

Resident Volunteering Policy



Reference:	HS_POL_CCC_VOL_0.1	Author:	Lorna Collisson
Scope:	Housing Solutions Residents	Approved by:	ET Policy Group
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Related Policies:	Resident Engagement Policy Tenants and Residents Association Policy (TARA) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Safeguarding Policy Employee Disciplinary Policy		

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. Housing Solutions is focused on providing localised and personalised services to our residents, ensuring that we not only meet their needs but also exceed their expectations.
- 1.2 Resident involvement is paramount at Housing Solutions. Whether you are a resident living in social housing, sheltered accommodation, a supported property or you are a leaseholder who owns their home, we want residents to have a real say in how Housing Solutions operates, setting the right direction of travel for our team, residents and all stakeholders.
- 1.3 This Policy sets out the principles by which Housing Solutions involve and engage with residents as volunteers. It aims to create a common understanding between the organisation and volunteers in regards to roles, responsibilities and expectations from both parties.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all staff and board members that work with and provide support to volunteers, in any capacity, as well as volunteers themselves.

3. Role and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Executive Team	To foster an environment that is welcoming and positive for volunteers
Assistant Director of Finance & Procurement	To make sure volunteers are insured
Volunteer Lead (Manager/Officer coordinating the volunteer activity)	To provide clear information about what is, and what is not, expected of the volunteer. This will be either via the Terms of Reference (for panel members) or a role description. To provide a safe environment to volunteer in.
Community Engagement Officer and Volunteer Lead	To ensure adequate support and training is provided for the volunteer, including providing information on what to do if something goes wrong. To provide agreed out-of-pocket expenses in a timely manner so that volunteering is not disadvantageous.
Volunteers	Will follow the Code of Conduct, Terms of Reference/Role Description and other related policies and training.

4. Definitions

- 4.1 A Volunteer is someone who freely chooses to give their time to undertake tasks and activities without payment or the expectation of payment. The arrangement is voluntary on both sides and should be mutually beneficial. Either party can bring this to an end.
- 4.2 Housing Solutions' volunteers will not be used to replace paid staff, but play a valuable and vital role in our Resident Engagement Strategy.

5. Legislation

- 5.1 There is currently no formal legislation that regulates volunteering; however we will ensure we follow best practice at all times as set out by organisations such as TPAS, NCVO and local volunteer centres.

6. Recruitment and Selection

- 6.1 Any volunteer roles that Housing Solutions has will have different criteria that will clearly be explained in the role advert and description. Successful applicants will be based on merit and will be in line with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. Depending on the role volunteers may be asked to attend an informal interview, if this is the case it will be stipulated on the role advert.
- 6.2 Where applicants are not able to be placed in their preferred role, then other

options will be discussed with them.

- 6.3 Some roles may require a DBS check to take place. Having a criminal record is not a bar to volunteering with Housing Solutions and each case will be reviewed on an individual basis.

7. Code of Conduct, resolution and termination of agreement

- 7.1 Housing Solutions will try and deal with any concerns informally in the first instance, and at the earliest opportunity with the aim of a positive and amicable solution.
- 7.2 If Housing Solutions suspects a volunteer has breached the Code of Conduct, or related policy, we will need to proactively manage this. We will always aim to do this with sensitivity and respect.
- 7.2.1 Informal resolution – If the breach is minor then it will be discussed with the volunteer. Support and training will be offered to the volunteer to ensure they understand their role and the expectations of Housing Solutions. Notes of the discussion will be retained on the volunteers file.
- 7.2.2 Verbal warning – if the breach is deemed as more serious the volunteer will be issued with a verbal warning. This will include a formal meeting with Housing Solutions to explain what breach has occurred and how the volunteer can work differently to prevent this from happening again. Support and training will be offered to the volunteer to ensure they understand their role and the expectations of Housing Solutions. The verbal warning and notes of the meeting will be sent to the volunteer in an appropriate format within 7 days of the meeting and will be retained on the volunteers file.
- 7.2.3 Withdrawing the volunteer role – if the breach is serious, or a volunteer has received more than one verbal warning Housing Solutions can withdraw the volunteer role. This will be communicated to the volunteers as soon as possible both verbally and in writing and detail the reasons this decision has been taken. An exit interview will be offered to the volunteer and all notes will be sent to the volunteer in an appropriate format within 7 days of the meeting and will be retained on the volunteers file. Volunteers must return any equipment, property or ID passed they have been given.
- 7.3 Housing Solutions recognises that volunteers are free to end the volunteering at any time. All volunteers will be offered an informal exit interview. Volunteers must return any equipment, property or ID passed they have been given. Housing Solutions can also end the volunteer arrangement should the project come to an end, or if the arrangement is no longer deemed mutually beneficial. All volunteer projects will be reviewed at least every three years.
- 7.4 Volunteers who have been with Housing Solutions for at least three months and played an active volunteer role in that time have the right to request a reference.

8. Expenses

- 8.1 Volunteers would not be expected to use their own money to buy equipment, activities, refreshments, etc. for activities they are volunteering at. These will be

covered and bought by a Housing Solutions member of staff.

- 8.2 Housing Solutions will offer to pay mileage (at the recommended government rate), or provide appropriate transport, to all volunteers to attend meetings, workshops and training sessions.
- 8.3 If volunteers are attending a volunteer activity over the lunch period then lunch will be provided.

9. Vulnerable Residents

- 9.1 Each role and activity will have been risk assessed to ensure all health and safety requirements are met, and that safeguarding is adhered to at all times.
- 9.2 Residents who are working directly with vulnerable residents will be required to have a DBS check completed before beginning in the role

10. Consumer Standards

- 10.1 Volunteering is not directly regulated by the consumer standards but achieves objectives within the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard and the Neighbourhood and Community Standard.

11. Equality & Diversity

- 11.1 Housing Solutions recognises the needs of a diverse population and always acts within the scope of its own Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and Equalities Act 2010. Housing Solutions works closely with its partners to ensure it has a clear understanding of its resident community with clear regularly updated service user profiles. Housing Solutions will record, analyse and monitor information on ethnicity, vulnerability and disability.

12. Confidentiality

- 12.1 Under the Data Protection Act 2018, UK General Data Protection Regulation (UKGDPR), all personal and sensitive organisational information, however received, is treated as confidential. This includes:
 - anything of a personal nature that is not a matter of public record about a resident, client, applicant, staff or board member
 - sensitive organisational information.
- 12.2 Housing Solutions employees will ensure that they only involve other agencies and share information where there is a legal basis for processing the information.

13. Review

- 13.1 This policy will be reviewed on a 3 yearly basis or more frequently in response to changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, good practice or changes in other relevant Housing Solutions' policy.
- 13.2 Our performance in relation to the delivery of the services and activities set out in this policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis through our established reporting mechanisms to our Senior Management Team, Executive Team, Board and associated committees.