

Age UK Waltham Forest was founded in 1982. It is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. Our mission is to promote the well being of all older adults and to help make later life a fulfilling and enjoyable experience.

Age UK Waltham Forest is a member of the Age UK federation but we are an independent charity that has to raise all its own funds for our work in Waltham Forest.

Mission Statement

AGE UK WALTHAM FOREST AIMS TO:

Improve the quality of life for older adults in Waltham Forest by:

- Providing direct services
- Campaigning for the rights of older adults
- Participating in joint planning with statutory authorities and non-governmental organisations

Age UK Waltham Forest is an Equal Opportunity Organisation and celebrates diversity.

Why do we involve volunteers?

- To increase our contact with the local community we serve
- To benefit from the skills, experience and perspectives volunteers bring with them
- To offer our volunteers new skills and experiences
- To ensure that our services meet the needs of our clients
- To engage local people in a way that increases wellbeing.

Recruitment

- Age UK Waltham Forest aims to identify worthwhile and satisfying opportunities for volunteers. Volunteer roles are not introduced to replace paid staff.
- Age UK Waltham Forest produces a volunteer role description for all voluntary opportunities which is shared with prospective volunteers
- Age UK Waltham Forest will operate its Equal Opportunities policy at all times in relation to both recruitment and support of volunteers and is committed to achieving diversity in our volunteer base
- An informal discussion will be held with all prospective volunteers to ensure that their skills and interest are best served by the volunteering opportunity.
- Two references will be taken up before an individual can start volunteering
- Volunteers will undertake a DBS check of the appropriate level if their role requires it. This will need to be in place before a volunteer can start their role.

Induction

- All volunteers must attend an induction session with their team/Coordinator to familiarise themselves with the work of Age UK Waltham Forest and their own area of work.
 - Training will be offered to a volunteer where it helps them fulfil their role effectively and as funds permit.
 - All volunteers will be asked to sign a Volunteer Agreement which outlines the rules and principles of the organisation. These will be explained and copies of appropriate policy and procedures made available.
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Support

- All volunteers will have a named person within the organisation as their contact. Volunteers will be provided with ongoing supervision and support.
- All volunteers are covered by Age UK Waltham Forest's insurance policy while they are on the premises or engaged in Age UK Waltham Forest's work.
- Age UK Waltham Forest will ensure that volunteers are made aware of health and safety procedures and requirements, and will, as far as practical, provide a safe environment for volunteers.

Recognition

- We fully recognise the importance of acknowledging our volunteers and seek opportunities to say thank you and highlight achievements wherever possible
- Our long service awards are acknowledged annually at the AGM. They recognise service of 2, 5, 10, 15 years (and upwards in increasing increments of 5 years)
- We also have an annual Volunteer of the Year award which is decided through staff nominations

Confidentiality

- This organisation's process requires an explicit confidentiality policy, which all workers, which includes Management Committee, volunteers and staff, are obliged to observe. The way this relates to the volunteer's role will be explained in the induction process.
- Age UK Waltham Forest will respect the confidentiality of volunteers and will not release any information about them without their agreement in line with GDPR policy and procedures.

Expenses

- **Most of Age UK Waltham Forest's volunteers do not claim travel expenses and this helps the organisation keep costs down. However, we recognise that, if a volunteer is not entitled to free travel, they may need to claim travel expenses in order to be able to volunteer.** Age UK Waltham Forest will reimburse reasonable travel expenses however if a volunteer is in receipt of a Freedom Pass, they are required to use that for travel.
- Expenses must be agreed beforehand with the appropriate line manager.
- Expense claims must be made using the Expenses Claim Form and be supported by receipts.
- Claims that are more than 3 months old will not be accepted.

Offers of Gifts and Legacies

It is not permissible for any reason, unless specifically authorised by the Board of Trustees, to:

- 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 (save 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 he/she is not seeking favour, but merely wishing to express thanks. A gift voucher, with a maximum value of £25, is regarded as a gift and not money and can therefore be accepted. It is essential that all such gifts received are reported immediately to your Volunteer Manager so that they can be recorded on the service user's file. Frequent offers of such gifts by service users should be discouraged.

Anyone unsure of how these conditions may apply in particular circumstances should contact their Volunteer Manager for clarification.

Resolving Problems

The relationship between the organisation and its volunteer workers is entirely voluntary and does not imply any contract. However, it is important that the organisation is able to maintain its agreed standards of service to the clients who use it. We also want our volunteering experiences to be as enjoyable and rewarding as possible and have appropriate processes in place where volunteers can express concerns if needed.

If the role of a volunteer does not meet with the organisation's standards, it will be addressed by:

1. Initially convening a meeting with the Project Leader who will explain the concerns
2. If this does not resolve the concern, then a meeting with the Chief Executive will be convened.
3. If the role still does not meet with our standards, then the decision would be made to terminate the volunteering. This would be done in writing.

If a volunteer has a concern about their volunteering role, it will be addressed by:

1. The volunteer initially explaining their dissatisfaction to the Project Leader
2. If that does not resolve the concern, then a meeting with the Chief Executive would be convened
3. If after this, the grievance is still unresolved, then we would suggest they leave their role as a volunteer then it would be inappropriate for them to continue to be a volunteer.

Termination

- Age UK Waltham Forest reserves the right to terminate a volunteer relationship. This will be done in writing. We will, where possible, give volunteers at least 2 weeks notice of termination of the volunteering relationship, but we reserve the right to terminate the volunteer relationship without notice at any time without prejudice.
- If a volunteer wishes to withdraw from a voluntary role, we request that they give their Project Leaders much notice as possible. We would appreciate at least 1 months' notice from volunteers as this helps us reduce the impact on our clients and operations.
- All volunteers will be offered an exit interview upon leaving your voluntary role.

This Volunteer policy is freely accessible to all. It will be reviewed on a yearly basis to adapt or improve it.

Next review due July 2023