

AGE UK EXETER

Controlled Document

Document Name: Volunteering Policy

Document Version Number: 6

Agreed by Risk and Quality Committee on: 15 September 2022

Approved by Board of Trustees on: 27 September 2022

Review Schedule: Every three years

Next review due: September 2025

Owner (Responsibility) CEO

Amendments to: Governance Officer

Revision History: See end of document

Document location: www.ageuk.org.uk/exeter/about-us/policiesandguidelines

Document Description

The vision of Age UK Exeter is for a city in which all older people can love later life. In order to deliver its services to the community effectively and consistently, Age UK Exeter depends on the support of a diverse group of volunteers who work closely with our employed team. Without their contribution we would be limited in our capacity, and we highly value their support. It is therefore vital that we have in place robust policies and procedures to protect the volunteers and the organisation. This policy aims to provide the framework within which volunteering will operate.

This policy applies to all our volunteers. If you have any questions about how it applies to you and your role, please speak to your service co-ordinator.

Implementation and Quality Assurance

Implementation is immediate and this policy shall stay in force until any alterations are formally agreed.

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Board of Trustees, sooner if legislation, best practice, or other circumstances indicate this is necessary.

All aspects of this policy shall be open to review at any time. If you have any comments or suggestions on the content of this policy, please contact the CEO on info@ageukexeter.org.uk or at Age UK Exeter, The Sycamores, Mount Pleasant Road, Exeter, EX4 7AE, 01392 202092.

VOLUNTEERING POLICY

1. Volunteers

Volunteers are hugely important to the work of Age UK Exeter, helping with the delivery of our services, being active in projects and community led activities, helping to raise funds, and helping with administrative and financial tasks.

The two following basic characteristics distinguish volunteers from our employed staff:

- Volunteers are unpaid and do not receive any material reward for their work
- There is no contract of employment between us and our volunteers, who do not have any rights as employees, workers or otherwise under the employment legislation; for example, the rights not to be unfairly dismissed or to have redundancy payments do not apply to them.

However, there are obligations which apply to our volunteers as well as our paid employees. Even the charitable and voluntary sectors are at risk from legal claims, and goodwill and 'freely giving one's time' are no defence to claims and legal liability. We take our responsibilities towards our volunteers seriously, and similarly expect that, as representatives of ours, our volunteers will act appropriately. Therefore, in both the volunteers' and our interests, the main obligations applicable to our relationship with our volunteers are set out below.

2. Our expectations of you

We look to you to carry out such tasks and duties as are assigned to you, within the scope that you have volunteered to do and to commit to Age UK Exeter's aims and objectives. In particular, we ask that you aim for high standards, reliability, respect, quality and care in all your volunteering.

As a volunteer, you are an ambassador for us, so please try to keep up to date with Age UK Exeter's projects and services and ask if necessary.

If your role is working with clients, you should recognise that the relationship with the client may be challenging due to the needs and circumstances of the client, and so you must be realistic about what can be achieved in your relationship with them and maintain the boundaries outlined by your service co-ordinator.

Our clients rely heavily on the support provided by our volunteers. As a volunteer you are therefore in a position of trust, and must not do anything which does, or could be seen to, undermine or abuse that trust. This includes the establishment and maintenance of appropriate and professional boundaries in the volunteering relationship.

You must adhere to our Code of Conduct.

You must maintain confidentiality throughout and after your volunteering role with Age UK Exeter.

You will be required to attend training relevant to your role and undergo a DBS check if required.

If there is any change in your circumstances that might affect your volunteering with us, please also let us know.

3. What you can expect of us

We will look to match your skills and experience with the right role wherever possible, and to listen to your motivations and aspirations.

We will provide you with a full induction and training, including placing you with trained members of staff who can guide and advise you.

We will provide you with information about our work, policies, and procedures.

We will offer you a formal yearly review, invite you to our events and keep you informed about future volunteering opportunities.

We want you to enjoy working as our volunteer and will do what we can to make that happen.

4. Expenses

Although you receive no salary, gratuity, payment in kind expenses may be reimbursed if they are expressly agreed and actually incurred in the performance of your duties. All claims for expenses must be presented on an Expenses Claim Form and will preferably be paid via BACS when the claimant's details have been given with the first claim. If no BACS details are given, expenses can be paid by cheque. Expenses will never be paid out of petty cash.

5. Motor Vehicles

If you are required to use your own car in connection with volunteering for us, we shall reimburse you for every mile for which you necessarily use your own car. Please ask your service manager for current rates.

If you are required to drive any motor vehicle in connection with our activities, you shall whenever requested, permit us to examine your driving licence, MOT and current certificate of insurance.

6. Insurance

We maintain insurance against risks which we consider necessary, including loss and damage to or destruction of our property and the injury or death of members of the public affected by our activities and of our employees and volunteers undertaking authorised work for us. The insurance does not extend to unauthorised work or to authorised work carried on by persons not authorised by us. It is therefore most important that you ensure that you comply with the conditions of our insurance and do not do anything which might result in the insurance being voided.

7. Policies

You must always support, respect, and adhere to our organisational policies, guidelines, and management decisions, including all aspects of equal opportunities, health and safety and data protection. All our policies can be found on our website at www.ageuk.org.uk/exeter/about-us/policiesandguidelines.

8. Health and Safety

We have a duty to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable the health, safety, and welfare at work of all employees and other persons (including volunteers and members of the public) who are affected by our activities. You must take reasonable care for your health and safety as well as that of other persons who may be affected by your acts or omissions and must co-operate with us in fulfilling our statutory duties.

Notices will be posted or issued to give you information about possible health and safety hazards within our premises and the procedures and precautions which we have put in place.

We have a Health and Safety Policy which is available on the website. You must comply fully with the Health and Safety Policy in all respects.

We operate a no smoking policy, and you may not smoke or vape anywhere while volunteering for us or in any building in which any of our work is carried on, for example, in a client's home. Please refer to our non-smoking policy.

9. Confidentiality

All information relating to us (including our organisation, finances, membership, and activities) and users of our services is confidential. You must keep this information secret and not use or disclose it except as authorised or required by us and shall use your best endeavours to prevent the use or disclosure of it by any other person.

Your obligation to keep information confidential applies indefinitely but shall cease to apply to information which you can establish has in its entirety become public knowledge otherwise than through any unauthorised disclosure.

All records in any medium (whether written, computer readable or otherwise) including accounts, documents, drawings and private notes about us and our activities and all copies and extracts of them made or acquired by you in the course of your volunteering for us shall be: our property; used for our purpose only; returned to us at any time on demand; and returned to us without demand if you cease for more than one month to be involved with our work.

10. Public

As a volunteer, you may not at any time:

- Make any statement about us or our activities to the press or other form of public media, except with our written consent; or
- Represent yourself as working for or employed by or in any way connected with us or our activities after ceasing for more than one month to be actively involved with our work.

11. Fundraising

We are in constant need of funds to support our work needs and normally will accept contributions from any legal source. We have the right however to refuse to accept any contribution without giving any reason.

As a volunteer, you are encouraged to hold and assist with fundraising events, and if you intend to organise or arrange any fundraising event for us you should discuss the proposal in advance with our Community Events Fundraising and Social Media Officer. If we approve the proposal, we will support it with such publicity material and help as is practicable and you accept. However, we will not support any fundraising proposal of which we do not approve, and as the organiser of any such event you must not use our name or logo or in any way imply or permit it to be believed that the fundraising is approved by us.

12. No Agency

Except when expressly authorised in writing, no volunteer is our agent or representative in any way or has any authority or right to assume any obligation of any kind express or implied on our behalf or to bind or commit us in any way.

13. Children and Young People

A child is defined as someone who has not yet reached the official minimum school leaving age (MSLA). This is the school year in which they turn sixteen. A young person is someone over the MSLA but not yet eighteen.

NSPCC recommends that for all voluntary placements involving young people, a risk assessment should be carried out to identify any potential safeguarding issues that might occur with the tasks the young people are asked to undertake. These include:

- Potential risks for exploitation of the young person
- The possible emotional impact of tasks
- The impact of pressures the young person might be experiencing in their lives (for example exam pressures).

As well as making sure a young volunteer is the right fit for a role, we should also consider whether the organisation is the right fit for the young person.

We might need to adapt usual volunteer recruitment processes to meet the needs of young people, but must still carry out the necessary checks, such as cv and references.

Written agreement should always be sought from young volunteers as well as parental or carer consent if under the age of eighteen.

Young volunteers should adhere to our code of conduct.

Young volunteers might need additional support and should have a named adult to refer to and a mentor available within all activities.

Please refer to NSPCC website for more information:

www.learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/working-with-young-volunteers.

14. Requests for Community Service

Requests to complete community service at Age UK Exeter will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the CEO and relevant service managers. The CEO will keep a confidential record of the decision-making process.

15. Termination

We reserve the right to refuse the offer of services of any volunteer, generally or in any case, and to terminate any work being done by a volunteer. We may exercise these rights at any time, with or without prior notice and without giving any reason.

16. Resolving concerns

If you have any problems or complaints about your volunteering, please let us know immediately and refer to our Volunteering Problems and Concerns Procedure, kept as an appendix to this policy. We take volunteers concerns seriously and will try to resolve any difficulties you may be experiencing.

Revision History

Revision date	Summary of changes	Other comments
20.02.15	Routine review by Standards Committee	
09.03.15	Approved by the Board of Trustees	Next review due February 2017
24.04.17	Routine review by Standards Committee	Recommended to the Board for approval
09.05.17	Approved by the Board of Trustees	Next review due May 2019
09.09.19	Routine review by Standards Committee. New sections to include volunteering by under-18's and requests for community service.	
10.08.22	Complete rewrite based on HR Template provided by Stephens-Scown. Volunteering Problems and Concerns Procedure added as an appendix to this policy.	Approved by Board 27.09.22

Appendix 1

Volunteering Problems and Concerns Procedure

Age UK Exeter is dependent upon and greatly appreciates the time, enthusiasm and skills given by all our volunteers and strives to ensure that volunteering with us is a safe and rewarding experience for all.

However, while volunteering is by and large a positive experience for everyone involved, sometimes things can go wrong.

This procedure explains what should happen if a problem arises.

If you have a concern or complaint about your volunteering role with Age UK Exeter:

Stage 1

In the first instance you should raise it with the co-ordinator of the service in which you volunteer. If the issue requires discussion, they will arrange a time with you when you can speak privately with them about your concern.

If you feel uncomfortable raising the issue with your service co-ordinator, then you should contact our CEO to make an appointment to discuss your concern.

Stage 2

If, after following the route above, you feel your concerns have not been resolved or if you require someone other than the CEO to listen to your concerns, you should contact the Chair of the Board of Trustees, to arrange an appointment to discuss the issues in question.

Stage 3

We will always take your problem or concern seriously and respond to you in writing or however you would like the outcome communicated.

Stage 4

In the unfortunate situation that a concern cannot be dealt with to your satisfaction, you can refer to our Complaints Policy and the Charity Commission.

If we have a concern or complaint about your volunteering role with us:

Informal Stage

In some instances, a minor issue of concern may be identified by your service co-ordinator, and they may judge it most appropriate to deal with this informally. They will discuss their concerns with you and support and encourage you to address the identified concerns. If this does not address the issue raised, then we will move to the formal stage.

Formal Stage

Stage 1

In the first instance, your service co-ordinator will inform you of the concern and invite you to a meeting to discuss it. You can be accompanied by someone of your choice. The aim of this meeting is to define and agree the concern and agree a plan to address it.

Stage 2

If the concern is not resolved by this route, then a meeting will be arranged with you, the service co-ordinator, and the CEO. Again, you may be accompanied by a person of your choice. Depending on the nature of the concerns, further objectives may be set, or help offered. However, if we cannot find a mutually agreeable solution, we may end your volunteering role with us. In this case, you will have the opportunity to appeal.

Stage 3

If you wish to appeal, you should write to the CEO, with the reasons for your appeal. The appeal will be investigated by the CEO and Chair of the Board of Trustees, or their nominees and the decision made will be final.

Exceptions

In very rare circumstances we may ask a volunteer to desist from volunteering, while we investigate a complaint or allegation. This is normal good practice in these situations and does not imply 'guilt'. We would always take care to ensure that the volunteer understands the situation, is well supported, and has every opportunity to provide their side of the story.

If you are unhappy with the outcome, you may appeal the decision by writing to the CEO as set out above. The appeal will be investigated by the CEO and Chair, or their nominees and their decision will then be final.