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## VOLUNTEER POLICY

### 1. Introduction

This policy sets out the broad principles for volunteers working with Sutton Housing Society (SHS). It is relevant to all within the organisation, including volunteers, staff and Board members.

This policy is primarily aimed at volunteers involved with our community engagement activities.

No volunteers are considered to be employees.

### 2. Role of Volunteers

The role of a volunteer is based on trust and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time to carry out the tasks involved in their voluntary activity.

SHS cannot be compelled to provide either regular tasks, payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken by the volunteer.

Volunteers will not be used during times of industrial action to do the work of paid staff.

### 3. Recruitment of volunteers

SHS will promote volunteering opportunities at SHS schemes, in newsletters and on our website. It may be necessary for any interested person to complete a basic application form. CV's may be attached with the volunteer application form. This information will be to support potential volunteering tasks and will not result in paid employment.

Volunteers may be asked to produce two references and invited to attend an informal interview, depending on the role the volunteer wishes to fulfil.

If the volunteer is to be involved with vulnerable groups (children and/or adults) they must undergo an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) check if they are likely to be left alone with any resident before they start their volunteer placement.

For volunteers that are under 18 years of age, a DBS will not be carried out. However, the volunteer must be accompanied on site by a staff member at all times and never left alone with any other individuals.

The acceptance of volunteer assistance for a particular role is made on merit, with the sole selection criterion being the individual's suitability to carry out agreed tasks.

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If volunteers are considered unsuitable for a particular role, SHS will either offer an alternative voluntary opportunity or refer the individual to a Volunteer Centre.

**4. Support and Coordination**

A named SHS staff member will have overall responsibility for the development of voluntary activities within the organisation; this is the Community Engagement Officer for all sites apart from our extra care scheme, where this is the Housing with Care Manager's responsibility.

Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both of what the organisation expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of the organisation.

SHS has a statutory duty to comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. All volunteers must co-operate to fulfil this duty. A copy of the health and safety policy will be made available to the volunteer. SHS recognises the diversity of cultures and religions of its employees and will take a sensitive approach when this affects dress requirements. However, priority will be given to health and safety, security and business objectives.

Should there be any concerns/issues arising as a result of the volunteer placement, SHS will try to resolve any problems fairly and as speedily as possible. Should a volunteer have any unresolved problems, SHS will offer an opportunity to discuss the issues with the Community Engagement Officer / Housing with Care Manager in the first instance and if necessary, with the Operations Director.

It may be necessary in some circumstances for SHS to bring the volunteer placement to an end and SHS reserves the right to do so.

**5. Expenses**

Volunteers with SHS are able to claim reasonable out of pocket expenses, subject to agreement with SHS and the production of receipts as evidence of the expenditure. What can be reclaimed from the organisation and the calculation of expenses will be explained to the volunteer before they start any activity likely to give rise to expenses. Volunteers must not incur expenditure without pre-authorisation by the Community Engagement Officer.

The organisation has a consistent approach to the reimbursement of expenses which are the same for volunteers, staff, etc. and are as approved by the Inland Revenue.

It is the responsibility of the Community Engagement Officer to make volunteers aware of the procedure for the reimbursement of expenses.

**6. Equal Opportunities**

SHS is committed to provide equality of opportunity and fairness of treatment for all persons and has an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy. This policy will be issued to all volunteers.

Throughout the volunteer process and placement, SHS aims to ensure that no person receives less favourable treatment than any other on grounds of gender, gender reassignment, age, religion or belief, marital or civil partnership status, sexual orientation, disability, colour, race or national or ethnic origins, pregnancy or maternity leave or trade union membership.