

Volunteer Responsibilities (Health and Safety)

Risks to volunteers on visits to clients are judged to be extremely low. Following the procedures below will help to ensure a trouble free visit, for both you and the client, especially during the first visit to a new client.

Remember not to cause any risk to the client by your actions.

The Client

Do not divulge your address to clients.

Do not divulge your telephone to clients until you are sure that it will not be abused. Prefix your calls to clients with 141.

While your CC should have satisfied himself, as far as practicable, that the client does not present a risk to you through e.g. mental instability, it is wise to be put the client at his/her ease on arriving and to be aware of any sudden changes of mood. If you feel threatened at any time, make your excuses and leave. Report your experience to your CC as soon as practicable.

Be aware of the client's disabilities and adapt your behaviour to suit.

Do not feel obliged to visit a client if you have strong reservations.

Try to be punctual with your visit so that you arrive when the client is expecting you.

Show your ITCH ID card so that the client can avoid letting some other person into their home by mistake.

Keep client names and personal information confidential. Avoid quoting such information in emails as far as possible. Restrict client information to Initials and Town in visit reports.

Destroy documents containing client information by shredding or burning before discarding.

Clear client information from your hard disk before disposing of an old computer.

Environment

Be aware of the exits in case of fire or other reasons for egress.

Make a quick evaluation of other persons or animals, e.g. dogs, to gauge whether they may be a possible risk to yourself.

Make a quick evaluation of likely hazards such as sharp furniture, furniture in awkward places, unsafe chairs or tables, PCs balanced precariously, or exposed electric, gas or open fires

Watch out for trailing wires or other tripping hazards.

If a client is visually impaired, take care not to leave items, such as your briefcase, where they may be in the client's way. Likewise, do not move the client's furniture about except with his/her agreement.

Electrical Hazards

Watch out for faulty plugs, loose or overloaded sockets, and worn out mains leads and avoid touching them. Any such item should be reported to the client with a recommendation to have it fixed by a qualified person.

Do not overload sockets with too many multiple outlets. Do not chain multiple extension leads.

Do not leave trailing mains leads across the floor.

Moving Equipment

If you are asked to move equipment, only agree to move it if you have no history of serious back trouble and if it is not too heavy for you. Keep your back straight and, if necessary, bend the knees. It is particularly dangerous carrying equipment down a flight of stairs; if you have to do it, take each step very slowly and carefully and ensure that you can see the steps in front of you. Do not feel obliged to move equipment if you think it may cause you or the client injury.

Operation of the PC

Generally, for the relatively limited time of an average visit, there is little risk from an unergonomic PC set up unless it is particularly bad. If you need to operate the PC, take steps to adjust the positions of the items of equipment (e.g. display, keyboard, mouse) and make sure that they are readjusted again for the client before you leave. If you need to adjust the display settings to suit yourself, ensure that they are set back to the client's preference afterwards.

Repair of PC and Associated Equipment

If you are not experienced and/or qualified in the repair of PCs and associated equipment then you should not undertake them but should refer back to your CC.

If you do undertake to make a repair, then observe the following safety rules.

- Remove the mains lead before opening the case.
- Ensure all tools are removed before closing the case.
- Ensure all repairs are electrically safe.
- Do not attempt to repair a faulty Monitor as the high voltages inside are extremely dangerous.

Other issues

If the client has an alarm system which activates via the same telephone line as used for dialling up to the internet, then recommend to the client that they get an additional line installed.

Point out to the client any H&S items that you feel should be attended to. Inform your CC so he can follow this up with the client and/or relevant support agency.