



Age UK Merton Volunteering Policy

1. Introduction

The aim of Age UK Merton is to promote independence, wellbeing and quality of life for all older people in the London Borough of Merton

In Age UK Merton we are committed to involving a diverse range of local people in both formal volunteering and community activity. We do this because we believe that:

- 1.1 Volunteers, in their diversity of age, experience, cultural background and their involvement within communities, bring to our work a value which adds to our understanding of and response to older people's needs.
 - Through the involvement of volunteers we contribute to the building and support of active and sustainable communities based on social justice and mutual respect.
 - The development and support of vibrant community networks and individuals within them is vital to the wellbeing of older people.
 - We work more effectively with and on behalf of older people by providing opportunities for older people to use their skills knowledge and experience through volunteering.
 - As volunteers who reflect the diversity of their communities, local people bring a different perspective to that of professional paid staff, which adds value to our work.
 - People of all ages care about and want the opportunity to contribute to making later life a more fulfilling and enjoyable experience for everyone.
 - Older people with whom we work value the involvement of volunteers
 - by involving volunteers we can offer opportunities for genuine involvement, learning and development for individuals
 - Without the involvement of volunteers, we would be able to achieve only a small percentage of our work with and for older people.
- 1.2 A volunteer is anyone who freely chooses to undertake work for Age UK Merton through the giving of their time, skills and experience without financial remuneration beyond the reimbursement of out of pocket expenses. It is work undertaken by choice and is unpaid. We undertake to organise this work effectively
- 1.3 At Age UK Merton volunteers:
 - Serve on our Board of Trustees
 - Support / mentor senior managers
 - Help with the delivery of our services
 - Are active in projects and community-led initiatives supported by us
 - Campaign with and on behalf of older people
 - Help raise funds to support our work
- 1.4 We believe that our relationship with volunteers is one of mutual responsibility and commitment within which Age UK Merton have both rights and responsibilities. We aim to ensure that volunteers enjoy their involvement with us and gain from it terms of their own personal objectives.

2. Purpose of this Policy

2.1 Our purpose in adopting this policy is to:

- Highlight and acknowledge the value of the contribution made by volunteers
- Reflect the purpose, value, standards and strategies of Age UK Merton in its involvement of volunteers
- Recognise the respective roles, rights and responsibilities of volunteers in Age UK Merton
- To confirm Age UK Merton's commitment to involving volunteers in its work
- Establish clear principles for the involvement of volunteers, clarify their roles and the relationship between them, those who involve them and those who receive their services or work alongside them
- Help to ensure the quality of both the volunteering opportunities on offer and the roles carried out by the volunteers
- Acknowledge the current state of volunteers involvement in Age UK Merton

2.2 The policy is intended for internal management guidance only and does not constitute, either implicitly nor explicitly, a binding contractual or personal agreement. Matters in areas not specifically covered by the policy shall be decided by the CEO

3. Scope of the Volunteer Policy

Unless specifically stated, the policy applies to all volunteers in all programmes and projects undertaken by or on behalf of Age UK Merton, to all its departments and sites of operation and to all volunteers

4. Statement of principles of good practice

4.1 General

- In involving volunteers we will be guided by the following principles of good practice:
- Tasks will be clearly defined so that all concerned with volunteers' activities are sure of their respective roles and responsibilities
- Records will be kept of work done by volunteers as a basis for monitoring, and volunteers will have access to their records
- Volunteers will complement, not replace, the work of paid staff
- Existing and future policies will be checked as to how they affect volunteers
- A mechanism will be established by which the policy and procedures on volunteers can be monitored and reviewed

4.2 Recruitment and Selection

- Age UK Merton's Equalities and Diversity Policy will be adhered to when recruiting and selecting volunteers
- The recruitment of ex-offenders as volunteers will be governed by a special policy and procedures
- Volunteering opportunities will be promoted in such a way as to ensure wide accessibility to what we offer
- Volunteers are normally required to complete an application/registration form

- People who offer to volunteers will have their offers dealt with as quickly as possible and certainly within 10 working days of receipt.
- Volunteers will be clearly informed of their roles and tasks and of the extent of their commitment
- We will ensure that procedures are in place to fulfil good practice requirements for volunteers selected to work with children and/or vulnerable older people. For some volunteers this will involve a requirement for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks in accordance with our DBS Policy
- Volunteers will be placed in activities which match their skills, talents and interests and, once placed, they will be required to comply with Age UK Merton's agreed policies and procedures
- We will regularly review the ways in which potential volunteers can make contact with us

4.3. Support for Volunteers

- We will invest financial and personnel resources for the management of volunteers, and this will be included in our budgets and planning.
- We will provide an induction programme and review session for volunteers to assess the progress of their placements and resolve any problems at an early stage.
- We will reimburse volunteers' out of pocket expenses. Volunteers will be given clear information about what expenses can be claimed and how to make a claim.
- We have written confirmation of insurance for volunteers.
- Volunteers will be given information on legislation and other policies which might affect them, e.g. Health and Safety, Whistleblowing and Equality and Diversity. In these respects volunteers will be treated in the same way as staff.
- All volunteers will be offered access to support and supervision on a regular basis and will be informed whom to contact in an emergency.
- All volunteers will be offered access to appropriate training to enable them to develop their capabilities and competence in relation to their volunteering role.
- Opportunities will be provided for changing/upgrading volunteer responsibilities as desired by the volunteer and appropriate to Age UK Merton's needs.
- Volunteers will be made aware Age UK Merton's complaints procedure and of whom to contact if they have a grievance about any aspect of their work.
- A designated person will be assigned responsibility for dealing with complaints about a volunteer's conduct, in accordance with the general procedures of Age UK Merton.

4.4. Volunteers on Age UK Merton's Board of Trustees

To support our Board members we will provide:

- An induction to include the role and responsibilities of Trustees
- Opportunities to meet with staff and key volunteers of their choice
- Written reports and information in good time on matters relating to the governance of the organisation, Age UK Merton's Memorandum and Articles of Association and other relevant documents.

4.5 Rights and responsibilities of volunteers

In engaging volunteers we recognise the rights of volunteers to:

- Know what is expected of them and to be given clear information
- Have clear lines of support and supervision
- Be shown recognition and appreciation

- Have safe working conditions
- Be insured
- Know what their rights and responsibilities are if something goes wrong
- Be paid out of pocket expenses
- Be trained and receive ongoing opportunities for learning and development
- Be free from discrimination
- Experience personal development through their participation as volunteers
- Ask for a reference after a suitable length of service
- Be consulted on decisions which affect what they do
- Withdraw from their volunteering

We expect that volunteers will:

- Carry out their tasks in a way which corresponds to the aims and values of Age UK Merton
- Perform within agreed guidelines and remits
- Be reliable
- Respect confidentiality and follow our confidentiality policy
- Attend training and support sessions as agreed
- Not discriminate against volunteers, staff, service users or others associated with Age UK Merton
- Maintain the good name of Age UK Merton and Age UK.

4.6 Relationship with paid staff

- We will ensure that paid staff at all levels are clear about the role of volunteers and that good working relationships are fostered between them and volunteers.
- Volunteers will not be engaged in time of industrial action to do the work of paid staff. They may continue to do their regular responsibilities, provided it is safe to do so, but will not be asked to undertake additional duties.
- Appropriate training, support and resources will be provided for those who work alongside volunteers and for those who have a managerial role in relation to them.
- Volunteers will be given clear information about the roles of paid staff
- Consideration will be given to the appointment of a Volunteer Manager whose primary function is to oversee the implementation of this volunteering policy and to ensure that Age UK Merton's practices meet the standards required of brand partners of Age UK. Volunteers on Age UK Merton's Board will observe fair and non-discriminatory standards and conditions of employment and health and safety in respect of paid staff.

4.7. Contracts and Service Level Agreements

In entering into contracts or service level agreements which involve volunteers we will ensure that:

- The role of volunteers is made clear and that satisfactory arrangements are in place for their management
- The terms of the contract or service level agreement provide for the necessary resources to involve and support volunteers
- Arrangements are made to set out the roles and commitments of volunteers
- The impact of volunteering and its benefits are promoted and acknowledged

4.8 Relationships with other groups and organisations meeting the needs of older people

In our relationships with other groups, organisations and partners we will

- Promote volunteering as an important means of contributing to the building and support of active and sustainable communities based on social justice and mutual respect
- Promote good practice in volunteering

4.9 Local Volunteering

We will develop relationships with the local organisations which promote volunteering on the following principles

- There is a need for a strategic approach to the development of volunteering locally.
- There is a need to support the work of local volunteering agencies, such as the Volunteer Centre Merton, which provide leadership in developing awareness of and standards of good practice in volunteering locally.

4.10 Responsibility for this policy

Overall responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and review of this policy and associated procedures lies with the Board of Trustees and on a day to day basis with the CEO

Date Implemented:	Future Review Dates					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Date to be reviewed						
Date approved By Trustees	May			May		