

# Volunteer Policy

## Version: 4.0

<b>Summary:</b>	This policy outlines the principles for volunteering with Age UK Camden. It informs how the organisation sets out to support people in volunteering along with the expectations the organisation may have of the volunteer. The document is relevant to anyone who is responsible for recruitment, support, development and coordination of volunteers across the charity.	
<b>Keywords:</b>		
<b>Target Audience:</b>	The Age UK Camden Group	
<b>Next Review Date:</b>	April 2023	
<b>Approved &amp; Ratified by:</b>	Board of Trustees	<b>Date of meeting:</b> <b>Approved – 07.07.2021</b>
<b>Date issued:</b>	September 2010	
<b>Author:</b>	GMC, AW	
<b>Sponsor:</b>		

Revision	Summary of Changes	Date Reviewed	Authors:
Version 1	N/A	September 2010	
Version 2	No changes	September 2013	
Version 3	Clarification of who Age UK Camden is with reference to subsidiaries. Wording and layout changes reflect changes in guidelines to Communications and Resolving Problems (incl code of conduct) and Data Protection and Info Sharing .	December 2017	GMC
Version 4	No further operational changes. Name change from Equality and Diversity Policy to Diversity and Inclusion Policy.	21 <sup>st</sup> April 2021	CBOD & GMC & AW

## **Introduction**

Volunteers are at the heart of the structure of Age UK Camden and integral to enhancing the quality of services we provide. The policy aims to reflect the value and respect Age UK Camden holds for volunteers. It also recognises the skills, energy and experience they bring to helping us achieve the best possible outcomes for older people.

Age UK Camden recognises that volunteering offers an opportunity for people to learn new skills, meet new people and potentially have a positive impact on physical and mental health for the people who give their time and support.

Age UK Camden recognises that volunteering must benefit the individual as well as the organisation.

This policy outlines the principles for volunteering with Age UK Camden. It informs how the organisation sets out to support people in volunteering along with the expectations the organisation may have of the volunteer. The document is relevant to anyone who is responsible for recruitment, support, development and coordination of volunteers across the charity.

Reference to Age UK Camden in this document is inclusive of following services.

**Age UK Camden:** provides services and support to older people in Camden.

**Opening Doors London:** provides information and support services specifically for older Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer +\* (LGBTQ+\*) people nationally.

**Ageing Better in Camden:** is a partnership of older people and Camden organisations, working together to tackle social isolation and loneliness among older people.

**Personalisation Support in Camden:** The service provides support in setting up direct payments to fund services and this may help people to achieve the desired outcomes agreed in their Education, Health and Care plan.

## **Our Commitment to Volunteering:**

Age UK Camden will commit to continually reflecting and reviewing the relationship of volunteers and the organisation. The Volunteering Manager reports to a Senior Manager and regular reports are presented to the charity's Board of Trustees. The Board also nominates a trustee to be the volunteering champion. This ensures volunteers and volunteering issues are represented at the highest level.

## **Diversity and Inclusion**

Age UK Camden's Diversity and Inclusion Policy covers both staff and volunteers. The organisation will not tolerate less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, age, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, responsibility for dependents, trade union or political activities, criminal record, place of residence, religion or other beliefs, health status or any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified.

## **Who is a Volunteer?**

A volunteer is someone who freely offers to donate their time, skills or experience to undertake a task on behalf of Age UK Camden. It is without expectation of financial compensation beyond the reimbursement of expenses.

Age UK Camden understands that the volunteering relationship is flexible and informal and distinct from employment legislation. This allows volunteering to enhance the quality of our services and support paid staff.

Age UK Camden understands that the relationship between the volunteer and the organisation is one of mutual agreement and understanding. There are no contractual obligations on volunteers, beyond the expectation that volunteers will undertake required training/induction and associated checks for the role they are undertaking.

The partnership is based on trust and understanding and is not intended to be legally binding.

Age UK Camden will endeavour at all times to:

- Ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisational structure and that mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to its work.
- Ensure paid staff are trained to work with volunteers.
- Will not introduce volunteers to replace paid staff.
- Expect that staff at all levels to work positively with volunteers.
- Provide clear roles outlines.
- Respect volunteers, listen and learn from their experiences and encourage two-way communication.
- Ensure that volunteers have a good understanding of what Age UK Camden is and does.
- Provide accurate information about policies and guidance.
- Provide ongoing support

## **Recruitment and Selection**

Age UK Camden starts from the premise of identifying tasks and roles that need doing and then recruiting volunteers to carry them out.

## **Application Process**

This procedure allows Age UK Camden to provide information to the prospective volunteer about the organisation and the current roles. It also provides an opportunity for the volunteer to tell us about their skills, experience and interests along with why they want to be part of the organisation, and, their expectations of the experience.

This allows Age UK Camden to make a fair decision as to whether a suitable role can be offered.

Age UK Camden endeavours to provide a consistent and fair recruitment and selection process in line with our Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

## **Volunteer Roles**

Age UK Camden will provide role outlines or descriptions that reflect the range of roles volunteers can engage in. These will be reviewed and updated to reflect any changes in services.

## **Interviews & Trial Sessions**

All prospective volunteers will have an initial meeting with the relevant coordinator of the service they are planning to link with, and/or the Volunteering Manager.

In some instances, volunteers are also invited to have a shadow session. (e.g. in the Shop). This allows Age UK Camden to assess suitability. If for any reason, a person is not suitable, alternative roles within the organisation will be looked at, or they will be directed to suitable roles with other organisations if possible.

Volunteers will be made aware of this when they make their initial enquiry.

## **References**

Potential volunteers are asked to provide details of two referees whom Age UK Camden can approach for references. The references can be professional or personal.

## **Induction, Training and Development**

Volunteers joining Age UK Camden attend an Induction session. Depending on the role or task being undertaken, additional training may be required before a volunteer can undertake the role. All volunteers based at one of our sites will receive an induction to the respective building.

An induction checklist is provided. (Appendix 1)

## **Ongoing Support**

Every service or project that involves volunteers will have a named person responsible for the team. They will ensure that volunteers have received the proper induction and training for the role they are undertaking. They will provide clear guidance and tasks. They will offer constructive feedback and deal with issues as they arise.

## **Health and Safety**

Age UK Camden will, as far as is practical, care for the health, safety and welfare of its volunteers. Volunteers will be provided with copies of relevant health and safety procedures and receive appropriate support and training relevant to the role/ task they are undertaking. Volunteers are expected to follow the health and safety policies and guidelines.

## **Expenses**

Volunteers will be reimbursed travel and other approved expenses as laid out in the Age UK Camden Expenses Policy.

## **Insurance**

Volunteers will be covered by the organisation's insurance policy while engaged in approved roles for Age UK Camden Group.

## **Data Protection and Information Sharing**

Volunteers will potentially have access to personal information and/or administer personal data on individuals and therefore will be expected to comply with the Age UK Camden policy guidelines. All volunteers are asked to sign the Data Protection and IG guidelines following induction. Some roles may require further training.

## **Standards and behaviour**

While we hope that the volunteer experience will be a positive one, it is important that measures are in place to allow both the individual and the organisation to deal with problems and issues if they arise. Volunteers and staff are the “front line” of the organisation. The Volunteer Handbook reflects the organisations *Code of Conduct* and there is an expectation that volunteers will comply with it. Volunteers receive a copy of this at Induction. If informal processes are found wanting, the Communications and Resolving Problems guidelines outlines steps for dealing with any grievance you might raise, as well as how we would conduct investigation of allegations about a volunteer. As a volunteer you can expect to be treated fairly and with respect by colleagues and clients as you carry out your tasks. The organisation understands that it has a responsibility to address any issues or problems as they arise and deal with them fairly and transparently. The organisation expects the volunteer to maintain regular communication with their coordinator and take responsibility for flagging up any issues or problems they have or encounter.

### **Moving on**

Age UK Camden recognises that volunteers may stop at any time. When a volunteer decides to leave, we will whenever possible provide an exit interview or an opportunity to complete an exit questionnaire. This process provides platform to discuss the benefit of the experience to both the individual and the organisation, raise any issues or concerns, and opportunities to share ideas and provide constructive feedback.

### **Acknowledgement**

Age UK Camden recognises the importance of acknowledging and saying thank you to volunteers for their contribution. The organisation will use different methods, such as certificates, gatherings, awards and general PR to message this.