



Contents

- Your Volunteering Experience.....6
- When You Start Volunteering.....7
- What Training Will I Receive?.....8
- Mutual Expectations.....10
- Volunteering FAQ's.....12
- Key Policies & Guidance.....14
- Some Do's and Don'ts for Volunteers.....21
- More About Age UK Exeter.....23
- Space For Your Notes.....26

Thank you for choosing to volunteer at Age UK Exeter. By volunteering with us you are helping to improve later life for people in Exeter by providing life enhancing services and vital support.



Welcome

A very warm welcome to you!

Dear new volunteer

Being a part of something, having a sense of belonging is important to us as people. By agreeing to join the Age UK Exeter volunteer team you are joining a team that has a real sense of belonging. We value what you bring: new energy, skills, experience and expertise. Having diversity and people who have different life stories provide such a great blend of richness. So, thank you again for agreeing to be part of this wonderful team, being our ambassadors in the community and letting people know we are here- we really, really appreciate you.

- Nicky Flynn CEO

Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in".

~Author Unknown

"The smallest act of kindness is worth more than the grandest intention."

~Oscar Wilde

We aim to make sure that those who give up their time to support our work feel valued, useful and proud to be part of Age UK Exeter. **This handbook contains important and useful information about volunteering with us. Please read it carefully and keep it somewhere safe to refer to when needed.**

If you have any questions about the information in the handbook or during your time volunteering with us please speak to your Service Co-ordinator. They'll be more than happy to help you.

Thank you once again for deciding to make a difference!

My Service Co-ordinator is:

.....

Their working days are:

.....

Their contact details are:

Tel:.....

Email:

My volunteer role is:

.....

The date I started was:

.....

The day and time I volunteer (if regular) is:

.....

YOUR VOLUNTEERING EXPERIENCE

What we offer you

Because we know everyone is different, **we are creative in offering a wide range of opportunities** for people to come together in a way that works for them.

This could be anything from one to one befriending to one off fundraising events.

Whatever your role is **we value the time, support and commitment that you are giving to Age UK Exeter.**



We are committed to offering all volunteers **clear and structured guidance** in their role. Age UK Exeter also knows how important it is, both for you and us, that you keep on developing your skills and knowledge, and that's why we have structures in place to ensure your time with us stays fulfilling and productive.

WHEN YOU START VOLUNTEERING

Induction

We might suggest a short trial period as sometimes people take a couple of attempts to find their perfect volunteer role. Please speak with **Ellen Holmes, Volunteer coordinator** if you need to discuss your role preference.

Your **Service Coordinator** is the person to whom you will be responsible and who will support and guide you in your role. They will go through your induction with you before your role begins or on your first day.

They will:

- describe the typical activities undertaken in your role
- introduce you to the staff, volunteers and clients involved
- highlight important health and safety measures and fire procedures
- show you where everything is – including tea and coffee
- ask you if you have any special requirements in order to carry out your role.

Ongoing Support

Your Service Coordinator will contact you regularly to discuss with you how you feel your volunteering is going. In the meantime, please contact them if you have any questions, concerns or need any support with your volunteering.

Your Service Co-ordinator will also meet with you yearly for an **Annual Review** to discuss how things are going and to hear your feedback.

WHAT TRAINING WILL I RECEIVE?



When you start

Your Service Co-ordinator will talk you through the tasks specific to your role, how to carry out your role and whom to speak to if you are not sure about something. Please don't be afraid to ask, we want you to be comfortable and confident in your role. If you think you need more training in any particular area please speak to your Service Coordinator.

Training

As part of your induction you are required to attend an **Initial Training session**.

This includes an overview of the work the charity carries out, an introduction to dementia, some basics of Safeguarding and other important issues to help you carry out your role including confidentiality and managing boundaries.

It is important you attend the session as soon as possible as it will help you understand the wider context of our work. They are informal and enjoyable sessions and are also a chance to meet staff and other volunteers.

Further Training opportunities

We offer several training sessions including: **Dementia awareness, Moving and Handling and Safeguarding.** If you have specific training needs please speak to your Service Coordinator. Volunteers can also access a plethora of online training resources and courses via Age UK National and we can support you to do this.



MUTUAL EXPECTATIONS

At Age UK Exeter we believe that volunteering is a two-way process. We are grateful for the time and support that you are offering to us but equally we want this to be a fulfilling and enjoyable experience for you. Like any good relationship it is important to outline what each party can expect from the other so we can build a mutually rewarding partnership.

What you can expect from us:

- To be valued and respected, whoever you are and whatever your background
- To have an identified Service Coordinator who will provide guidance, support and be in regular contact
- Clear direction from your Service Coordinator on carrying out your role as well as information about relevant training opportunities
- To have a full induction into your role and to Age UK Exeter with ongoing support including annual reviews
- To be able to contact the CEO Nicky Flynn if you have concerns or issues that you feel you can't raise with your Service Coordinator
- Recognition for your volunteering to include an Annual Volunteers' Party to celebrate your contribution
- To receive agreed out of pocket expenses
- To be able to change your mind or decline a volunteering activity without feeling pressured
- A creative approach to your role to allow you the chance to use your skills, interests and hobbies.
- To be able to discuss an alternative volunteer role if you feel the current one is not working out for you

What we expect from you

- To adhere to the fundamental principles and values of Age UK Exeter, in particular to treat older people with dignity and respect



- To be reliable and let us know as soon as possible if you are not able to attend your volunteer shift or if any circumstances change that will affect your volunteering
- To let your Service Co-ordinator or other manager know if you are concerned for the safety or welfare of a client
- To be our representatives in the local community, letting people know about our work, services and fundraising activities
- To support and act in accordance with our Policies & Procedures (See the Key Policies section)
- Take part in training and update sessions relevant to your role
- To understand that we may sometimes need to offer constructive comments about your actions when volunteering
- To give the best of your skills and abilities to meet the required standards relating to your volunteer role
- To speak to the Service Co-ordinator as soon as you have any concerns or issues – don't let them fester!
- Treat all clients, volunteers and staff with respect
- To be aware of and report any hazards, spillages, obstacles, fire hazards etc. as soon as possible to a member of staff

VOLUNTEERING FAQ'S

Who do I speak to if I don't know what to do or don't understand something?

Ask your Service Co-ordinator, who will help you and answer any questions you may have at any time. You will also be invited to an Annual Review with your Service Co-ordinator to discuss how you are getting on in your role.

What do I do if I am not happy in my role?

Often some adjustments can be made which will improve the situation for you. Talk to your Service Co-ordinator first. If that doesn't help, then do speak to the CEO.

What should I do if I am ill or can't come for any reason?



Please ring and let your **Service Co-ordinator** know as soon as possible, so they can then begin finding someone else to 'cover' if appropriate. If you are a **Volunteer visitor** then please let your visatee know or contact your Service coordinator if you would prefer they let your visatee know. It is also helpful for us to know in advance when you are planning any holiday, or a break from volunteering.

What expenses can I claim?

You can claim expenses for travel by bus or by car within the city's boundary. You will need to keep relevant receipts and complete an Expenses Form. You can pick one up from your Service Coordinator. You will need to give the completed form and receipts to your Service Coordinator for authorising. Please see our Expenses Policy for more details

What do I do if I am using my car as part of my volunteering role?

If you haven't already done so, you will need to show us your driving licence and MOT. It is advisable to let your insurer know that you are using your car for volunteering, but we have been advised this usually incurs no extra cost.

How can I make comments or suggestions about the organisation?

We welcome your thoughts and suggestions about Age UK Exeter and the way we do things. Do let us know through your Service Co-ordinator or via email to info@ageukexeter.org.uk or contact Nicky Flynn n.flynn@ageukexeter.org.uk



Find us on:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/AgeUKExeter

Instagram: www.instagram.com/ageukexeter/

X (Formally Twitter): <https://twitter.com/ageukexeter>

KEY POLICIES & GUIDANCE

As a volunteer, you need to be aware of, understand and comply with our policies. This is to ensure that volunteers, staff and service users are kept safe and treated in accordance with the law and our charity's ethos. We have summarised some of the main points below.

And please ensure you sign and return the slip that you will have received in your Induction Pack to confirm that you have read and understood the relevant policies and guidelines. These are outlined below and will be discussed during your Induction and Initial training session. If there are any parts that you don't understand or you require hard copies, please speak to your Service Coordinator.

Volunteering – a Code of Practice

We aim to ensure that our relationship with volunteers is one of mutual respect, responsibility and commitment.

The Volunteer Policy outlines Age UK Exeter's responsibilities and commitment to our team of volunteers. The policy includes information about:

- volunteer recruitment procedures
- support for volunteers
- our commitment to valuing and celebrating the contribution that volunteers make
- resolving problems and concerns

Please read the **Volunteer Policy** and ask if you're unsure about any aspect of it.

The Health & Safety Policy outlines how Age UK Exeter creates a safe working environment and what to do if you see something that may cause a fire or an accident.

It is everyone's responsibility to be alert to any potential hazard around the people they are involved with or the buildings and equipment they use.

If you see anything that you consider a risk to health & safety it is very important that you tell your Service Co-ordinator, or whoever is in charge, immediately. Your Service Co-ordinator will explain the emergency and fire procedures to you and go over the Risk Assessment for the area you will be volunteering in.

Please read the **Health and Safety Policy**.

The Bribery Policy outlines what to do if someone offers you a gift, a loan, or wants to leave you money in their will.

Because we're a charity working with potentially vulnerable older people, it's really important that we have clear guidelines relating to gifts, donations, legacies and loans. Please remember:



You must not for any reason, unless specifically authorised by the Board of Trustees:

- accept or seek a loan from a service user
- be involved in the making of wills on behalf of a service user
- accept money or any other gift or advantage, including a gift or legacy under a will (apart from as stated below) from a service user.

However, a modest gift other than money, under the value of £25, may be accepted where refusal would cause needless offence to the service user and they're not seeking favour, but merely wishing to express thanks. Please ensure that should this happen you report it immediately to you Service Co-ordinator so that it can be recorded on the service user's file. Frequent offers of such gifts by service users should be discouraged. Gift vouchers are not considered to be cash and so can be accepted to a maximum value of £25.

If someone tells you that they are interested in making a donation to Age UK Exeter, or in finding out more about making a legacy or any other such query, please ask them to get in touch with **Nicky Flynn on 01392 202092**.

Please read the **Bribery Policy**

The Confidentiality and Safeguarding Policies outline what to do if someone tells you personal information.

It's really important that anyone in contact with Age UK Exeter feels confident that information about them will be stored properly and only shared appropriately. Such information is to be treated confidentially and must not be discussed with anyone else without that person's permission. However, there are exceptions to this, especially if the person telling you is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed (see The Safeguarding Policy information below). Your Service Co-ordinator will explain this in more detail.

Please read the **Confidentiality Policy**.



The Safeguarding Policy outlines what to do if you feel that someone is being treated unfairly or someone tells you that they are being hurt or threatened. If someone discloses that they have been harmed or are at risk of being harmed, you have a legal obligation to tell a senior member of staff.

If someone discloses information to you remember:

- Do not promise to keep the information to yourself.
- Re-assure them that they have done the right thing in telling someone but that you will have to pass the information on to a senior member of staff for their own safety.
- Speak to your Service Co-ordinator or Manager immediately.
- You may also need to write down, as accurately as possible, what they told you.
- If you have any concerns at all about how someone is being treated speak to a senior member of staff. Your Service Co-ordinator will explain this in more detail.

Please read the **Safeguarding Policy**

The Data Protection Policy explains how Age UK Exeter treats personal data. Age UK Exeter, like all organisations, is legally obliged to look after the personal and sensitive data we hold on individuals, which includes their name and contact details. Sensitive data stored by Age UK Exeter is done so with explicit consent. As a volunteer you may have access to or be party to personal information. As outlined in the Confidentiality Policy, this data must not be shared with anyone else without that person's permission.

Please read the **Data Protection Policy**

The Harassment Policy outlines what to do if you feel you are being bullied, intimidated or harassed or if you witness someone else being treated in this way.



Age UK Exeter will not accept harassment, bullying or intimidation from any staff member, service user or volunteer. Any accusation will be investigated and disciplinary action taken if the complaint is upheld. If you feel you are being harassed, bullied or intimidated or you witness someone else being subjected to this type of behaviour, please speak to your Service Co-coordinator or Manager immediately.

Please read the **Harassment Policy**.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy outlines Age UK Exeter's approach to challenging discrimination and making our services accessible to all.

It is unlawful to discriminate, directly or indirectly, against someone because of age, disability, sex, gender re-assignment, pregnancy, maternity, race, sexual orientation, religion or belief or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. Equally, it is unlawful to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to anyone wanting to use our services.

Please read the **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

The Expenses Policy outlines what expenses you can claim back when volunteering and how to put in a claim.

Age UK Exeter does not expect you to be out of pocket because of your volunteering activities. You can claim back expenses for travel and telephone calls.

Other expenses that you may incur, such as childcare costs, will be considered on an individual basis. Please discuss this with your Service Co-ordinator. Expenses are claimed back by completing an expenses form and attaching relevant receipts. Forms can be acquired from your Service Co-ordinator.

Please read the **Expenses Policy**.

The Conflict of Interest Policy outlines what to do if you encounter a situation in which your personal interests run counter to those of Age UK Exeter.



If you think you have a conflict of interest please speak to your Service Coordinator. This doesn't necessarily mean that you will not be able to continue your role. A decision will be made by Senior Management and discussed with you. **There is a lot more detail about this in the Conflict of Interest Policy & Procedures.**

The Lone Working Policy outlines what to do if you visit people on your own. The person you are visiting will have full knowledge of your visit and will have given permission for you to visit them. Please ensure that you have spoken to your Service Co-ordinator about the boundaries of your relationship with the person you are visiting. This is to ensure the safety of both parties and to be certain that the person you are visiting has access to any support they need.

Remember to put your own safety first. Your Service Co-ordinator will give you all the contact details you need, in case of any concerns you have for yourself or the person you are visiting. These contact details are also detailed in the Emergency contact details information you will be given during your Induction, where relevant to your role.

Please read the **Lone Working Policy** if you undertake lone visits as part of your volunteer role.

The “Whistleblowing” Policy

“Whistleblowing” is when someone raises a serious concern about an aspect of their organisation. Anyone raising a serious concern is able to do so without fear of reprisal. The Whistleblowing Policy outlines this process.

Please read the **“Whistleblowing” Policy**

Resolving problems and concerns

If you have a complaint or grievance, or if it is felt that you are not carrying out your role satisfactorily, the organisation has approved ways of dealing with these issues.

All our policies and guidelines can be found here

<http://www.ageuk.org.uk/exeter/about-us/policiesandguidelines>

SOME DO'S AND DON'TS FOR VOLUNTEERS



Do think about why you want to volunteer

Do make sure you know who you are responsible to and who you can go to for help and advice

Do use this opportunity to find out as much as you can about Age UK Exeter; you are now one of our elite representatives

Do feel that it is fine to accept reimbursement for any out of pocket expenses you have incurred while volunteering. We don't want you to be out of pocket because of your volunteering activities. If you really feel that you don't need or want to claim expenses, please speak to your Service Coordinator about donating the money to Age UK Exeter

Do keep to any arrangements you have made. If you cannot keep an appointment, let your Service Co-ordinator or the person you are visiting know in plenty of time

Do tell us about any health problems that may affect your Volunteering

Do enjoy your time volunteering with us and tell us how to make it even better

Don't smoke or vape on any of our premises. If you are making a home visit to a client, you should politely request that they do not smoke/vape while you are there. You should also refrain from smoking/vaping in the homes of clients, even if they give you permission to do so, or in a car whilst carrying them

Don't over commit yourself

Don't discuss personal details of any sort outside your volunteering role; confidentiality is important to us all

Don't keep worries or concerns to yourself. Speak to your Service Coordinator. We are here to help you!

Don't accept money as payment from someone you have helped while volunteering. Explain to them that they can make a donation to the organisation if they wish to do so

Don't leave without telling anyone first. If you don't feel that your volunteering is providing the experience that you want, speak to your Service Co-ordinator; they may be able to find a solution



MORE ABOUT AGE UK EXETER

We have a strong reputation for putting the individual older person at the heart of all we do and provide support and opportunities to hundreds of older people in the city each week. We achieve this through our dedicated staff and our fantastic team of volunteers who give their time, enthusiasm and skills so generously for the benefit of others.

We are an independent charity (Charity No. 1010973) with our own locally elected Board of Trustees and are responsible for our own funding and governance. We are affiliated to Age UK nationally.

Age UK Exeter has developed out of Age Concern Exeter, which was formed in 1987. **Our main office is at The Sycamores, in Mount Pleasant** . Age UK Exeter is for older people in Exeter aged 50 and above.

We provide services to people in their homes which includes Enabling, Time for you, Befriending and Careline.

From Sycamores we provide **Sycamore days**, a day service for people with memory problems **Hospital to Home, Information & Advice**, and **Dementia Carers support**. In the community we run an allotment which is run by our **'Budding Friends'** group for people with a recent diagnosis of a dementia.

Having run several weekly activities and groups before the Pandemic, we are currently building up our groups once again. These now include a fortnightly lunch hosted at Sycamores, weekly Chair based exercise and taichi/qigong groups, a fortnightly Craft group. The Tea Dance continues and is held weekly at Wonford Community centre. We host regular one to one tech support sessions run by volunteers.

The Forum is a 6 weekly space for older people to have their say. Speakers are invited in to discuss issues such as transport in the city or scams.

As our representatives in the local community you are ideally placed to let people who might need our services know about us and encourage older people to access and enjoy activities.

Events and Fundraising

Age UK Exeter is responsible for raising all the funds needed to run our services; we don't receive any government funding. We hold a number of fundraising events throughout the year. Events are promoted in our newsletters and on our website.

Ways you can help us with our fundraising activities:

- Help at our events i.e. marshalling or running a fete stall
- Sign up for a sponsored challenge
- Help us spread the word – tell you friends and families about our events and encourage them to support us
- Organise a fundraising event at your place of work
- Bake cakes or make other items to sell at our events
- Run your own fundraising event (contact us for advice and support)
- Follow us on Facebook and Twitter/X and share our posts with friends and family

We always need willing volunteers to help at our events. Please contact your Service Co-ordinator for details or look out for appeals for support in our newsletters.

We hope you have found this handbook useful.

There are blank pages at the end of this booklet for you to make your own notes.

Please consider sharing your thoughts and experiences with us. Feedback is a vital tool for growing and developing our services and can help us apply for funding as well as encouraging support from the local community.

We also welcome suggestions about this handbook and if there is additional information that you feel would be useful.

Thank you once again for all you do for us and for enhancing the lives of older people in Exeter.

