing in mind that you are a visitor in their home. Please then raise your concerns with your named manager as soon as possible – explain to the client that you will be doing this.

The following points on personal safety highlight the main areas for consideration - they are not an exhaustive list.

**Personal Safety**

* It is up to you not to put yourself at risk. Our golden rule for volunteers is ‘if you are not sure whether it is safe to do it, don’t do it!’
* When going to and from a client, be aware of possible dangers. If you are worried about visiting the client on your own, or in the dark, or in a particular area, discuss your concerns as soon as possible with your named manager. Personal alarms are available to volunteers who require them.
* Trust your judgement. If the actions of anyone in the home you are visiting set off ‘alarm bells’, believe your intuition and position yourself for an easy exit. Please note that this situation is most unlikely to arise, but it is better to be forewarned.
* If you have not been trained in manual handling, do not under any circumstances, attempt to lift a client from a recumbent or sitting position to an upright position or move the person from a chair to a bed or wheelchair. It is easy for an untrained person to injure themselves and the client trying to do these manoeuvres.
* Do not climb onto unstable pieces of furniture, such as rickety chairs, to carry out tasks that may be part of your volunteer role.

**Electricity**

* Electrical flexes plugs and sockets should be in a good state of repair.
* Power points must not be overloaded, i.e. several appliances working from the same point.
* Mains operated appliances, including portable appliances, must not be used in bathrooms.
* Electrical appliances plugs and flexes must not be handled with wet hands.
* Electric blankets should be kept dry and flat, and serviced regularly.
* Do not carry out any electrical repairs yourself unless you are a professional electrician. Even routine tasks such as changing a fuse or wiring a plug must not be undertaken.
* If you have ANY doubts about a piece of equipment or item, do not use it.

**Gas**

If you smell gas in the house and you cannot locate the source, or if you detect or suspect a leak:

* Ensure that all naked flames are extinguished (including cigarettes).
* Open all doors and turn off the gas taps.
* Do not switch on the lights.
* Contact the gas emergency services ([TELEPHONE NUMBER]) and seek advice.

**Cooking**

Many fires start in the kitchen. These are some of the dangers:

* Pilot light going out.
* Pan handles must be kept clear of flames as they will get hot, but should not stick out into the kitchen.
* Chip pans must not be filled more than half way.
* Cookers should be checked regularly while in use.

**Heating**

Many fires start in the kitchen. These are some of the dangers:

* All fires and heaters should be adequately guarded.
* Check that there is no smell of gas, especially near meters.
* Portable heaters must be kept clear of furniture and not put where people can trip over them.
* It is dangerous to air clothes near a fire or a cooker.
* Check that oil heaters are not giving off smoke or smells.

**Safe Movement**

It is vital that the home is as safe as possible. However, remember that you are a visitor in somebody else’s home, and that you can only make suggestions on improved safety to the person you visit.

Check the following potential problem areas, and point out hazards in a diplomatic and friendly way:

* That doorways, hall, passages, stairs and landings are free of clutter and that they are well lit, even at night.
* That carpets, rugs, mats and lino which are torn, worn or wrinkled and/or move easily may be hazardous.
* That fixtures and fittings are secure.
* That all areas are free from trailing flexes.
* That anything spilt on the floor is cleaned up at once.

**Fire**

Don’t smoke in the client’s home – even if the client smokes. This will ensure that if there is a fire, you cannot be held responsible. If a fire should occur whilst you are with a client:

Do not put yourself at risk!

* Remove yourself and client to a place of safety.
* Dial 999 and ask for the Fire Brigade.

Medicine and Chemicals

* The golden rule for volunteer visitors is that it is not your role to assist the client in any way with medication and should not to do so.
* As a volunteer visitor you should also not be handling chemicals, but do remember that lavatory cleaners and bleach should never be mixed, and never transfer chemicals (e.g. bleach) into other containers.

The information in this document is for information only. It is not a substitute for professional advice and we cannot accept any responsibility for loss occasioned as a result of any person acting or refraining from acting upon it.

**This is a template document, please amend and use as appropriate,**

**we suggest that you set up with your own logo and branding.**

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**Disclaimer**



Third Sector Support Wales is a network of support organisations for the whole of the third sector in Wales.

It consists of the 19 local and regional support bodies across Wales, the County Voluntary Councils (CVCs) and the national support body, Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA).

For further information contact

<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/contact/>