

Volunteer Policy

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1 Policy information

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Responsible Director	Executive Director of Operations
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2 Policy Statement

South Liverpool Homes is committed to providing a range of meaningful volunteering opportunities that are mutually beneficial for the volunteers, the local community and the organisation.

This policy sets out SLH's approach to promoting, recruiting and supporting volunteers to take up opportunities it provides in the local community.

SLH primarily provides volunteering opportunities through:

- Market Place
- Market Place Social
- Grow Speke.

This also applies to any other SLH lead volunteering opportunities, however, does not apply if SLH has sign posted individuals to volunteer with other organisations.

3 Policy Aims

This policy aims to:

- Provide a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for volunteers
- Ensure volunteers are appropriately recruited, inducted and trained to deliver their roles
- Set out volunteer responsibilities, particularly in relation to conduct, health and safety, and data protection
- Maximise the mutual benefit of providing volunteering opportunities.

4 Volunteering Policy

4.1 Definition of a Volunteer

'Volunteering is when someone spends unpaid time doing something to benefit others. Volunteering can be formal and organised by organisations, or informal within communities. It should always be a free choice made by the person giving up their time.' (National Council for Voluntary Organisations, 2022)

4.2 Role of a Volunteer within SLH

Volunteers at SLH are members of the public who give their time freely, without financial recompense. Volunteers and SLH will operate in line with a volunteer agreement, which is of compulsory and does not form an employment contract between the individual and SLH.

The role of a volunteer will complement paid colleagues and not be seen as a replacement or substitute. Volunteers should be fully reimbursed for any out-of-pocket expenses.

All volunteering opportunities provided by SLH are to have its own specific role description to outline the general purpose, role requirements, duration of service, duties, training requirements and whether the role is subject to any particular checks.

SLH volunteers must be over the age of 18.

4.3 Recruitment and appointment of volunteers

SLH will use appropriate means to advertise for volunteers. Volunteer recruitment and placement will be in accordance with SLH's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy. Where possible SLH will carry out any reasonable adjustments to the role to ensure it is accessible and any barriers are removed.

All volunteers will receive and sign a relevant role description, a volunteer agreement, a confidentiality agreement and code of conduct.

A volunteer will not be placed in their role until checks, references (where requested) and agreements are complete.

4.3.1 Confidentiality

Volunteers may come into contact with confidential information. To protect SLH and its stakeholders from data breaches, volunteers will be required to read, agree and sign a confidentiality agreement prior to commencement of any placement within SLH. Any proven breach of this confidentiality may result in immediate termination of the placement. SLH will act on any breaches of confidential information in line with its Data Protection Policy

4.3.2 Code of Conduct

Volunteers will be expected to uphold the values and behaviours of SLH. Volunteers will be required to read, agree and sign a code of conduct prior to commencement of any placement within SLH. Any proven breach of this code may result in immediate termination of the placement.

4.3.3 Induction

Volunteers must undertake a comprehensive induction into the organisation as part of the standard induction programme. This induction will incorporate health and safety and Safeguarding whilst volunteering.

4.3.4 Support and Training

SLH volunteers will be given one to one check ins on a bi-monthly basis by a nominated SLH colleague.

Each role will have a programme of mandatory and voluntary training to provide them with the relevant skills, knowledge and confidence to deliver their role.

This training may include site rules and procedures.

4.4 Health, Safety and Wellbeing

SLH has a duty to protect volunteers from hazards and all volunteering opportunities will be monitored in line with SLHs Health and Safety Policy.

- Any project or placement that involves volunteers to have an up to date risk assessment in place and made available for volunteers to access (review annually of following an incident/change in procedure or regulations) Role specific mandatory training must be completed by each volunteer, before they can start.
- Any negligent or careless behaviours that cause a risk to others may result in termination of volunteer agreement.
- If reasonable adjustments cannot be made, SLH reserve the right to terminate a volunteer agreement based on capability.

Further health and safety requirements are set out in the volunteer procedure.

4.5 Expenses & Impact on Welfare Benefits

Expenses will be paid on an out-of-pocket basis only. Expenses will cover transport costs for either public transport or mileage. Lunch costs will be paid, upon production of receipts, where a volunteer works over 4 hours including the lunch time period. Child and adult care costs, delivered by a registered care provider will also be paid (where previously agreed and reasonable) for the period of time covering the volunteer placement plus reasonable travel time.

Volunteers will be responsible for securing suitable care for their dependants and will be reimbursed on production of receipts. If this causes financial hardship for the volunteer, SLH will consider making payments direct to the provider. Any care contract will remain between the providers and the volunteer and SLH accept no responsibility for the care given at any time.

Current government advice states that volunteering should not affect the right to benefit payments, as long as the only money the volunteer receives is to cover out of pocket expenses and that they continue to meet the conditions of the benefit. Volunteers must declare all expense claims to their advisor and be able to produce receipt upon request. It will be the sole responsibility of the volunteer to establish if they are likely to lose their benefit.

4.6 Maximising Mutual Benefit

SLH is proud of the contributions that volunteers make and recognises the benefits to the organisation and the local community. Therefore, on occasion SLH may make non-monetary gifts to volunteers, such as paid for celebratory events, trips and contributions to additional training/ qualifications.

To ensure the community maximises its benefit, SLH may ask volunteers to participate in promotional activities such as videos, photographs, case studies or entering projects into awards for recognition. Consent from volunteers will always be sought prior to sharing any of their information, volunteers can opt in or out of all activities.

4.7 Holidays, Sickness and Absence

Volunteers can take leave from their role due to a holiday, sickness or any other absence, whenever they like. However, the volunteer should inform SLH at the earliest opportunity.

If a volunteer is taking an extended break from their role, their nominated colleague will agree a contact plan to keep in touch, and understand when they expect to return to their role.

4.8 Volunteer Dissatisfaction SLH will aim to treat all volunteers with fairly, with dignity and respect. However, if a volunteer believes they have been unfairly treated they should follow the dissatisfaction process set out in the Volunteer Procedure.

4.9 Leaving

There is no formal contract between the volunteer and SLH, only a mutual agreement which can be ended at any time by either party. If a volunteer decides to terminate this agreement at any time, they will be asked to attend an exit interview to establish the reasons for leaving their volunteer role and to thank them for the time and effort whilst in their role.

Sometimes circumstances may dictate that volunteer roles cease to exist within SLH. In these cases, where appropriate, all efforts will be made to offer alternative opportunities either within SLH or through other local organisations.

A volunteer may be asked to leave their role as a result of their conduct or suitability for the role. In the unlikely situation that a volunteer is suspected of an illegal activity the appropriate authorities will also be informed.

5 Standards & Performance Monitoring

All callbacks related to volunteering opportunities should be completed within SLH target of 1 day.

The Community Investment Manager will be responsible for upholding the policy requirements in relation to volunteering and carry out the appropriate evaluation and monitoring of all volunteer opportunities provided by SLH. All volunteering placements must have:

- Signed role description
- Signed volunteer agreement
- Signed confidentiality agreement
- Signed code of conduct
- Risk Assessment

6 Policy considerations

6.1 Equality Analysis

An equality analysis was completed prior to the development this policy.

6.2 Policy Assessment

A full policy assessment was completed in reviewing this policy. This review included a value for money assessment as well as an assessment of risk to the business which was considered to be low.

6.3 Customer Influence

All SLH volunteers have been consulted on this policy.

7 Statutory and Legislative Framework

- Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007
- Equality Act 2010
- Health Act 2006
- HSE (Health & Safety Executive) Regulations
- Health and Safety (offences) Act 2008
- Local Authority and Emergency Services
- Manual handling operations regulations 1992
- Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992
- Regulatory Reform (fire safety) Order 2005
- Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977
- The Smoke Free (Premises & Enforcement) Regulations 2006
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Fire Safety (employees' capabilities) (England) Regulations 2010
- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- Health and Safety (first-aid) regulations 1981
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Noise at Work Regulations 2005
- Provision and use of work equipment regulations 1998
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)
- General Data Protection Regulation 2018
- Fire Safety Act 2021
- Building Safety Act 2022

8 Links to other policies

- Equality Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Data Protection Policy