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## VOLUNTEER POLICY

NOTE: This policy can be made available in a range of formats. Please contact the Head Office if you require this document translated or issued in a format which is more appropriate for you.

### 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.

SHS makes use of a Volunteer Agreement; this helps both Sutton Housing Society (SHS) and its volunteers by making expectations clear. The Volunteer Agreement address the unlikely possibility of volunteers being considered employees in the eyes of the law. This is attached as Appendix 1.

This policy is endorsed by the SHS Housing Operations Committee and will be reviewed every 2 years, to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of SHS and its volunteers.

### 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 will be necessary for any interested person to complete a basic application form. They will also be sent any other background information about the Society.

All volunteers will be asked to produce two references and will be invited to attend an informal interview.

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.

CV's may also be attached with the volunteer application form. This information will be to support potential volunteering tasks and will not result in paid employment.

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.

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.

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. (This is covered in the Volunteer Agreement).

New volunteers will have an action plan agreed with the relevant member of staff.

## ITEM 1

Volunteer Policy

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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 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 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 an SHS Manager or 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**

The Society 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.

At all stages of the recruitment process, and during any volunteer 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.