



## **SHA Volunteer Policy**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Southside Housing Association's (SHA) communities are diverse and it is this diversity and rich tapestry of different backgrounds, experiences, cultures, and perspectives that help to make our neighbourhoods such vibrant and great places to live, and volunteering plays a key role in supporting the delivery of our community work throughout our neighbourhoods.
- 1.2 This policy sets out our position in relation to volunteering within the organisation and our approach to managing and supporting volunteers.
- 1.3 Our organisational vision is 'Impacting and improving people's lives in a positive way', and volunteering sits firmly within this, providing opportunities through volunteering to improve confidence and skills as well as a strong sense of worth and purpose within communities. Likewise, the benefits our wider community gain from the services delivered by our volunteers are positive, and are small, tangible ways of improving lives.
- 1.4 Our Values represent the ethics and principles that our people value most and which reflect us as an organisation. At SHA we want to live our values and incorporate them into everything that we do, and we believe that they are at the heart of volunteering. Our values are as follows:
  - **Respect** - We will put people first, prioritise relationships, be kind and helpful and treat others as we would want to be treated.
  - **Integrity** - We will conduct ourselves with honesty and transparency.
  - **Positive** - We will focus on positive outcomes and be solution focused.
  - **Responsible** - We will be dependable professional, reliable and consistent

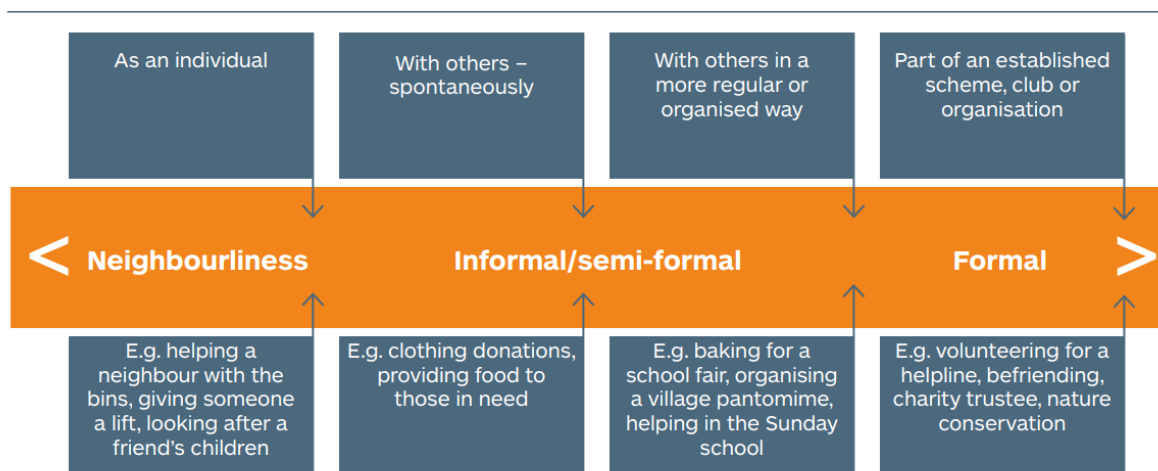
## 2.0 WHAT DO WE MEAN BY VOLUNTEERING?

The Scottish Government's National Framework 'Volunteering for All' states that:

*"volunteering is a choice. A choice to give time or energy, a choice undertaken of one's own free will and a choice not motivated for financial gain or for a wage or salary"*

The Framework also demonstrates the spectrum of volunteering from 'neighbourliness' through to more formal roles (Table 1.0) . The scope of this policy considers the latter, more formal roles that form part of the Association's service delivery.

**Table 1.0 Scottish Government's National Framework - Volunteering for All**



### 3.0 WHAT DOES VOLUNTEERING LOOK LIKE AT SOUTHSIDE HOUSING ASSOCIATION?

3.1 The Association has a long-standing programme of community work providing a range of projects and initiatives within our local communities. This ranges from food and fuel voucher support and tenancy sustainment packs, through to food and activity programmes for children and families, and breakfast sessions which help to bring our communities together.

3.2 Our volunteers make an essential and valuable contribution to the community services we provide, and we are committed to exploring and offering further opportunities for volunteers to get involved in the work of the Association and supporting them to take part. We do this by:

- Making volunteering accessible to a wide range of people, from different backgrounds and with different skill sets and helping people who might otherwise have found themselves excluded to take on a valuable role within their community and beyond.
- Providing training and support to enable volunteers to contribute to our services.

3.3 Some of our volunteers have been with us for almost a decade, which is testament to the support they are offered, the opportunities they have to grow and develop, the space provided for them to be heard and have an active role in shaping our programmes, and to the intrinsic value they feel from their role. They have become important, trusted, familiar and consistent faces within our communities and their role in helping to bring people together, facilitate connections and provide a warm, welcoming space is invaluable.

3.4 Beyond volunteering within our community programmes, in line with our Community Involvement and Engagement Strategy and Action Plan we are committed to supporting volunteering in more informal ways within the organisation such as:

- Providing scrutiny of our performance
- Estate walk abouts
- Tenant groups and ad-hoc resident meetings
- Reviewing policies
- Providing access to our community hubs for resident groups

#### **4.0 GOVERNING BODY MEMBERS**

- 4.1 As a registered social landlord (RSL) and a registered charity, we are a community-controlled housing association. SHA is controlled by, and the strategic direction of the organisation is set by a Management Committee made up entirely of volunteer members. The Governing body also includes members of sub-committees.
- 4.2 Although members of SHA's Governing Body are volunteers, as charity trustees and company directors the relationship is different from other volunteers and is subject to close regulation by regulatory bodies such as the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR), the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) and the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA).
- 4.3 Governing Body members are elected each year by the membership of the Association at the Annual General Meeting and are subject to the 'Seven Principles of Public Life' (Nolan Principles). To this end there is a separate Code of Conduct for Governing Body members, which contains its own protocol for the investigation of breaches of the Code of Conduct which are different from SHA's procedures for employees and volunteers.
- 4.4 While volunteers will almost always be involved in operational activities within SHA, the Code of Conduct for Governing Body Members states: *"..Management Committee members should not stray into operational matters or seek to use their influence (A6) inappropriately or for personal gain"*. Therefore, there are separate policies, procedures and protocols which set out Governing Body member obligations and expectations and these will apply to Governing Body members rather than our wider volunteer roles which this policy aligns with.

#### **5.0 POLICY PRINCIPLES**

- 5.1 In addition to our values, we have a set of principles to reflect our approach to the recruitment, involvement, support and management of our volunteers. We will:
- Recognise that voluntary work brings benefits to volunteers themselves,

to residents, to staff and the wider community;

- Ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisational structure and that mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to the Association's work where appropriate;
- Never introduce volunteers to replace the roles of paid staff;
- Encourage staff at all levels to work positively with our volunteers and, where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in their work;
- Recognise that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development and will seek to help them meet these needs, as well as providing training for them to carry out their role safely and effectively;
- Cover the costs of involving volunteers, in line with the Group Policy on Entitlements Payments and Benefits;
- Recognise that the management of volunteers requires designated responsibilities within specific posts;
- Endeavour to involve volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities and ensure our volunteering opportunities are as accessible as possible.
- Celebrate and recognise the contribution of our volunteers through celebratory events and gatherings that are in line with our Group Policy on Entitlements, Payments and Benefits.

## **6.0 RECRUITMENT**

- 6.1 Volunteering with us will be open to those living within and beyond our communities aged 18 years and over, and will be in line with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. Where appropriate roles exist and capacity of staff allows, we will look to support volunteering opportunities, such as those linked to Duke of Edinburgh awards or similar.
- 6.2 Those interested in becoming volunteers with us will follow a similar process to that of staff recruitment. They will complete an application form, be invited for an informal discussion, provide references and where required PVG/Disclosure Scotland checks will be carried out. If successful they will sign a role description and Code of Conduct and will be provided with an induction pack and any specialised information. They will also be required to complete a suite of training such as First Aid, Lone Working, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- 6.3 Where appropriate, applicants may shadow some volunteering roles and activities to get a feel for whether it is right for them. Where applicants are unsuccessful in their application, they will be provided with feedback and given the opportunity to discuss alternative volunteering roles both with SHA and other organisations as appropriate.
- 6.4 Every volunteer role will undergo a risk assessment completed by the relevant, assigned staff member. For roles which involve sustained and direct contact with young people or vulnerable adults, volunteers will also be required to have a full PVG Scheme Disclosure check which will be arranged by us at no cost to

the volunteer. The Recruiting with Convictions Policy and Self Disclosure will apply here.

- 6.5 Volunteers will receive a Role Description and Volunteer How to Guide, containing information about their chosen area of volunteering. Volunteers will also be given a Code of Conduct to sign. This is aligned with the staff Code of Conduct with some minor variations as appropriate.

## **7.0. INDUCTION AND TRAINING**

- 7.1 Volunteers will participate in an induction process. They will also be offered training appropriate to the specific tasks to be undertaken. Further ongoing training will be provided as and when necessary. Volunteers must attend the induction and the training relevant to their role in order to continue as a SHA volunteer.
- 7.2 Where training is delivered on-line, volunteers will be supported by staff and suitable equipment provided as required.
- 7.3 Where on-going or refresher training is required, this will be provided, and volunteers are required to complete it to continue in their role.

## **8.0 SUPPORT**

- 8.1 Volunteers will be assigned a staff member who will provide regular support.
- 8.2 Regular support sessions will provide the opportunity for ongoing dialogue about the development of the volunteering role and any advice and guidance as needed. Where the volunteering role is emotionally demanding these sessions will also give volunteers the opportunity to explore the impact of their role on them and ensure that they feel fully supported.

## **9.0 DATA PROTECTION AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

- 9.1 Any personal data provided to SHA by individuals in relation to the volunteering process, including recruitment will be handled in the strictest confidence. We will meet our obligations in line with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UKGDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- 9.2 It may be on occasion necessary to share volunteer personal data with third parties. The type of information we may collect and process, how we may share information and the security steps the Association put in place to ensure that personal data is handled and stored securely, are set out in the SHA Volunteer Fair Processing Notice and the SHA Privacy Policy.
- 9.3 Volunteers are expected to adhere to our Code of Conduct and our Privacy Policy as a condition of volunteering.

## **10.0 EXPENSES**

- 10.1 SHA will ensure that there is a clear and accessible system to enable volunteers to claim reasonable out of pocket expenses. Volunteers will be encouraged to claim expenses.

## **11.0 INSURANCE**

- 11.1 While volunteering with us, volunteers will be covered by our insurance policy for the purposes of carrying out their role and the activities associated with it. Volunteers will not be covered for activities outside this agreement.
- 11.2 If volunteers are using their own vehicle for the purposes of their role, they will need to have business insurance on their own car insurance and evidence this.

## **12.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- 12.1 We will take all reasonable steps to ensure the volunteers' health, safety and welfare while carrying out their role in accordance with our Health and Safety Manual.

## **13.0 EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

- 13.1 We are committed to promoting and achieving equality in all aspects of our work. We are committed to a workforce, including our volunteers, which is diverse and which is representative of the communities and neighbourhoods we serve.
- 13.2 To ensure that we are providing access to opportunities in a fair and equal way we will collect data in relation to the nine Protected Characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 for our workforce including our volunteers.
- 13.3 In developing this policy, we carried out an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA), to assess where the aims of this policy may have an impact, positive or negative, upon any of the nine Protected Characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.

## **14.0 CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

- 14.1 We will always try to resolve any difficulties which arise with volunteers informally, before taking a more formal route. Where issues cannot be resolved informally, volunteers will have access to SHA's Disciplinary Policy or where appropriate our Grievance Policy, which is available from their assigned staff member or the HR and Corporate Services Manager.

- 14.2 Any disciplinary or grievance procedure commenced with volunteers will be confidential.

## **15.0 ENDING VOLUNTEERING WITH THE ASSOCIATION**

- 15.1 If a volunteer wishes to leave their role they should advise their assigned staff member as soon as possible. They will be asked to provide feedback on their volunteering experience by taking part in an exit interview.
- 15.2 A payment or other gift in kind may be made to mark the service contribution or other landmarks in relation to an individual's volunteering with us. Any payment will be in line with the thresholds set out in our Group Policy on Entitlements, Payment and Benefits and may not exceed £100.00.
- 15.3 On the basis of their voluntary work, volunteers may give their consent for SHA to provide a reference to a third party e.g. a prospective employer. Volunteers will be supported to move on to other options.

## **16.0 POLICY REVIEW**

- 16.1 This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or sooner in the event of any significant legislative or regulatory changes



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