

VOLUNTEERING POLICY

Introduction

Our ability to speak out for older people depends upon the support of our volunteers. The activities of our volunteers are crucial to our 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 Age UK Surrey. They enhance our work 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 our 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 with us may benefit personally in many ways including the acquisition of new skills and experiences, improved physical and mental fitness and 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 the organisation expects 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 breadth 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 we hope that volunteers volunteering with Age UK Surrey will feel that they are treated respectfully and professionally and that their needs are fully considered.

Our 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 Coordinator reports to the Information & Advice and Wellbeing Manager and the Chief Executive, who sits on the charity's Board of Trustees. This gives volunteers and volunteering issues representation at the very highest level.

It is the role of Age UK Surrey's Managers and staff to ensure the contribution made by our volunteers is optimised. As such, we will invest appropriate resources into the planning and development of volunteering.

Equality & Diversity

Age UK Surrey operates an Equality and Diversity Policy for both staff and

volunteers. We believe that no-one should be treated less favourably than anyone else 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 our 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, Age UK Surrey 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, Age UK Surrey does not undertake to provide volunteering opportunities, payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken.

We 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 instead to express a voluntary two-way commitment where everyone gains satisfaction from being part of our organisation.

The Age UK Surrey 'Volunteer Commitment'

Age UK Surrey will endeavour at all times 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 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 our work, policies and procedures
- Foster a friendly and supportive atmosphere – aiming to make volunteering rewarding and pleasurable
- Make appropriate financial and other provisions in our organisational planning to support volunteering
- Ensure volunteers know who to talk to if there are problems or difficulties and 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, we ask 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 tell us 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.

Recruitment & Selection

Age UK Surrey adopts a Task Led approach to volunteer recruitment. This means we first identify a piece of work or a role that needs doing and then attempt 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 our work and volunteering opportunities to enable the volunteer to make a decision as to whether they want to volunteer with us. The volunteer provides information about their needs, aims and motivations, as well as existing skills and experiences, to enable Age UK Surrey to make a decision as to whether a suitable placement can be provided. Age UK Surrey strives to provide a fair 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. We welcome volunteers over the age of 18.

Interviews

Potential Age UK Surrey volunteers will be given an interview, appropriate to the role they are applying for, to enable us to assess their suitability. If the volunteer is not suitable, we may look at alternative roles within the organisation or direct them to suitable opportunities with other organisations if possible.

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).

References

Potential volunteers are asked to provide details of two referees whom Age UK Surrey can approach for references. The type of references requested will depend on the volunteering role being undertaken. (Further information can be found in the Age UK Surrey Recruitment Policy).

Task Description

All Age UK Surrey volunteer roles should be meaningful and worthwhile. The tasks of each role will be detailed in a task 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 complete an induction programme within three months of their start date.

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

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.

Where it is necessary to end a volunteer's involvement with Age UK Surrey we will endeavour to give due notice to the volunteer and will treat the volunteer fairly, and with dignity and respect.

Communication and Feedback

Age UK Surrey will ensure all volunteers have 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 good communications we will encourage volunteers to stay with us, recognise their efforts and maximise their contribution. We welcome feedback on how things could be done better and how to improve our systems.

Complaints

If a volunteer has a complaint that they feel cannot be resolved informally, then the volunteer should contact their Line Manager or, if this is not appropriate, the Volunteer Coordinator.

If a client is unhappy about our service, or any other service that they receive, then they have a right to make a complaint. A copy of the Complaints Procedure is available from their Line Manager.

Expenses

Anyone volunteering for Age UK Surrey should not be out of pocket because of doing so.

All volunteers are given the opportunity to claim previously agreed expenses, such as travelling expenses. Expenses must be authorised by the volunteer's Line Manager and, where appropriate, receipts provided. We will provide clear guidance on claiming expenses to volunteers.

Gifts and Donations

It is Age UK Surrey's policy that 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, it is an Age UK Surrey policy, that it 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 Gifts & Donations 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. Our written Health and Safety Policy applies 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 reported back to the Line Manager so that it can be recorded and assessed and appropriate action taken.

Some of our clients are frail, housebound and isolated and as a volunteer you may feel that they are dependent on you for more than the assigned task. If you are clear from the beginning what you are able and willing to do then this helps to set very clear boundaries which help both you and the client.

We suggest you not to give the client your personal telephone number instead when phoning a client dial 141 before their number in order to keep your number confidential. If the client needs to contact you, then they can do so via Age UK Surrey staff and we will pass messages on.

Please also see the Age UK Surrey Lone Working Policy.

Insurance

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

Driving

All volunteers using their own vehicles as part of their volunteer role must inform their insurers of their voluntary activities. Volunteers will be provided with a standard letter to forward to their insurance company with a return slip for the insurance company to complete and return to Age UK Surrey.

Line Managers must ensure all volunteer drivers hold a full and valid driving licence. Proof of this can be obtained by the volunteer driver by visiting <https://www.gov.uk/view-driving-licence> and obtaining a "check code" to provide to the line manager. This can be used to check the licence online via the following website: <https://www.gov.uk/check-driving-information>. The line manager must also ensure that the vehicle is safe, in a roadworthy condition and is fit for purpose and ensure the vehicle is properly taxed, has a valid MOT and valid insurance. The volunteer must provide the registration of the vehicle they will be using for their driving role and agree to their MOT being checked online on a yearly basis using the following website <https://www.gov.uk/check-mot-history>). Any change to the vehicle that they use should be communicated to the Line manager for up to date checks to be made.

Volunteer drivers must show proof of the above if 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

Volunteers will be asked if they would donate to Age UK Surrey the copyright to any original works they may produce whilst volunteering e.g. photographs or original artwork etc. For particular 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 our 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 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. 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.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

Issue	Date agreed by Board of Age UK Surrey	Reviewed
3	29 th September 2011	May 2014
3	17 th July 2014 (no changes required)	July 2017
3	2 nd October 2017 (no changes required)	July 2019
4	24 September 2019	