

Volunteering Policy

NOTE

This policy must read in conjunction with our Equal Opportunity and Diversity Policy

Definitions

Volunteer

A volunteer is anyone who freely chooses to undertake work for Age Concern through the giving of their time, skills and experience without financial remuneration beyond the reimbursement of out of pocket expenses.

Voluntary work

Voluntary work may be formally or informally organised. It can be organised one to one, in groups or small teams, in offices, centres or at a distance. Some people prefer to be involved in community activity, self help or campaigning work and this too is regarded as voluntary work. In Age Concern, the federation we offer a wide range of voluntary roles.

Volunteering

Is a term used to cover all aspects of the organisation and support of volunteers. It is an important social phenomenon, central to citizenship and to a living democracy. Through volunteering, people can become involved in their community and society and can work with others to change and improve it or seek to prevent change which they see as unwelcome or undesirable.

In Age Concern, the federation we see volunteering as an important expression of people's interests in the quality of older people's lives and for older people a vital way for continuing participation in their community.

1 Introduction

1.1 The aim of Age Concern Okehampton and Torrington is to promote the relief of older people in any manner which is or may be deemed by law to be charitable in and around the districts of West Devon and Torrington, called the area of benefit.

1.2 In Age Concern Okehampton and Torrington we are committed to involving a diverse range of local people in our work in both formal volunteering and community activity. We do this because we believe that:

- 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
- through the involvement of volunteers we contribute to the building and support of active and sustainable communities based on social justice and mutual respect
- the development and support of vibrant community networks and individuals within them is vital to the well being of older people
- we work more effectively with and on behalf of older people by providing opportunities for local people to use their skills, knowledge and experience through volunteering
- as volunteers who reflect the diversity of their communities, local people 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 making later life a more fulfilling and enjoyable experience for everyone
- older people with whom we work value the involvement of volunteers
- by involving volunteers we can offer opportunities for genuine involvement, learning and development for individuals
- without the contribution of volunteers, we would only be able to achieve a small percentage of our work with and for older people.

1.3 In the federation, a volunteer is any one who freely chooses to undertake work for Age Concern through the giving of their time, skills and experience without financial remuneration beyond the reimbursement of out of pocket expenses. It is work undertaken by choice and is unpaid. We undertake to organise this work effectively.

1.4 In Age Concern Okehampton and Torrridge volunteers can

- serve on our Executive Committee/Board
- help with the delivery of our services
- be active in projects and community-led activities supported by us
- campaign with and on behalf of older people and
- help raise funds to support our work.

1.5 We believe that our relationship with volunteers is one of mutual responsibility and commitment within which Age Concern Okehampton and Torrridge and volunteers have both rights and responsibilities. We aim to ensure that volunteers enjoy their involvement with us and gain from it in terms of their own personal objectives.

2 Purpose of this policy

2.1 Our purpose in adopting this policy is to:

- Highlight and acknowledge the value of the contribution made by volunteers.
- Reflect the purpose, value, standards and strategies of Age Concern Okehampton and Torrridge in its involvement of volunteers.
- Recognise the respective roles, rights and responsibilities of volunteers in Age Concern Okehampton and Torrridge.
- Confirm Age Concern Okehampton and Torrridge's commitment to involving volunteers in its work
- Establish clear principles for the involvement of volunteers, clarify their roles and the relationships between them, those who involve them and those who receive their services or work alongside them.
- Help to ensure the quality of both the volunteering opportunities on offer and the work carried out by volunteers.
- Acknowledge the current areas of volunteer involvement in Age Concern Okehampton and Torrridge .

2.2 The policy is intended for internal management guidance only and does not constitute, neither implicitly nor explicitly, a binding contractual or personal agreement. Matters in areas not specifically covered by the policy shall be decided by the Chief Officer.

3 Scope of the volunteer policy

Unless specifically stated, the policy applies to all volunteers in all programmes and projects undertaken by or on behalf of the Age Concern, to all its departments and sites of operation and to all volunteer trustees.

4 Statement of principles of good practice

4.1 General

In involving volunteers we will be guided by the following principles of good practice:

- Tasks will be clearly defined so that all concerned with volunteers' activities are sure of their respective roles and responsibilities.
- Records will be kept of work done by volunteers as a basis for monitoring, and volunteers will have access to their records.
- Volunteer roles will complement, not replace, the work of paid staff.
- Existing and future policies will be checked as to how they affect volunteers .
- A mechanism will be established by which the policy and procedures on volunteers can be monitored and reviewed.

4.2 Recruitment and selection

- Age Concern Okehampton and Torridge's equal opportunities statement will be adhered to when recruiting and selecting volunteers.
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- Volunteer opportunities will be promoted in accordance with our agreed method for recruiting volunteers so that there is wide accessibility to what we offer.
- Volunteers are usually required to complete an application/registration form
- Written role/task descriptions will lay out time, commitment, necessary skills and experience and actual duties
- Volunteers will be placed in accordance with our agreed volunteer selection procedures.
- We will ensure that procedures are in place to cover good practice requirements for volunteers selected to work with children and/or vulnerable older people.
- It is our practice to request references.
- People who offer to volunteer will have their offers dealt with as quickly as possible and certainly within
- Volunteers will be placed in activities which match their skills, talents and interests and, once placed they will be required to comply with Age Concern Okehampton and Torridge's existing policies and procedures.
- We will regularly review the ways in which potential volunteers can make contact with us.

4.3 Support for Volunteers

- We will invest financial and personnel resources for the management of volunteers. This will be laid out in Age Concern Okehampton and Torridge's development plan and related budget.

- We will provide an induction programme and review session for volunteers to assess the progress of their placements and resolve any problems at an early stage.
- We will provide funding for volunteers out of pocket expenses. Volunteers will be given clear information about what expenses can be claimed and how to make a claim.
- We have written procedures for the insurance of volunteers.
- Volunteers will be given information on legislation and other policies which may affect them e.g. Health and Safety and Equal Opportunities. In these respects volunteers will be treated in the same way as staff for liability purposes.
- All volunteers will be offered access to support and supervision on a regular basis, with a named person, and will be informed of who to contact in an emergency.
- All volunteers will be offered access to appropriate training to enable them to develop their capabilities and competence in relation to their volunteering role.
- Opportunities will be provided for changing/upgrading volunteer responsibilities as desired by the volunteer and appropriate to Age Concern Okehampton and Torrridge's needs.
- Volunteers will be made aware of Age Concern Okehampton and Torrridge 's complaints procedure and of whom to contact if they have a grievance about any aspect of their work.
- A designated person will be assigned responsibility for dealing with complaints about a volunteer's conduct in accordance with the general procedures of Age Concern x.

4.4 Volunteers on Age Concern Okehampton and Torrridge's Executive Committee/Board

To support our executive committee/board members, we will provide:

- An induction on the role and responsibilities of executive/ board committee members and Age Concern Okehampton and Torrridge 's work.
- Opportunities to meet with staff and key volunteers of their choice.
- Written information and reports in good time on matters related to the governance of the organisation Age Concern Okehampton and Torrridge's constitution or Memorandum and Articles of Association and other relevant legislation.

4.5 Rights and responsibilities of volunteers

In engaging volunteers, we recognise the rights of volunteers to:

- Know what is expected of them and to be given clear information.
- Have clearly specified lines of support and supervision.
- Be shown recognition and appreciation.
- Have safe working conditions.
- Be insured.
- Know what their rights and responsibilities are if something goes wrong.
- Be paid out of pocket expenses.
- Be trained and receive ongoing opportunities for learning and development.
- Be free from discrimination.
- Experience personal development through their participation as volunteers.
- Ask for a reference.

- Be consulted on decisions which affect what they do.
- Withdraw from voluntary work.
- We expect that volunteers will:
 - Carry out their tasks in a way which corresponds to the aims and values of Age Concern Okehampton and Torridge.
 - Work within agreed guidelines and remits.
 - Be reliable.
 - Respect confidentiality and follow our confidentiality policy.
 - Attend training and support sessions where agreed.
 - Not discriminate against volunteers, staff, users and others associated with Age Concern Okehampton and Torridge.
 - Maintain the good name of Age Concern.

4.6 Relationship with paid staff

- We will ensure that paid staff at all levels are clear about the role of volunteers and that good working relationships are fostered between them and volunteers.
- If appropriate, consultation arrangements with Trade Unions or staff association will be clearly established.
- Volunteers will not be engaged in times of industrial action to do the work of paid staff. They may continue with their regular work but will not be asked to undertake additional duties.
- Appropriate training, support and resources will be provided for those who work alongside volunteers and for those who have a managerial role in relation to them.

- Volunteers will be given clear information about the roles undertaken by paid staff and of their value to Age Concern Okehampton and Torrridge.
- Consideration will be given to the appointment of a Volunteers Manager whose primary function is to oversee the implementation of this volunteering policy and to ensure that Age Concern Okehampton and Torrridge's practices meet the Federation Foundation Standard of Quality Counts.
- Volunteers on Age Concern Okehampton and Torrridge's executive committee/ board will observe fair and non-discriminatory standards and conditions of employment, and health and safety in respect of paid staff.

4.7 Contracts and Service Level Agreements

In entering into contracts or service level agreements which involve volunteers, we will ensure that:

- The role of volunteers is made clear and that satisfactory arrangements are in place for their management.
- The terms of the contract or service level agreement provide for the necessary resources to involve volunteers.
- Arrangements are made to set out the roles and commitments of volunteers.
- The impact of volunteering and its benefits are promoted and acknowledged.

4.8 Relationships with other groups and organisations meeting the needs of older people

- In all our relationships with other groups, organisations or partners we will:
 - promote volunteering as an important means of contributing to the building and support of active and sustainable communities based on social justice and mutual respect
 - promote good practice in volunteering.
- In funding other groups, organisations or partners involving volunteers we will ensure that they adopt commitments to volunteers similar to those contained in this policy where appropriate.

4.9 **Local volunteering**

We will develop relationships with the local volunteering sector (those organisations which support volunteering) on the following principles:

- There is a need for a strategic approach to the development of volunteering locally.
- There is a need to support the work of local volunteering development agencies e.g. Volunteer Bureaux, in providing leadership in developing awareness of and standards of practice in volunteering locally.

4.11 Action Plans and reviewing policy and procedures

Age Concern Okehampton and Torrridge will produce a development plan that includes volunteer involvement.

Age Concern Okehampton and Torrridge will monitor and review this policy and procedures on volunteering on an annual basis. We will nominate a member of the executive committee/ board and the Chief Officer or another paid manager or volunteer to undertake this monitoring and review role.

4.12 Responsibility for the policy

Overall responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and review of the policy and procedures lies with the executive committee/board and on a day to day basis with the Chief Officer.