VOLUNTEERING POLICY

Introduction

Age UK Surrey's ability to speak out for older people depends upon the support of our volunteers. The activities of all volunteers is crucial to the work and Age UK Surrey seeks volunteer involvement wherever appropriate.

This Volunteering Policy aims to reflect the high esteem in which Age UK Surrey holds volunteers. Volunteers are an established, valued and integral part of the charity. Volunteers enhance the work of Age UK Surrey by bringing valuable skills, experiences and energy as well as their gift of time. They champion the cause and often challenge opinions and perspectives whilst demonstrating loyalty and commitment to the Age UK Surrey mission 'to anticipate and meet the needs of older people across Surrey to help make later life a more positive experience'.

For Age UK Surrey, volunteering is not just a means of getting things done. Individuals who volunteer may benefit personally in many ways including acquiring new skills and experiences, improved physical and mental fitness and making new friendships and social contacts.

Age UK Surrey recognises that volunteering must benefit the individual as well as the charity and aims to provide an environment that is inclusive, stimulating, friendly and supportive.

This policy sets out the broad principles for volunteering with Age UK Surrey. It clarifies what Age UK Surrey sets out to do for its volunteers and what is expected in return. It is relevant to everyone concerned with the recruitment, support, development and coordination of volunteers as well as volunteers themselves across the whole of the charity. At the heart of the policy is the 'Volunteer Commitment', which is a statement of hopes and expectations, owed both ways.

Through this policy it is hoped that volunteers with Age UK Surrey will feel that they are treated respectfully and professionally and that their needs are fully considered.

The Policy

This policy principally encompasses 'operational' volunteers that are directly involved in the delivery of the Charity's services.

Volunteers also include the Trustees of the Charity. The principles of the Volunteering Policy equally apply to Trustees however, unlike 'operational' volunteers their immediate reporting line will be to the Chair of Trustees albeit this does not preclude them from having direct contact with the Chief Executive and operational staff when the need arises.

Commitment to Volunteering

Age UK Surrey commits to continually developing and maintaining the dynamic and mutually beneficial relationships between volunteers and the charity. As part of this process, the Volunteer Lead reports to their Line Manager and the Chief Executive, who sits on the charity's Board of Trustees. This gives volunteers and volunteering issues representation at the highest level.

Age UK Surrey's Managers and staff must ensure the contribution made by all volunteers is optimised. and will invest appropriate resources into the planning and development of volunteering.

Equality & Diversity

Age UK Surrey operates an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy for both staff and volunteers. No-one should be treated less favourably because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marital status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

Age UK Surrey strives to be more representative of wider society and welcomes new ideas and fresh approaches generated by people from different backgrounds, cultures, genders, ages and outlooks.

Who is a Volunteer?

A volunteer is someone who, at the request of, or on behalf of Age UK Surrey donates their time and talent, without expectation of financial compensation beyond reimbursement of expenses.

In line with relevant legislation and case law, AUKS distinguishes volunteering from employment and puts its flexibility and informality to best effect to complement the work of paid staff and Trustees.

The volunteer relationship is based on trust and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise can be imposed on volunteers with the exception of induction and training. Likewise, AUKS does not undertake to provide volunteering opportunities, payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken.

Family members/partners should not work/volunteer together at the same location, as it creates the potential for personal conflicts to enter the workplace. It can add to the stresses and strains of family life and can have considerable impact on work locations and create challenges for the volunteer manager. Any exceptions to this will be at the discretion of the Line Manager and CEO and will be decided on a case-by-case basis. Any exceptions will not set a precedent for future application decisions.

Age UK Surrey respect and honour our volunteers by building trust and understanding. Such a partnership is not intended to be a legally binding contract or to have mutuality of obligation but expresses a voluntary two-way commitment where everyone gains satisfaction from being part of the charity.

There is no contract of employment between AUKS and the volunteers, who do not have any rights or benefits as employees, workers or otherwise under the employment protection legislation; for example, the rights not to be dismissed or to receive a redundancy payment.

Note: The Board of Trustees generally act in a voluntary capacity but are not included in the volunteering policy. They are subject to the Charity's Articles of Association in respect of their appointment and/removal which is overseen by the Charity Commission.

The Age UK Surrey 'Volunteer Commitment'

Age UK Surrey will always endeavour to:

- Match the needs of the charity with the skills, knowledge, experience, time and motivation of the volunteer
- Recognise successful volunteer involvement incorporates the individual's motivations, aspirations and choices
- Ensure paid staff are trained to work with volunteers
- Ensure volunteers feel properly valued and thanked
- Respect volunteers, listen to and learn from what they have to say, consistently encouraging two-way communication.
- Ensure volunteers have a good understanding of what Age UK Surrey is and does and be provided with timely and accurate information about its work, policies and procedures.
- Foster a friendly and supportive atmosphere – aiming to make volunteering rewarding and pleasurable
- Make appropriate financial and other provisions in organisational planning to support volunteers
- Ensure volunteers know who to talk to if there are problems or difficulties and to have complaints and grievances resolved fairly.
- Ensure every volunteer has access to a Line Manager to guide and advise them
- Ensure the health, safety and welfare of all Age UK Surrey volunteers whilst undertaking their volunteering activities
- Provide appropriate training and reimbursement of appropriate expenses associated with volunteering
- Evaluate all volunteer activities with a view to build and develop what we do well.

In return, it asks volunteers to:

- Maintain and uphold the reputation of Age UK Surrey
- Cooperate with paid members of staff, to listen and learn from what they have to say to achieve the aims of the charity
- Aim for high standards of efficiency, reliability and quality in all aspects of their contribution
- Encourage two-way communication with other volunteers and paid staff, fostering a pleasant and friendly atmosphere

- Adhere to Age UK Surrey's policies and procedures whilst volunteering
- Accept that ultimate responsibility for the affairs of the charity rests with the Board of Trustees
- Work within the law
- Respect the need for confidentiality whenever they have access to confidential information
- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety whilst volunteering and that of others who may be affected by their actions
- Extend to their fellow volunteers and staff the same degree of courtesy that they would expect to receive
- Be reliable and punctual and advise in good time if they are not available or running late
- Carry out the agreed project/role
- Ask for support if they need it
- Take part in training relevant to their role as a volunteer.

in addition, volunteers are asked NOT to do the following at any time:

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

Except when expressly authorised in writing, no volunteer is an agent or representative of Age UK Surrey in any way or has any authority or right to assume any obligation of any kind express or implied on its behalf or to bind or commit it in any way.

Recruitment & Selection

Age UK Surrey adopts a Task Led approach to volunteer recruitment. This means it first identifies a role or project that needs doing and then endeavours to recruit a volunteer to undertake it.

Application Procedure

The application procedure is designed to help both Age UK Surrey and the volunteer find out whether the placement is right for the volunteer by enabling an exchange of information. Age UK Surrey provides information about its work and volunteering opportunities and the prospective volunteer decides whether they want to offer their time to volunteer. The volunteer provides information about their needs, aims and motivations, as well as existing skills and experiences, to enable Age UK Surrey to decide as to whether a suitable placement can be provided. Age UK Surrey strives to provide a fair, thorough and consistent recruitment and selection process for volunteers relevant and appropriate to the role.

Age UK Surrey encourages involvement by volunteers from all sections of the community and will not discriminate against any volunteers in the selection procedure. All volunteers over the age of 18 are welcome.

Interviews

Potential volunteers may be interviewed for the role they are applying for to assess their suitability. If the volunteer is not suitable, alternative roles within the organisation will be considered or they may be signposted to suitable opportunities with other organisations.

Disclosure and Barring Service checks

Volunteers may be subject to a DBS check. The level of check will be dependent on the role they are going to take on. (Further information can be found in the Age UK Surrey Recruitment Policy). DBS checks are paid for by the Charity where deemed necessary for volunteer roles.

Volunteer Registration Forms

All prospective volunteers must fully complete a Volunteer Registration form providing the names of two referees and full contact details including email address, before a volunteer can proceed to register with Age UK Surrey as a volunteer.

References

Potential volunteers will be asked to provide details of two referees whom The type of references requested will depend on the volunteering role being undertaken and are usually from a person who has known the prospective volunteer for a minimum of 2 years and is not a family member. (Further information can be found in the Age UK Surrey Recruitment Policy).

Role Description

All Age UK Surrey volunteer roles should be meaningful and worthwhile. The tasks of each role will be detailed in a volunteer role description, which is agreed with the volunteer before they commence their volunteering.

Induction, Training and Development

It is a requirement of joining Age UK Surrey that all volunteer applicants, (when requested) complete an induction programme within three months of their start date which includes attending an Induction with the Volunteer Manager. Only once all the necessary onboarding steps are completed will the volunteer be a fully registered member of the volunteer team.

All volunteers must read, understand and agree to Age UK Surrey's policies.

Volunteers may wish to develop their skills whilst helping Age UK Surrey and, where appropriate, will be encouraged to take on new roles or additional responsibilities and/or become further involved. Volunteers will always be encouraged to try additional tasks to utilise their skills and experience.

Where appropriate, the progress and contribution of volunteers will be discussed

regularly and this will provide the opportunity for each volunteer and Age UK Surrey to establish whether the voluntary placement should be adjusted in any way and this will be mutually agreed with the volunteer.

Where it is necessary to end a volunteer's involvement with the charity, Age UK Surrey will endeavour to give due notice to the volunteer and will treat the volunteer fairly, and with dignity and respect in accordance with its core values. Age UK Surrey reserve the right to refuse the offer of services of any volunteer**,** generally or in any particular case, and to terminate any volunteering tasks being done by a volunteer and may exercise these rights at any time, with or without prior notice and without giving any reason. This will be clearly communicated to the volunteer verbally or in writing.

Communication and Feedback

Age UK Surrey will ensure all volunteers be given the opportunity to give and receive information relevant to their role. The methods of communication and feedback will be appropriate in style, frequency, tone and source to individuals and groups of volunteers through presentations, group discussions, 1:1's, newsletters, telephone calls or emails.

Through good communication its volunteers will be encouraged to stay with Age UK Surrey and have their efforts recognised and will be able to maximise their contribution. Age UK Surrey welcomes feedback on how things could be done better and how to improve systems and procedures.

Complaints

If a volunteer has a complaint about their volunteering role that cannot be resolved informally, the volunteer should contact their Line Manager or the Volunteer Manager. All concerns will be taken seriously.

If a volunteer is unhappy about any service they receive from Age UK Surrey, they have a right to make a complaint. A copy of the Complaints Procedure is available from their Line Manager.

Expenses

All volunteers are given the opportunity to claim previously agreed expenses, such as travelling expenses to and from their home to their place of volunteering. Expenses must be authorised by the volunteer's Line Manager and, where appropriate, receipts provided. Clear guidance is provided on claiming expenses. Note: Reimbursement for trips out with individual clients should be agreed with the client directly.

Gifts and Donations

Staff and volunteers must not accept personal gifts, or bequests from clients, including those from the client's family, relatives or friends. If the client is insistent on making a cash gift it must be explained that it is Age UK Surrey policy that gifts can only be accepted as a direct donation to the charity. Any volunteer with doubts as to the offer and acceptance of a personal gift should refer the matter to their Line

Manager (please also see Anti-corruption & Bribery & Gifts Policy).

Health and Safety

Age UK Surrey is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all volunteers, staff and visitors and to giving appropriate instruction, training and supervision for their welfare. The written Health and Safety Policy Statement and Risk Assessments apply to our volunteers as well as our paid staff.

All volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a safe and responsible manner in line with Age UK Surrey's safe working procedures. Volunteers should not act in a way that may put themselves or others at risk of injury.

Any accident or incident MUST be immediately reported to the Line Manager so that it can be recorded and assessed and appropriate action taken.

Some clients are frail, housebound and isolated and a volunteer may feel that they are dependent for more than the assigned volunteer role requirements. The volunteer must be clear from the beginning what they are able and willing to do as this helps to set very clear boundaries which help both the volunteer and the client.

Volunteers should not give the client their personal telephone number instead when phoning a client dial 141 before your number to keep your number confidential. If the client needs to contact the volunteer, then they can do so via Age UK Surrey staff who will pass messages on.
Please also see the Age UK Surrey Lone Working Policy and guidelines and the *Maintaining Boundaries* training is provided for your privacy and protection and that of the clients.

Insurance

While undertaking any agreed tasks as a volunteer for Age UK Surrey volunteers will be covered by Age UK Surrey's insurance policy in respect of public liability.

Driving

All volunteers travelling to and from their place of volunteering using their own vehicle MUST inform their insurers of their volunteering activities to ensure their insurance policy covers them. Age UK Surrey do NOT need to see or record this documentation. Check requirements of a number of top insurance companies on this document : https://www.abi.org.uk/globalassets/files/publications/public/motor/2019/abi-guide-to-volunteer-driving---the-motor-insurance-commitment.pdf

Where volunteers plan to transport clients as passengers in their vehicles the Health and Safety and Public Liability requirements state that the following documents are evidenced by Age UK Surrey on an annual basis.

- Driving Licence and expiry
- Current MOT
- Current TAX
- Evidence of car insurance for volunteering purposes and expiry date

See the Flow Chart Procedure for Using Your Car whilst Volunteering and pass details to your line manager IF you are or plan to take clients as passengers in your vehicle.

Volunteers will be asked to provide their licence plate number for our records once a fully registered volunteer if their role involves taking clients in their own car . Any changes to driving licence or vehicle details must be communicated to the Line Manager for up-to-date checks to be made.

Volunteer drivers must show proof of the above as requested and agree to conduct regular vehicle safety checks. Please also see the Age UK Surrey Car User Policy if you are a volunteer driver.

Copyright and Consent

Volunteers will be asked if they would donate and give consent to Age UK Surrey the copyright to any original works they may produce whilst volunteering e.g. photographs or original artwork etc. For roles that specifically involve producing such work volunteers will be asked to sign a copyright agreement.

Data Protection

Age UK Surrey gathers a variety of information on volunteers in order to manage, support and recognise volunteers' contribution to Age UK Surrey. This personal information is stored and maintained, with appropriate safeguards for confidentiality, on the Volunteer Database. The charity abides by all provisions of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 and recognises that volunteers' privacy is important to them.

Volunteers who collect or administer any personal data on individuals will also be required to comply with the provisions of the Data Protection Act.

Confidentiality

Age UK Surrey's Confidentiality Policy applies to our volunteers as well as paid staff. Volunteers will be asked to sign to confirm that they have read and understood the policy.

Supervision and Support

Age UK Surrey aims to support its volunteers to enable them to carry out their role to the best of their ability. Relevant training is provided to volunteers where required. All Volunteers should complete the training required of them. All volunteers will have regular contact with a named Age UK Surrey staff member including an annual 1:1 session with their Line Manager.

Moving On

The charity recognises that volunteers may cease their involvement at any time. When a volunteer chooses to cease their links with the charity an exit interview will be offered by the department head and ID badges must be returned to Age UK

Surrey. The Volunteer Manager (who initially recruited the volunteer) will seek feedback from all volunteers moving on so we can assess their volunteering experience and identify our successes or any areas for improvement.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

Issue	**Date agreed by Board of Age UK Surrey**	**Reviewed**
3	29th September 2011	May 2014
3	17th July 2014 (no changes required)	July 2017
3	2nd October 2017 (no changes required)	July 2019
4	24th September 2019	Feb & Sept 2020
5	22nd September 2020	Dec 2023, Jan 24
	Agreed by Governance Committee and CEO	
6	16th January 24 – Board adopted Feb 2024	