



Volunteer Policy

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1. Introduction

This Policy applies across the ng group and it provides information on all aspects of our approach to working with volunteers. ng homes seek to involve people in our communities in volunteering to work effectively to enrich communities, provide people with opportunities and to help resolve real problems.

ng homes does this by:

- Working to improve the diversity and quality of volunteer placements
- Providing potential volunteers with the means to access volunteering opportunities
- Helping people who might otherwise have found themselves excluded to participate in their communities

ng homes is committed to involving volunteers directly within the organisation and its subsidiary companies to:

- Contribute to the delivery of our services
- Make sure we are responsive to the needs of our tenants, residents and other customers and stakeholders
- Provide different skills and perspectives
- Provide people with the opportunity to gain new skills and achieve personal development
- Remove barriers and offer opportunities for participation to people who might otherwise be excluded

This Volunteer Policy sets out the principles and practice by which we involve volunteers.

2. Principles

ng homes will ensure that this policy is implemented in line with the following principles:

- We recognise that voluntary work brings benefits to volunteers themselves, to service users and to paid staff
- We will ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisational structure and that mechanisms are in place for them to positively contribute to the organisation's work
- We will not introduce volunteers to replace paid staff
- Our staff at all levels will work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in their work

- We recognise that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development and will seek to help volunteers meet these needs, as well as providing the training for them to do their work effectively
- We will endeavour to identify and cover the costs of involving volunteers
- We recognise that the management of volunteers requires designated responsibilities within specific posts
- We will endeavour to involve volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities and ensure our volunteering opportunities are as accessible as possible
- Volunteers will act in accordance with our Staff Code of Conduct
- ng homes will systematically monitor this policy and evaluate its use of volunteers with reference to this Volunteer Policy.

3. Recruitment

Recruitment of volunteers is open to all members and sections of the community and will be conducted in line with the principles of the ng homes Equality and Diversity Policy.

People interested in becoming volunteers with ng homes and its subsidiary company ng2 Ltd will be invited for an informal discussion with the appropriate contact person. They will be given an information pack including general information about the organisation and specific information on the volunteer post in which they are interested.

All volunteers will be asked to complete a simple registration form appropriate to the role that they are applying for and to supply two references. Where applicants are not placed in the role applied for, they will be provided with feedback and given the opportunity to discuss suitable alternative volunteering roles within ng homes, ng2 Ltd and/or other partner organisations that may involve volunteers.

A risk assessment will be conducted for each volunteer role. For volunteer roles which involve 'regulated work' such as providing care and/or sustained and direct contact with children or vulnerable adults, ng homes has a legal obligation to ensure that volunteers are not barred from working with children or vulnerable groups. Potential volunteers for such roles will be required to join the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme and scheme records and/or disclosure records will be accessed. This information will be dealt with in the strictest confidence and will not necessarily prejudice the person being accepted for voluntary work.

4. Volunteer Agreements and Voluntary Work Outlines

Volunteers will receive a role outline and Volunteer Agreement containing full information about their chosen area of work. Volunteers will be provided with comprehensive details on responsibilities relevant to them.

5. Induction and Training

Volunteers will be given induction and training appropriate to the specific tasks to be undertaken.

6. Support

Volunteers will be assigned a named contact person within the organisation who will provide on-going support. Support sessions will provide the opportunity for regular dialogue about the development of the volunteering role and advice and guidance as needed. Where the volunteering role is emotionally demanding these sessions also give volunteers the opportunity to access support from the organisation in the form of independent counselling, if required.

7. The Volunteer's Voice

Volunteers will be consulted in decisions which affect them. ng homes is committed to developing consultation and representational procedures for volunteers and will involve volunteers in developing these procedures.

8. Expenses

ng homes will ensure that there is a clear and accessible system to enable volunteers to claim relevant expenses.

9. Insurance

Volunteers will be covered by appropriate insurance while carrying out agreed duties on behalf of the organisation.

10. Health and Safety

ng homes will take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the volunteers' health, safety and wellbeing while carrying out agreed duties on behalf of the organisation. Volunteers will be provided with the relevant health and safety training and appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) as required.

11. Equal Opportunities

Volunteers and staff will work in accordance with the ng homes Equality and Diversity policy and Dignity at Work policy. ng homes will comply with the Equality Act 2010 at all times and will protect volunteers from discrimination on any grounds.

12. Dealing with Problems or Concerns

ng homes is committed to dealing fairly and effectively with any problems or concerns that volunteers may have. Volunteers have the right to discuss any concerns they may have with their named contact or a member of the management team at any time and all efforts will be made to resolve matters. Any grievance or disciplinary issue will be dealt with in a fair and reasonable manner in line with this policy.

13. Ending the Volunteer Arrangement

When volunteers move on from their role at ng homes they will be asked to provide feedback on the volunteering experience by way of an exit interview/questionnaire. They will also be given the opportunity to discuss their responses to the questionnaire more fully with their named contact/manager or a member of the Human Resources team as appropriate.

On the basis of their voluntary work, volunteers will have the right to request a reference after completing at least one month as a volunteer with ng homes. Where requested, volunteers will be provided with the appropriate support to assist them in moving on to other opportunities.

14. UK General Data Protection Regulation 2021

ng homes will treat your personal information in line with our obligations under the UK General Data Protection Regulation 2021 (UK GDPR) and the Association's Data Protection Policy. Minimum details will be kept on volunteers. This will include the registration form, references, placement details, emergency contact details, correspondence and any other relevant information. Information regarding how your data will be used and the basis for processing your data is provided in our Fair Processing Notice.

15. Other Related Policies

- Equality and Diversity
- Dignity at Work
- Data Protection
- Racial Harassment
- Stress and Mental Wellbeing at Work
- Code of Conduct for Staff

- Health and Safety Manual

16. Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier in line with regulatory or legislative guidance/changes, good practice guidelines or changes to working practices. Any amendments will be made as appropriate and communicated to all volunteers, staff and relevant stakeholders.

17. Equality Impact Assessment

This Policy is equally applicable to all and has no detrimental impact on protected characteristic groups as specified within the Equality Act 2010.