



# Volunteering Policy

## 1.0 Purpose and scope

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This policy reflects best practice principles in relation to the recruitment, screening, support, monitoring, safety and recognition of volunteers. This will enable the diverse services that we deliver to involve volunteers in a positive, consistent, structured way.

This policy covers volunteer placements only. It does not cover ad hoc volunteering by staff at a scheme.

## 2.0 Definitions

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**Volunteering:** any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives.

## 3.0 Policy statement

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We recognise the important and unique role which volunteers play in enhancing the wellbeing of our customers. We believe that the volunteering experience should be an enhancing experience, in terms of personal development, as well as being of value to customers, staff and the wider community.

## 4.0 Status of volunteers

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Volunteers are covered by our associated policies to provide the best experience. We are committed to providing volunteers with fair and equitable treatment.

The relationship between us and our volunteers is non-contractual, and any commitments we make are not intended to be legally binding. Any 'agreement' between the volunteer and the organisation will stress the non-contractual nature of the relationship.

## 5.0 Partnership working

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We work in partnership with a number of external volunteering organisations to promote the health and wellbeing of our residents and tackle social isolation.

Volunteers of an external organisation are not subject to the recruitment processes or benefits outlined here.

Our approach to digital inclusion enables residents to be proactive in engaging with external volunteer organisations that can support, guide, and encourage positive experiences.

## 6.0 Recruitment

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In creating a volunteer opportunity, a role profile is created and risk assessment for the role is undertaken. All risk assessments are reviewed annually, and adjustments are made to newly identified risks.

The volunteer team advertise the opportunity, process the completed application forms, carry out all relevant checks and refer applicants. This ensures fairness of our recruitment process. Unsuccessful candidates are given feedback and/or referred to other roles or services

We welcome interest in volunteering from all sections of the community and recognise the value of having a diverse workforce of volunteers. We particularly encourage our customers to get involved. We aim to provide opportunities that benefit the wider community and provide employability experience.

The following groups require additional consideration:

**Under 16s:** We do not accept under 16s on to the volunteering scheme, however they can apply for work experience opportunities.

**Ex-offenders:** We recognise that previous offenders are much less likely to re-offend if they can find suitable occupation and can contribute to a diverse workforce of volunteers. We comply with the legal obligations of the Rehabilitations of Offenders Act 1974 and do not unfairly discriminate based on non-relevant past convictions.

**Volunteers with disabilities:** We welcome applicants with disabilities and will make reasonable adjustments to support them in their roles.

Volunteers are subject to a DBS check if their role is classed as regulated activity. A DBS Policy is available upon request.

All volunteers need to provide ID documents and references as part of the recruitment process. Two references are required to cover the last three years. This can be from employment or character references.

## 7.0 Relationships with staff

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We ensure employed staff at all levels are clear about the role of volunteers so that good relationships are fostered between paid staff and volunteers. All staff must ensure volunteers feel welcome, supported and valued.

Volunteer involvement complements and supplements the work of paid staff and is not used to displace paid staff or undercut their pay and conditions.

## 8.0 Induction and training

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All successful volunteers are invited to an induction with the team that they will be volunteering with.

Volunteers are provided with training that is necessary for them to perform well in their placement. They are also provided with training around general health and safety and will know how to report an accident or incident.

Volunteers can apply for internal paid vacancies within the organisation as soon as their placement with us starts.

## 9.0 Expenses

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Volunteers are reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses incurred while volunteering with us. This includes travel by public transport to and from their placement as well as lunch of up to £5 if volunteering for more than 4 hours. We require receipts to process expense claims, which will be paid promptly.

Volunteers are not permitted to use their own vehicles while undertaking volunteering activities. This is due to insurance regulations of volunteering. In exceptional cases we can reimburse for travel via Taxi.

All volunteers are covered by our public liability insurance.

## 10.0 Monitoring the placement

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Volunteers are supervised on a one-to one basis once every three months. This is for a joint review of the volunteering placement.

### 10.1 Confidentiality

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all privileged information to which they are exposed to while serving as a volunteer, in line with our [Data Protection and Information Governance Policy](#).

### 10.2 Disputes and complaints

Volunteers who are dissatisfied with their volunteering role can make a complaint. Any complaint will be investigated thoroughly with prompt feedback. Complaints about a placement should be sent to the volunteering manager.

### 10.3 End of volunteer placement

Volunteers who wish to leave their placement should notify their supervisor as well as the volunteer team so that volunteer records can be updated as soon as possible. References can be provided for volunteer placements that have lasted three months.

We can cancel a volunteer placement at any time if it is felt appropriate by providing notice and feedback.

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### Document control

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Effective date	
Approved by	Policy Group
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Accountable Director	Director of Housing
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### Version Control

Date	Amendment	Version
V1.0	New NHG policy	1.0
V1.1	Added section on partnership working	1.1