



Age UK Wandsworth

Volunteer Policy

Ratified by Board: January 2024

Date for review: January 2027

1. About this policy

- 1.1** This policy is intended to outline the principles on which the relationship between volunteers and Age UK Wandsworth is based and to provide basic information about volunteering with Age UK Wandsworth.
- 1.2** This policy applies to all of Age UK Wandsworth's volunteers. If volunteers have any questions about its application, they should raise these with the relevant Service Coordinator.

2. The Use of Volunteers

- 2.1** Age UK Wandsworth depends on volunteers for much of our work, fundraising, in the community and within Age UK Wandsworth's office. Age UK Wandsworth would be very limited in the way we work if it were not for the help of volunteers to supplement our paid staff.
- 2.2** The two following basic characteristics distinguish volunteers from Age UK Wandsworth's employed staff:
 - (a) Volunteers are unpaid and do not receive any material reward for their work;
 - (b) There is no contract of employment between Age UK Wandsworth and Age UK Wandsworth's volunteers, who do not have any rights as employees, workers or otherwise under the employment protection legislation; for example, the rights not to be unfairly dismissed or to have redundancy payments do not apply to them.
- 2.3** However, there are obligations which apply to Age UK Wandsworth's volunteers as well as Age UK Wandsworth's paid employees. Even the charitable and voluntary sectors are at risk from legal claims, and goodwill and 'freely giving one's time' are no defence to claims and legal liability. Age UK Wandsworth takes our responsibilities towards our volunteers seriously, and similarly expect that, as representatives of Age UK Wandsworth, our volunteers will also act appropriately. Therefore, in both the volunteers' and Age UK Wandsworth's interests, our main obligations are set out below.
- 2.4** Age UK Wandsworth reserve the right to revise or replace the terms of this policy whenever necessary and will notify volunteers of changes when made.

3. The application process

- 3.1** Applicants will be required to complete and return a Volunteering Application form. The completed form will include the contact details of 2 people who have known the applicant for 1 year or more and are prepared to provide a written reference for them. At least one of these should be an employer referee, or a college tutor if the applicant does not have work experience. Family members cannot be accepted as referees.

- 3.2** Both referees will be contacted for written references. Applications cannot proceed until both written references have been received.
- 3.3** Once references have been received, the applicant will be contacted to schedule a Volunteer Role Introduction meeting with the relevant Service Coordinator.
- 3.4** The relevant Service Coordinator will inform the applicant of the outcome of their application and meeting. If successful, the applicant will be sent additional information about the next steps of the process.
- 3.5** Successful applicants will be required to register for a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and provide the relevant documentation, in accordance with our DBS Policy, which can be made available on request. DBS checks will be paid for by Age UK Wandsworth, and certificates will be sent directly to applicants once processed. Applicants should contact the relevant Service Coordinator once they have received their certificate. Age UK Wandsworth require an updated DBS check to start volunteering with us and cannot accept previous certificates. Applicants can discuss any concerns about the outcome and disclosure of this check with the Service Coordinator.
- 3.6** Applicants who receive a satisfactory DBS check will complete and return Client Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest forms.
- 3.7** Successful applicants will also complete an online Safeguarding course and submit proof of completion to the Service Coordinator.

4. Age UK Wandsworth's expectations of you as a volunteer

- 4.1** Age UK Wandsworth looks to you to carry out such tasks and duties as are assigned to you, within the scope that you have volunteered to do and to comply with all reasonable directions given by your Service Coordinator. In particular, Age UK Wandsworth asks that you aim for high standards of efficiency, reliability, and quality in all your volunteering.
- 4.2** Age UK Wandsworth expect you to develop and promote a caring, supportive and professional relationship with the client(s) with whom you are matched. You should be reliable and friendly, with a focus on the relationship being about providing a supportive ear to listen and encourage positive thinking and growth, as opposed to therapy or over-assertive advice giving.
- 4.3** You must recognise that the relationship with the client may be challenging due to the needs and circumstances of the client, and so you must be realistic about what can be achieved in your relationship with them.
- 4.4** Age UK Wandsworth expects that you will work collaboratively with other volunteers, Age UK Wandsworth's employees, and the general public.

- 4.5 You should be guided by common sense and be prepared to act accordingly. If in any case action must be taken and it is not possible to obtain Age UK Wandsworth's authority or permission, you should take such action as you think best and report as soon as possible to your Service Coordinator or equivalent.
- 4.6 Age UK Wandsworth's clients rely heavily on the support provided by our volunteers. As a volunteer you are in a position of trust, and must not do anything which does, or could be seen to, undermine or abuse that trust. This includes the establishment and maintenance of appropriate and professional boundaries in the volunteering relationship.
- 4.7 It is important you treat Age UK Wandsworth's client with respect, dignity and without any form of discrimination.
- 4.8 You must maintain confidentiality throughout and after the volunteering process.
- 4.9 If there is any change in your circumstances that may affect your volunteering, please let Age UK Wandsworth know. This includes holidays, change of address or other life events that will impact your volunteering role.

5. What can you expect from Age UK Wandsworth?

- 5.1 Age UK Wandsworth will look to match your skills and experience with the right role, and to listen to your motivations and aspirations.
- 5.2 You will be required to keep Age UK Wandsworth informed of your relationship by completing regular feedback forms, where appropriate, or by directly informing the Project Coordinator of your service.
- 5.3 Age UK Wandsworth will provide appropriate support and training, including placing you with trained members of staff who can guide and advise you.
- 5.4 Age UK Wandsworth will inform you of training that is on offer which can help enhance your skills or help you develop new skills.
- 5.5 Age UK Wandsworth will provide you with information about our work, policies and procedures.
- 5.6 Age UK Wandsworth wants you to actively enjoy being an Age UK Wandsworth volunteer and feel rewarded by the time and energy you are giving back to the community, and we will do our best to make that happen.

6. Expenses

Although you receive no salary, gratuity, payment in kind, expenses may be reimbursed if they are expressly agreed and actually incurred in the performance of

your duties. All claims for expenses must be presented in accordance with Age UK Wandsworth's Volunteer Expenses Policy.

7. Motor vehicles

- 7.1** If you are required to use your own car in connection with volunteering for Age UK Wandsworth Age UK Wandsworth shall reimburse you for every mile for which you necessarily use your own car, but only with prior agreement by the Service Coordinator.
- 7.2** If you are required to drive any motor vehicle in connection with Age UK Wandsworth's activities you shall, whenever requested, permit Age UK Wandsworth to examine your driving licence and (whenever your own car is used for Age UK Wandsworth's purposes) your motor car insurance policy and current certificate of insurance.
- 7.3** If volunteers are required to use their car for volunteering, they must check with their insurer that they are insured to do so before carrying out any voluntary work. Age UK Wandsworth will not insure your car during this time.

8. Insurance

Age UK Wandsworth maintain insurance against risks which Age UK Wandsworth consider necessary, including loss and damage to or destruction of Age UK Wandsworth's property and the injury or death of members of the public affected by Age UK Wandsworth activities and of Age UK Wandsworth employees and volunteers undertaking authorised work for Age UK Wandsworth. The insurance does not extend, for example, to unauthorised work or to authorised work carried out by persons not authorised by Age UK Wandsworth. It is therefore most important that you ensure that you comply with the conditions of Age UK Wandsworth insurance and refrain from anything which might result in the insurance becoming void.

9. Policies

You must at all times support, respect, and adhere to Age UK Wandsworth's organisational policies, guidelines and management decisions, including all aspects of equal opportunities, equality and diversity, data protection, gifts and hospitality, confidentiality, health and safety, safeguarding and fundraising. This policy should also be used in conjunction with any additional training or instruction provided by your Service Coordinator.

10. Health and safety

- 10.1** Age UK Wandsworth has a duty to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees and other persons (including volunteers and members of the public) who are affected by Age UK Wandsworth's activities. You

must take reasonable care for your health and safety as well as that of other persons who may be affected by your acts or omissions and must co-operate with Age UK Wandsworth in fulfilling our statutory duties.

- 10.2** Notices will be posted or issued to give you information about possible health and safety hazards within Age UK Wandsworth's premises and the procedures and precautions which we have put in place.
- 10.3** Age UK Wandsworth has a health and safety policy which is overseen by the Chief Executive Officer, and which is available on request.
- 10.4** You must comply fully with the health and safety policy in all respects, including:
 - (a) Volunteering in a safe and efficient manner;
 - (b) not doing anything which does or might injure any other person or expose any other person to risk;
 - (c) making full and proper use of all safety and protective equipment and clothing;
 - (d) adhering to all procedures specified by Age UK Wandsworth or any instructions issued with any plant or machinery or substances in use at any given time; and
 - (e) Reporting any actually or potentially unsafe conditions, system of work, buildings, vehicles, plant or other equipment.
- 10.5** Age UK Wandsworth operate a no smoking policy and you may not smoke anywhere in the course of volunteering for Age UK Wandsworth or in any building in which any of Age UK Wandsworth's work is carried on.

11. Confidentiality

- 11.1** All information relating to Age UK Wandsworth (including Age UK Wandsworth's organisation, finances, membership and activities) and users of Age UK Wandsworth's services is confidential. You must keep this information secret and not use or disclose it except as authorised or required by Age UK Wandsworth and shall use your best endeavours to prevent the use or disclosure of it by any other person.
- 11.2** Your obligation to keep information confidential applies indefinitely but shall cease to apply to information which you can establish has in its entirety become public knowledge otherwise than through any unauthorised disclosure.
- 11.3** All records in any medium (whether written, computer readable or otherwise) including accounts, documents, drawings and private notes about Age UK Wandsworth and our activities and all copies and extracts of them made or acquired by you in the course of your volunteering for Age UK Wandsworth shall be:
 - (a) Age UK Wandsworth's property;

- (b) used for Age UK Wandsworth's purpose only;
- (c) returned to Age UK Wandsworth at any time on demand; and
- (d) returned to Age UK Wandsworth without demand if you cease for more than one month to be actively involved with Age UK Wandsworth's work.

12. Public

As a volunteer, you may not at any time:

- (a) make any statement about Age UK Wandsworth's activities to the press or other form of public media, except with Age UK Wandsworth's written consent; or
- (b) Represent yourself as working for or employed by or in any way connected with Age UK Wandsworth or Age UK Wandsworth's activities after ceasing for more than one month to be actively involved with Age UK Wandsworth's work.

13. Fundraising

13.1 Age UK Wandsworth is in constant need of funds for local needs and normally will accept contributions from any legal source. Age UK Wandsworth have the right however to refuse to accept any contribution without giving any reason.

13.2 As a volunteer, you are encouraged to hold and assist with fundraising events in keeping with our fundraising principles. These principles are detailed in our Fundraising Policy, which is available on request. If you intend to organise or arrange any fundraising event for Age UK Wandsworth, you should discuss the proposal in advance with our Fundraising Coordinator. If Age UK Wandsworth approve the proposal, we will support it with such publicity material and help as is practicable and you accept. However, Age UK Wandsworth will not support any fundraising proposal of we do not approve, and as the organiser of any such event you must not use Age UK Wandsworth's name or logo or in any way imply or permit it to be believed that the fund raising is approved by us.

14. No agency

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

15. Termination

Age UK Wandsworth reserves the right to refuse the offer of services of any volunteer, generally or in any particular case, and to terminate any work being done by a

volunteer. Age UK Wandsworth may exercise these rights at any time, with or without prior notice and without giving any reason.

16. Resolving concerns

If you have any problems or complaints about your volunteering, please let Age UK Wandsworth know immediately. You should raise your concerns with your Project Coordinator. Age UK Wandsworth take your concerns seriously and will try to resolve any difficulties you may be experiencing



Volunteer Handbook

Revised: January 2024

Introduction

Welcome to Age UK Wandsworth! Thank you for choosing to volunteer with us; we are delighted to have you on board. This handbook outlines useful information for Age UK Wandsworth volunteers; if you have any comments, questions, or concerns, please contact your Service Coordinator.

Age UK Wandsworth is a local, independent charity working in the community to support older people and their carers. Our vision is that everyone should be able to 'Age Well in Wandsworth' and we offer services to support older people to enable them to live independently for as long as they wish to do so. Volunteers are a vital part of our mission.

Equal Opportunities

Age UK Wandsworth is an equal opportunities organisation for our staff, volunteers, and clients. We oppose all forms of discrimination and expect all staff, volunteers and everyone connected with Age UK Wandsworth to abide by Age UK Wandsworth's Equal Opportunities Policy.

Confidentiality

Please remember that your clients' details are STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL—please be very careful where you store these details. Before you begin volunteering, you must sign a Confidentiality Statement. We expect you to comply with Age UK Wandsworth's policies and procedures relating to confidentiality in respect of our staff, clients, and other volunteers. This applies even after you are no longer a volunteer. Further information is contained in our Privacy Standard.

Getting Started

All volunteers will complete an induction process with their Service Coordinator.

If you are an office-based volunteer, your induction will take place at our office located at Old York Road. SW18 1TQ.

If you are a home visiting volunteer, the Service Coordinator will assess the client prior to your pairing. They will provide you with the relevant information before your first contact with your client. When possible, the Service Coordinator will attend the introductory visit with you and the client. After this initial visit, you may arrange a mutually convenient time for any future visits with your client.

If you are a telephone befriender, the Service Coordinator will give you a date/time to contact your client.

It is our policy to not give out personal telephone numbers, and we ask that when calling a client from your personal number that you dial 141 before the client's number or withhold your number on your phone.

Please let the Service Coordinator know of any planned holidays or extended times you may be unavailable to volunteer so that we can try to support the client in your absence, if necessary. If

you are an office-based volunteer, please contact your Service Coordinator to let them know you will be absent.

All volunteers should adhere to organisational and Government guidance relating to public health concerns.

Home Visiting and Telephone Volunteers

Every effort will be made to give you as much information about the client and their circumstances before your visit or call. However, there may be unforeseeable situations that arise. If you feel unsafe at any time travelling to your client, during a visit, or over a phone call, you should prioritise your own personal safety.

Home Visits

As a home visiting volunteer, you have committed to visiting your client on your own and under no circumstances should you visit your client with another person, child, or pet/animal.

Age UK Wandsworth does not allow staff or volunteers to remain in a client's home alone, so you should not stay behind in the home if the client leaves for any reason.

When arranging home visits, ensure you have a lone working 'buddy' (a relative or friend who knows your schedule) and be mindful of your safety. Further information is contained in our Lone Working Policy.

We recommend calling your client to confirm your meeting before your scheduled visit. If you are unwell, you should not visit; please contact the client directly to rearrange your visit. If you have a prolonged illness, please let your Service Coordinator know.

It is important to let the client know if you are unable to make a planned visit, or if you are running late. Please be aware that it may take some time for your client to answer the phone or walk to the door; they may not have heard the first knock or doorbell or may have mobility issues.

If there is no response when you arrive for a pre-arranged visit, please refer to the options below:

- Try telephoning the client.
- If appropriate, try contacting their neighbours to see if they know of their whereabouts
- If applicable contact the manager of the sheltered housing scheme Warden's phone numbers are often listed in the communal areas.
- If there is still no response, telephone the Service Coordinator or the main Age UK Wandsworth office number to inform them of the situation, if during office hours.
- If your visit takes place outside of office working hours or you are unable to contact anyone above call Wandsworth Social Services on 020 8871 7707 or 020 8871 8999 to enquire whether the client is known to them. They may be able to offer you advice and help deal with the situation and explain you are a volunteer from Age UK Wandsworth.
- If the client has a Watch alarm pendant, you can call 020 8871 8999 and ask if they have been in contact with the client.

Emergency Response

If you are visiting or on a phone call with your client and an incident occurs, someone requires immediate assistance, or you are concerned about your client's well-being, the below procedures should be carried out as quickly as possible:

- Call Emergency Services on 999 and explain what happened. They will talk you through the next steps until help arrives
- Don't try to move the person
- Speak to and reassure the person until help arrives
- Inform the Age UK Wandsworth office or Service Coordinator as soon as possible.

Volunteer Wellbeing

If you experience a difficult visit or call, please contact your Service Coordinator to discuss this and any concerns you might have regarding your role as a volunteer. We are here to offer you support and guidance, as well as extra training if needed. It may be that you would like a change, try another volunteer role or take a break.

Safeguarding

Age UK Wandsworth has a duty of care to all clients to recognise the signs of abuse and to act when it is reported. We take this responsibility seriously which is why all staff and volunteers are required to complete Safeguarding training as part of the application process.

Please report any safeguarding concerns you may have to your Service Coordinator immediately in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy.

Health and Safety

General Safety for Clients

Please observe the client and how they move around their home. You may notice items restricting their access and mobility, such as trailing wiring from lamps, raised carpets, furniture, or other hazards. You may wish to raise these issues with the client in case they are unaware. If you have concerns about their safety at home, please contact your Service Coordinator, as we may be able to support the client.

General Safety for Volunteers

It is important that you always put your own safety first and avoid any situations that could cause you or your client harm. Please do not hesitate to contact Age UK Wandsworth if you have any safety concerns. Further information is contained in our Health and Safety Policy and our Lone Working Policy.

Training and Supervision

You will be encouraged to undertake further online and in-person training sessions relevant to your role during your time with Age UK Wandsworth. If you are interested in further training or

learning about a specific need which your client is facing, please let your Service Coordinator know as we may be able to suggest relevant courses or literature.

All volunteers will receive regular updates and communication from their Service Coordinator.

Providing Information and Feedback

As a volunteer you are an important point of contact for your client. If you notice anything unusual regarding their health or welfare, it is important that you inform a member of the Age UK Wandsworth staff. If your client needs extra support with matters such as their health; financial situation; practical tasks around the home; Age UK Wandsworth may be able to help. Please see our About Us leaflet for further information about available services.

As part of your volunteering commitment, you will be required to complete feedback forms. This information helps us keep a record of your volunteering, in addition to making any necessary changes to our records. It also helps us to demonstrate our impact to funders, which ensures the longevity of our services and aids us to secure ongoing funding.

If we do not receive your feedback forms as agreed by your Service Coordinator and our attempts to contact you are not successful, you will be removed from the service and will be marked inactive as a volunteer. We understand that life situations may change and if you no longer wish to or are unable to volunteer, we ask that you inform us immediately and confirm this in writing to your Service Coordinator. It is essential you do this because the client contacted our organisation for support, and we must ensure continuity of this support.

If/when you cease volunteering with us, please shred any confidential information regarding your client(s) and if you have a name badge, please return this to the office.

Complaints

If you are unhappy with a member of staff, volunteer, client, or for any other reason, please raise your concern with your Service Coordinator in the first instance. If you do not feel comfortable contacting the Service Coordinator or you feel the matter is still not resolved, please contact our Chief Executive in accordance with our Complaints Policy: ceo@ageukwandsworth.org.uk. The Chief Executive may delegate an investigation into any complaint raised to another senior staff member.

Insurance

As you are insured by Age UK Wandsworth for your volunteering position, you must not go beyond the scope of your role as this may negate our/your insurance coverage.

If you wish to take your client out in your car, this must have been agreed in advance with your Service Coordinator. It would be your responsibility to ensure that you have a motor insurance policy which covers this; some policies may need an additional premium to include voluntary work and the Age UK Wandsworth insurance policy does not cover this.

Expenses

You are entitled to claim out-of-pocket expenses related to relevant travel by bus, tube or train. These must be discussed and agreed with your Service Coordinator in advance.

Welfare Benefits Status

If you are in receipt of welfare benefits while volunteering with Age UK Wandsworth, it is your responsibility to inform all relevant parties and to be aware any relevant restrictions.

Immigration Status

If you are in the UK with any type of visitor or resident visa, it is your responsibility to check whether undertaking voluntary work will affect your immigration status. Visit the UK Government Home Office website for further details.

Policies

For many of the issues covered in this booklet, we have a comprehensive policy in place to ensure that volunteers and clients are protected. All policies are available upon request from your Service Coordinator.

Finally

We hope that volunteering for Age UK Wandsworth is a very rewarding and enjoyable experience for you. We appreciate there is a lot of information in here, so please do not hesitate to contact your Service Coordinator with any questions you may have.

Thank you again for giving us and our clients your valuable time. We all really appreciate it!