



# Volunteer Strategy

## 2026

Age UK Solihull  
Charity number 1055887



# Volunteering with Age UK Solihull

**At Age UK Solihull we raise money and support our older community of Solihull.**

Our activities are **volunteer-led** with over **350** volunteers offering their time to make the services we offer run smoothly.

We couldn't provide the service that we do without the **hard work, dedication** and **commitment** of our **amazing volunteers**.

Our volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds; some retired, some looking to gain work experience at the early part of their working life, some who have older relatives and feel they want to make a difference, and others who have spare time on their hands.

Volunteers support all of our services, which include befriending, lunch club activities, driving clients to venues, training digital skills, supporting our postural stability classes, fundraising and administration at our Age UK Solihull Hub office.

Volunteers offer their time to enhance the lives of older people within our community. We are forever thankful to them.

We have developed this strategy to ensure our volunteers have the best experience possible with Age UK Solihull.

This volunteer strategy will outline our objectives and commitments to our volunteers over the next two years and beyond.



# What our volunteers say

Volunteers that have supported us have provided some statements about why they chose to volunteer with Age UK Solihull and what they enjoy about it.



This is **Mike**, who supports our clients with **digital training**. Mike has been volunteering with Age UK Solihull since the pandemic when digital training became vital for so many of our clients. Since then he has been enjoying teaching in a group environment where our clients can all learn together and enjoy being part of a weekly activity mixing with others. Mike says, ***“During my time with Age UK I have received support from other volunteers to help run the sessions. Their knowledge has been invaluable. We work in teams of 4/5 and we help each other as necessary. This group dynamic is really useful to the clients and helps people get the attention they need.”***



**Pooja** is one of our **volunteer befrienders**. She has been visiting her client every Friday for a year, and she tells us that she gets just as much out of volunteering as the older person she visits. She says, ***“Being a befriender at Age UK Solihull has been an incredibly enriching experience. From spending time with Pam chatting away or listening to her incredible stories, I feel great warmth and companionship in her presence. I also count down the days till I get to visit Pam and I look forward to our weekly catch-ups and chats. It is a privilege to call Pam a friend, although it’s only been a year since our paths crossed, it feels as if we’ve been friends for years. I am grateful towards the Age UK Solihull for helping me meet a very kind and wonderful friend and also for their remarkable values and work.”***



**Sheila** started with us in 2019 as a **Project Administrator** assisting with benefits, safeguarding training, stuffing envelopes and whatever administration was required. Sheila has now moved onto the **Attendance Allowance** service where she is responsible for coordinating appointments for the team. Sheila’s support is vital to the work that we do as it enables clients to claim extra benefit to support their personal care. Sheila says, ***“I thoroughly enjoy my role within the Hub Team. What I appreciate the most is it keeps my brain active, allows me to interact with a supportive team of staff and volunteers. I feel really looked after by the staff and volunteers and during a time when I had limited mobility I was visited by staff to reduce my isolation and they also provided me with practical help.”***



**Rosie** decided to volunteer for Age UK Solihull after seeing an item on the news about loneliness in older people. She has volunteered for us in several roles, including as a **befriender**, a **driver**, and a **digital champion**. Rosie says, ***“I get a real sense of reward and satisfaction from being a volunteer with Age UK Solihull. I really feel that I’m making a difference to local people in my community. I feel really valued and supported as a member of the team and it truly is a team effort all round. I would recommend becoming a volunteer to anyone who is thinking about it; it is the best thing I have ever done. You really feel part of a family and the knowledge that you are really helping local people makes it such a rewarding pastime.”***

# Our mission

**The Vision of Age UK Solihull is for every older person in Solihull to feel included and valued, and our Mission is to improve and enrich the lives of older and vulnerable people in Solihull by providing the right information and enabling meaningful activity and connection.**

Most of our services are **provided free**. All the money we raise is placed back into Age UK Solihull to help provide services across the borough.

We recognise that Solihull shares many characteristics with England as a whole, but it also has a range of **unique challenges**. A larger proportion of the Solihull population is aged 65 and over compared to England and this group is projected to be the fastest growing population cohort over the next 20 years, in particular those aged 85 and over (+3,500 by 2041). This has implications for many services, particularly rising demand for health and social care, and will undoubtedly have implications for the range of services that we offer or might wish to offer in the future. Going forward, we need to ensure that we reach out even further to older people, their carers and their families, to support them with the impartial, personalised, and expert information and advice they need.

We are in the privileged position of being able to speak to older people day in day out, so we're constantly learning more about the challenges older people face, and constantly looking to provide appropriate services or solutions to those challenges.

We do this by employing around **45 members of staff** and having support of over **350 volunteers**.



# Our values

**Age UK Solihull aims to fulfil its mission by its adherence to the values, principles and good practice of the Age UK Network.**

We have four key values, which are to be:

## Expert

We are knowledgeable and resourceful, sharing our expertise, enabling people to make informed choices and live well, in the way they wish.

## Caring

We focus on what is important to the people we support. We are kind and compassionate, going above and beyond and making a positive difference.

## Inclusive

We actively listen to individuals, ensuring voices are heard and respected, involving people in shaping our organisation and services.

## Impactful

We work dynamically together to improve people's lives, building resilience, enabling independence, connecting people and co-creating future opportunities.



# Why Age UK Solihull involves volunteers

Age UK Solihull is committed to involving a **diverse range of local people** in our work in both formal volunteering and community activity. We could not carry out the range of services to older people that we do without the input of so many **committed volunteers** but we gain so much more for all concerned than just an extra pair of hands and involve volunteers in all that we do because we believe that:



- The **development and support** of **vibrant community networks** and individuals within them is vital to the well-being of older people.
- We **work more effectively** with and on behalf of older people by providing opportunities for local 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 and contribute to the **strengthening of communities**.

We currently have approximately **350 volunteers** actively engaged in a variety of opportunities including:

<b>Administration</b>	<b>Digital champions</b>	<b>Welfare benefits advice</b>	<b>Governance</b>
<b>Reception</b>	<b>Monitoring</b>	<b>Research</b>	<b>Driving and Escorting</b>
<b>Charity shops</b>	<b>Befriending</b>	<b>Trustees/Corporate</b>	
<b>Fundraising</b>	<b>Practical tasks</b>		

**Our 350+ volunteers are fundamental to the success of our charity and we could not achieve what we do without each and every one.**

Our current volunteer experience is supported in the following ways:

- our **Volunteer Manager** is responsible for the recruitment and onboarding of volunteers, including role descriptions, basic induction training, and DBS checks where appropriate.
- we hold an annual volunteer's **thank you and celebration event**, where we also present **long-service awards**.
- Service Managers arrange specialist service-related **training** and provide **ongoing support**.
- We arrange occasional **meet-ups** at our offices to enable volunteers to **interact** and **connect**.

This year we started working towards our **future volunteer strategy**, with the overall aim of seeing how we can **improve our volunteer experience**.

# Volunteer roadmap 2025 onwards



**We sent a questionnaire to all of our volunteers to gain an insight on what they would like to see improved. After receiving the feedback from 24% of our volunteers it was apparent that the main areas to focus on were communication, reward and recognition, supervision and training. These initial responses were then discussed at various volunteer working groups to gain more in-depth ideas on improvements to be made. From this valuable insight we have developed the following commitments and aims:**



**1. Communication** – we will provide regular communication to our volunteers and create regular opportunities to interact and input ideas

We want to improve our volunteers' journey by ensuring individuals feel **informed** and **involved** in what we do day to day. It was clear that people volunteer not only because they have spare time but because they wish to be a **part of something bigger**. Volunteers consulted suggested:

- Quarterly update meetings
- Clear and current volunteer handbook
- Monthly update email
- Increased visibility of senior leadership team
- Volunteer-led coffee mornings for volunteers to interact with each other
- Meet the team, more information about the team the volunteer is allocated to



**2. Training and Support** – we will ensure our volunteers have the opportunity to develop skills and knowledge that enable them to confidently contribute to our work, and ensure they feel supported.

Volunteers want to be able to access **useful and relevant training** to enable them to do their role **efficiently**. They also want to have **regular feedback**, so they know how their volunteering is **contributing to our work**. Volunteers consulted suggested that we consider the below points to improve our current training offer and supervision.

- Volunteer access to a training platform with certificates to evidence completion
- Practical First Aid/CPR training offer
- Digital upskilling training offer
- Offer talks from other organisations to provide information and awareness
- Provide training for when befriending comes to an end (death/ illness/relocation)
- Provide informal volunteer led group service meetings in South & North Solihull
- Quarterly or 6 monthly check-ins with Service Volunteer Managers/Coordinators



**3. Recognition** – we will ensure our volunteers understand the invaluable contribution and difference they make, and that this is celebrated widely.

We want our volunteers to feel **valued** and **recognised** for their efforts. We **promote** volunteers in our **newsletters** and celebrate **Volunteers Week**. We have an **annual celebration event** and present **long-service awards**. Volunteers consulted suggested the below points to enhance volunteer recognition and experience.

- More frequent informal celebration events
- Formal annual celebration to geographically rotate around the Borough
- Donations from other organisations (tickets that can't be sold at The Core Theatre/off-peak passes at local gyms)
- Work towards a volunteering accreditation (NAVCA | Quality Accreditation)
- Develop a volunteering app that could be used to thank/ update etc.
- Streamlined expenses process for all services
- More information about our impact
- Volunteer thank you box – to be issued every month perhaps thank you card and a bar of chocolate
- Volunteer achievements to be officially recognised and details to be included in the newsletter

# Volunteer roadmap 2025 onwards



## 2025

### What has already been achieved

- Collated volunteer survey feedback
- Engagement via working groups
- Considered points raised
- Compiled the aims and commitments
- Devised a Roadmap
- Offered talks from other organisations
- Offered support for when befriending ends

## 2026

### What we plan to implement

- Revised, up-to-date handbook
- Additional Team knowledge and insight
- Monthly email to include volunteer impact
- More visibility of Senior Leadership Team
- Shouting more about our successes
- Volunteer-led coffee mornings
- Improve Training offer
- Offer volunteers digital training
- Volunteer meetings North/South Solihull
- Streamlined processes

## Volunteer roadmap 2026-27

**In order to achieve the above aims and commitments we have developed the following roadmap for 2026-2027.**



2026

- Update handbooks
- Improve processes
- Updates via meetings and emails
- Increase engagement opportunities
  - Recognition
- Online and face-to-face training



2027

- Volunteer app
- Accreditation

# Our aims for supporting volunteers

## When supporting volunteers we aim to:



Keep them at the **heart** of everything we do



**Develop** volunteering roles and opportunities to fit in with the aims of our charity



Enable volunteers to feel **confident** in their roles



Build **trust** and have **long-lasting relationships** with our charity and the clients they support



Provide **training and development opportunities** to enhance our volunteering experience



Provide **recognition** for the contributions of volunteers and celebrate their service



Make it **simple** to volunteer whilst maintaining the **standards** required for supporting vulnerable members of the community.