Volunteer Policy

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Policy Statement

The aim of Age UK York (AUKY) is to promote the wellbeing of all older people in the City of York and help make later life a fulfilling and enjoyable experience. We do this by providing a range of support and social opportunities for older people in York, on a regular basis. Volunteers are an essential part of providing these opportunities including face to face service provision, fundraising, finance and administration activities.

- The Volunteering Policy outlines the process of volunteer recruitment, the procedures in place to train and support volunteers and a clear procedure for resolving any volunteering concerns or problems.
- This policy should be read in conjunction with the AUKY Volunteer Handbook.
- Unless specifically stated otherwise, this policy applies to all volunteers engaged by AUKY.

Introduction

Age UK York is committed to working in partnership and involving a diverse range of people in our activities. Volunteers, in their diversity of age, experience, cultural background and their involvement within communities, bring to our work a value which adds to our understanding of, and response to, older people’s needs. We recognise that there will never be sufficient resources to meet all the needs of older people within York through paid services. Without the contribution of volunteers, we would only be able to achieve a small percentage of our work with and for older people.

Volunteering within AUKY will complement the work of paid employees and will not displace paid roles.

AUKY believe that:

- The quality of life of most older people is enhanced by their membership of communities. Through the involvement of volunteers, we contribute to the building and support of active and sustainable communities based on social justice and mutual respect.
- We work more effectively with and on behalf of older people by providing opportunities for people to use their skills, knowledge and experience through volunteering.
- Volunteers reflect the diversity of their communities and can 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 make later life a more fulfilling and enjoyable experience for our older people.
- Older people with whom we work value the involvement of volunteers.
• By involving volunteers, we can offer opportunities for genuine involvement, including learning and development opportunities.

Responsibilities and Accountability

Ultimate responsibility

The Chief Executive Officer has ultimate responsibility for implementation of this policy, which has been approved by the Board of Trustees.

Managers and Supervisors

Managers and Supervisors will ensure that the policy is being followed during day-to-day operations.

Definition of a volunteer

A volunteer within AUKY is an individual who:
  • Freely chooses to support Age UK York through the giving of their time, skills and experience without financial remuneration beyond out of pocket expenses. It is support undertaken by choice and is unpaid.
  • Does not have the same rights as an employee, that is, someone who is paid under a contract of employment.
  • Is expected to carry out the role as defined in their role description and under the supervision of their Service Organiser/Manager.
  • Works under AUKY policies including Confidentiality, Equal Opportunities and Diversity, Safeguarding and Health and Safety Polices.

Procedures and Implementation

Rights of volunteers

As indicated above, volunteers do not have employment rights. However, a volunteer is entitled:
  • To have personal information respected as confidential.
  • To have a clearly defined role description outlining expected tasks and activities.
  • To support and supervision as appropriate to the role they are undertaking.
  • To be offered training that will enable him or her to carry out their duties safely and competently.
  • To refuse to carry out any task for which they have received no, or inadequate, training or instruction and to refuse a particular role or task without criticism.
  • To be treated with respect.
• To be offered roles of their own preference, where possible and appropriate.
• To take ‘leave’ and holidays although it is expected that they will do so, whenever possible, with adequate warning to their Supervisor or Line Manager in the interests of continuation of a professional service.
• To have adequate information about the organisation or individual they are assisting and about the roles or tasks which they are asked to undertake.
• To participate in discussions and decisions which directly affect clients with whom they are involved, given the agreement of the clients concerned.
• To be adequately insured and to have the benefit of protection by AUKY’s Health and Safety Policy.
• To have the opportunity to enhance personal development and gain personal satisfaction.
• To claim reasonable expenses e.g. for travel. Will not be out of pocket due to their voluntary work with AUKY.

Scope of the volunteer policy

Unless specifically stated otherwise, the policy applies to all AUKY volunteers.

Recruitment and selection

• In principle, Age UK York will involve volunteers in all areas of our work, unless prevented by legislation or contract.
• Age UK York seeks to recruit a wide range of volunteers who are representative of the wider community and who bring a wealth of skills and experience to the organisation. We are committed to building a diverse organisation and to equal opportunities. We will not discriminate on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnerships; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.
• Volunteers will not be recruited to displace paid staff.
• Volunteers will be aged 18 years or over.
• All volunteering opportunities are advertised on our website. Each role has a discrete role description. The role description will explain what is expected of volunteers in relation to time, commitment, necessary skills, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance (where appropriate), experience and specific duties required.
• Volunteers are invited to complete an application form and return it to the responsible staff member. He/she will log the application and acknowledge receipt of the application form. In the first instance, the staff member will contact the volunteer and arrange an interview. After an initial meeting, prospective volunteers will be allocated to the most appropriate Service Organiser/Manager depending on their skill, experience and personal preferences.
• Volunteers are invited to a further interview with the Service Organiser/Manager from the area they wish to volunteer in. An interview assessment form is completed after each interview. The Volunteer Manager or Service Organiser/Manager has the right to decline a volunteer if they do not fulfil the criteria. The interview assessment form will clearly indicate the reasons for declining a volunteer application. A letter declining the application will be sent from the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

• Successful volunteers will then be invited to part 1 and part 2 induction training, references taken, and appropriate DBS clearance applied for. In some instances, a GP reference may be required. Volunteers are asked to sign a proforma confirming their attendance at training.

• Volunteers will not be assigned to duties until the above mentioned training and checks have all been completed.

• Volunteers will also be asked to sign a copy of the role description and volunteer agreement prior commencing volunteering.

• All new volunteers will receive a copy of the Volunteer Handbook and agree to work within the policies and procedures of AUKY.

Training and supervision

• All new volunteers will undertake part 1 and part 2 induction training before they can start volunteering.

• For some volunteer roles additional training will be mandatory, such as, safeguarding, moving and handling, infection control, food hygiene. Certification can be time limited and courses may need to be repeated to comply with AUKY policies and procedures.

• A programme of optional training is offered to volunteers. Some training may be certified by an external provider. Volunteers are actively encouraged to attend these courses.

• Volunteers are not expected to pay for training offered through AUKY.

The rights of AUKY regarding the use of volunteers

• All volunteers will be formally recruited and trained before starting their volunteering role.

• Volunteers will work within the parameters of AUKY policies and procedures.

• Volunteers will work within the parameters of their role description. Undertaking activities other than those specified could lead to the termination of the volunteering role.

• AUKY has a duty of care to all clients using our services. In any situation where a client’s vulnerability or disability appears to have been in any way abused by a volunteer, the CEO will instigate an immediate investigation which may lead to the volunteer being required to leave AUKY with immediate effect.
Procedure for resolving problems and concerns

AUKY is dependent upon and greatly appreciates the time, enthusiasm and skills given by all our volunteers and strives to ensure that volunteering with us is a safe and rewarding experience for all. However, while volunteering is by and large a positive experience for everyone involved, sometimes things can go wrong. This procedure explains what will happen if a problem arises. At each stage a record will be made of the outcome.

If a volunteer has a concern or complaint about their volunteering role with AUKY

Stage 1
In the first instance the volunteer should raise it with their Service Organiser/Manager. If the issue requires discussion, their Service Organiser/Manager will arrange a time with the volunteer to speak privately with them about the concern. If the volunteer feels uncomfortable raising the issue with their Service Organiser/Manager, they should contact the Volunteer Manager to make an appointment to discuss the concern.

Stage 2
If, after following the route above, the volunteer feels their concerns have not been resolved or properly listened to, they should contact their Head of Service to arrange an appointment to discuss the issues in question.

Stage 3
If the volunteer is still not satisfied with the outcome, then they should put their concerns in writing to, the CEO of AUKY. The appeal will be investigated by the CEO and Chair of Trustees, or their nominees and their decision will be final.

If AUKY have a concern or complaint about a volunteer

Informal stage

In some instances, a minor issue of misconduct will be identified by the Service Organiser/Manager and dealt with informally. They will discuss their concerns with the volunteer and support and encourage them to address the identified concerns. If this does not address the issues raised, the next stage is the formal stage.

Formal stage

Stage 1
In the first instance, the Service Organiser/Manager will inform the volunteer of the concern and invite them to a meeting to discuss it. The volunteer may be accompanied by someone of their choice. The aim of this meeting is to define and agree the concern and agree a plan to address it.
Stage 2
If the concern is not resolved by this route, then a meeting will be arranged with the volunteer and their Head of Service. Again, the volunteer may be accompanied by a person of their choice. Depending on the nature of the concerns, further objectives may be set, or help offered. However, if a mutually agreeable solution cannot be found, this may end the volunteering role with us. In this case, the volunteer will have the opportunity to appeal.

Stage 3
To appeal, the volunteer should write to the CEO with the reasons for the appeal. The appeal will be investigated by CEO and Chair of Trustees, or their nominees and the decision will be final.

Exceptions
In very rare circumstances we may ask a volunteer to desist from volunteering with immediate effect (see Stage 3 above), while AUKY investigates a complaint or allegation. This is normal good practice in these situations and does not imply ‘guilt’. We would always take care to ensure that the volunteer understands the situation, is well supported and has every opportunity to provide their side of the story.

If a volunteer is unhappy with the outcome, they may appeal the decision by writing to the CEO as set out above. The appeal will be investigated by the CEO and Chair of Trustees, or their nominees and their decision will then be final.

If the volunteer is working for a service which is regulated, as defined by the Disclosure and Barring Service, in exceptional circumstances a referral for barring maybe appropriate.

Related Policies, Guidance and Procedures
Expenses policy

Monitoring and Review
The implementation of this policy will be monitored by all Service Managers and the Volunteer Manager. Volunteering will be a regular agenda item at Service Managers’ meetings.

The policy will be reviewed by the Volunteer Manager and the Chief Executive Officer every two years. During review the views and opinions of volunteers will be sought on the content and operation of the policy.

Appendices
None