



**Independent  
Age**

# Volunteers' Handbook



# Contents

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3	Introduction
3	Volunteering at Independent Age
4	Useful contacts
5	Data protection
5	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
6	Safeguarding
7	Keeping you safe: COVID-19
8	What we expect from you and what you can expect from us
10	Problems with your volunteering

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# Introduction

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We know what an incredible difference volunteering makes to the people that we support, so we really can't thank you enough for giving up your time to be part of our work.

This guide will help you as you carry out your volunteering role for Independent Age, so please read the information thoroughly and if you have any questions please do not hesitate to get in touch with your Independent Age contact.

I would like to take this opportunity once again to thank you for joining Independent Age so we can help more people to live a happy, connected and purposeful later life.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "K. Butler".

**Kelly Butler**  
**Head of Volunteer Transformation**

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## Volunteering at Independent Age

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Whether performing an active role in their communities, increasing awareness, campaigning for change, or raising funds, volunteers play an essential role in increasing our impact.

Our volunteers work in collaboration with our employees, bringing their skills, experience, passion and expertise to all areas of our work.

We appreciate, support and celebrate our volunteers for their diversity and creativity. Our volunteers increase our capacity and impact, enabling us to ensure that more people can grow old well, with dignity, choice and purpose.

By working with our volunteers, we increase our reach and impact in a wider range of communities across the UK.

# Useful contacts

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## Volunteering

For general enquiries about your volunteering role.

**T 020 7605 4255** (Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm)

**E [volunteering@independentage.org](mailto:volunteering@independentage.org)**

## Useful documents for volunteers

**[www.independentage.org/get-involved/volunteering/volunteer-resources](http://www.independentage.org/get-involved/volunteering/volunteer-resources)**

## Telephone services queries

For all telephone volunteering enquiries.

**T 020 7605 4265** (Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm)

**E [telephone.volunteers@independentage.org](mailto:telephone.volunteers@independentage.org)**

## Helpline

For free confidential advice on older people's issues, or to order our free guides.

**T 0800 319 6789** (Monday to Friday 8.30am–6.30pm)

**E [advice@independentage.org](mailto:advice@independentage.org)**

Alternatively, you can order advice guides and access information and videos on our website: **[www.independentage.org](http://www.independentage.org)**

## Safeguarding concerns

If you have a safeguarding concern about the older person you support. During working hours Monday to Friday, please get in touch with your Independent Age contact.

### Safeguarding concerns out of hours

**T 020 7605 4455**, from 5–9pm on the week days and 9am–9pm on the weekends.

## Campaigns enquiries

For enquiries about how we campaign to improve the systems that people rely on as they get older

**E [campaigns@independentage.org](mailto:campaigns@independentage.org)**

## Fundraising enquiries

For enquiries about making a donation or supporting our fundraising.

**T 020 7605 4223**

**E [supporters@independentage.org](mailto:supporters@independentage.org)**

## Data protection

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As an Independent Age volunteer, you may have access to personal and sensitive information in order to enable you to carry out your role properly. It is vital that this information is not shared with unauthorised persons and that it is handled correctly, in line with the GDPR Regulations 2018. We have clear guidelines to ensure you fully understand how best to protect the data you have access to on behalf of the charity which we ask you to read and sign when you start volunteering with us. It can also be found on: [www.independentage.org/get-involved/volunteering/volunteer-resources](http://www.independentage.org/get-involved/volunteering/volunteer-resources).

If you witness, are told of, or accidentally disclose any information to others who should not be privy to the information, immediately report this to your Independent Age contact and the Information Governance Team on [dp@independentage.org](mailto:dp@independentage.org).

Please remember to delete or securely destroy any notes you make or saved files containing personal information you no longer need.

## Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

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This statement applies to everyone who may seek our support, and also to those who seek to support us in delivering our mission to ensure that **as we grow older, we all have the opportunity to live well with dignity, choice and purpose**. This includes the people who use our services, our staff, volunteers, partners, supporters and suppliers.

We celebrate diversity at Independent Age and we champion the differences and nuances which make each and every one of us unique. We believe that everyone should benefit from equity of opportunity and no one should be subject to any form of discrimination.

We value the diversity of our dedicated team of staff and volunteers, of those who choose to use our services, our partners, supporters and suppliers. We commit to further building upon this diversity over the next three years so that we can be more representative of the communities we work with. We want everyone who uses our services and those who work with Independent Age as a staff member, volunteer, partner, supporter or supplier to feel safe, protected, welcome and included.

In the UK, we all have the right to be treated equitably regardless of our age, colour, disability/health, ethnic or national origin, gender reassignment, marital/family status, nationality, race, religion/belief, sex, sexual orientation, social class, or any other status.

We therefore expect that anyone working with or supporting Independent Age or using our services will treat each other with dignity and respect. We will not tolerate any form of discriminatory behaviour or language from or towards our staff, volunteers, the people who use our services, partners, supporters and suppliers and we will challenge respectfully if this occurs. If changes in behaviour are not made, we will re-evaluate our relationship with the offending party and take appropriate action including potentially ending our relationship with them.

We hope you will help us in creating the respectful, equitable, inclusive environment we all want to enjoy life in, and in celebrating the rich diversity that exists across our nations.

## Safeguarding

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We all have a duty to protect anyone who is at risk of harm or abuse: this is known as safeguarding. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. The training provided by Independent Age will ensure you are well equipped to handle any concerns you have, and you will be fully supported at all times.

If anyone tells you of any type of abuse, remain calm, listen and reassure them that it will be taken seriously. Don't promise confidentiality as you will need to speak to your Independent Age contact who will take this forward. We also have an out of hours number to assist you on **020 7605 4455**, from 5 to 9pm on the week days and 9am to 9pm on the weekends.

You can access more detailed information on safeguarding on our dedicated pages for volunteers on:

[www.independentage.org/get-involved/volunteering/volunteer-resources](http://www.independentage.org/get-involved/volunteering/volunteer-resources)

# Keeping you safe: COVID-19

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We want all of our volunteers to feel safe and supported during their role with us.

- Please continue to follow the government guidance regarding coronavirus and any guidance sent to you by Independent Age. We will communicate with you as and when there are changes to government guidance that will affect you in your role. If you have questions or queries about your specific circumstances please get in touch with your Independent Age contact who will be happy to help.
- Here at Independent Age, we will not be asking for or keeping data related to vaccinations. We are, however, encouraging people to consider getting vaccinated if possible, because this will help protect us all from the impact of COVID-19. If you do come into contact with people as part of your volunteering we encourage you to use personal protective equipment (e.g. face masks) and hand sanitiser, and to take precautionary measures as appropriate and in line with current government guidance.

We keep the most updated information for volunteers on COVID-19 on our website on: [www.independentage.org/get-involved/volunteering/volunteer-resources](http://www.independentage.org/get-involved/volunteering/volunteer-resources).

## Specialist Coronavirus support

### **NHS**

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19)

### **Samaritans**

[www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/support-and-information/if-youre-having-difficult-time/if-youre-worried-about-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak](http://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/support-and-information/if-youre-having-difficult-time/if-youre-worried-about-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak)

### **Anxiety UK**

[www.anxietyuk.org.uk/coronanxiety-support-resources](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/coronanxiety-support-resources)

# What we expect from you and what you can expect from us

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## Volunteering at Independent Age

Volunteers are essential to Independent Age and we really appreciate that you've chosen to volunteer with us.

We want you to know that we will do our best to make your volunteer experience as enjoyable and rewarding as possible. Effective relationships are built on trust and mutual understanding and it's for that reason that we have pulled together this agreement.

This agreement aligns with Independent Age's values of:

- **Purpose-driven** – the experience, needs and views of older people are central to everything we do
- **Compassionate** – we listen, care and take action
- **Expert** – our work is evidence-based and solution-focused
- **Collaborative** – we work in partnership to maximise our impact
- **Accountable** – we work with integrity and transparency
- **Inclusive** – we value diversity and always treat everyone fairly with dignity and respect.

Although this isn't a legally binding agreement and both Independent Age or you as a volunteer can end the agreement at any time we want to be clear with you from the beginning that there are some things that we'll ask and expect of you and that equally there are things that you should ask and expect from us, those things are listed below:



**We ask that you****In return we will**

Are **Purpose-driven** and strive for the best that you can do and complete your volunteering activities with dedication and commitment.

Be **Inclusive** and introduce you to how our organisation works and your role within it.

Go to any briefings and training that we think will help you in your role.

Use our **Expert** knowledge offering you relevant training and resources to support you in your role.

Be **Accountable** and operate responsibly and within the law following the policies and procedures of Independent Age including Safeguarding, Health and Safety and report any concerns which occur.

Ensure your health, safety and welfare, give you information about Independent Age's policies and procedures and provide relevant training to support you.

Be **Inclusive** and adhere to our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion statement.

Provide an opportunity to discuss what Equity, Diversity and Inclusion means and how it relates to you in your role.

Maintain the confidentiality of Independent Age's activity and that of the people that we work with.

Provide you with our **Expert** information relating to GDPR and confidentiality best practice.

Be **Compassionate** by valuing and respecting the rights of the people that we support.

Ensure that you have access to regular support.

Be **Collaborative** and work in partnership with staff and other volunteers to achieve Independent Age's mission.

Be **Accountable** and respectful and listen to your feedback, and keep you informed of any relevant changes.

Let your volunteer manager know if you are having any problems or if you have any complaints, concerns or feedback.

We will be **Purpose-driven** and strive to resolve any concerns fairly and reasonably, applying our complaints procedure when it's needed.

### We ask that you

If you volunteer directly supporting an older person we ask that you be **Accountable** and remember that your role is about helping someone to develop their confidence and independence and as a result that you do not retain or use the keys to someone's home, you don't provide medical, health or personal care, that you do not act as an advocate or power of attorney for someone nor act as qualified therapist as part of your volunteering role with us.

### In return we will

**Expert** and **Collaborative** by providing you with advice and support to ensure that the people that we work with are referred to other relevant services to support their needs.

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We hope that volunteering with Independent Age will be a fun, enjoyable and fulfilling experience and would like to thank you once again for choosing Independent Age.

## Problems with your volunteering

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If you encounter difficulties in your volunteering role or just feel it isn't working out as hoped, please talk to your Independent Age contact as soon as possible for advice and support. They will help you try to work out any difficulties and finding a more suitable match or volunteering role with us. Alternatively, you can contact the volunteer team on **020 7605 4255**.

If you find that during your volunteering role you're struggling with your mental health for any reason, we encourage you to speak to your Independent Age contact in the first instance. You might also find it helpful to contact one of the organisations below who can offer support and advice.

Organisations who may be able to help:

## **Samaritans**

Emotional support day or night for anyone who needs someone to listen without judgement or pressure.

**T** 116 123

**E** [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

**W** [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

## **Mind**

Mental health specialists. Mind provides advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem.

**T** 0300 123 3393

**E** [info@mind.org.uk](mailto:info@mind.org.uk)

**W** [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

## **Anxiety UK**

A user-led organisation, run by people with experience of living with anxiety, stress or anxiety-based depression, supported by a high-profile medical advisory panel

**T** 03444 775 774

**Text service:** 07537 416 905

## **Taking care of yourself**

Independent Age really value your support and contributions. We know that life has its ups and downs and it's important to look after yourselves.

Mind website has very good resources on how to look after your own wellbeing:  
[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk).

You can always contact your Independent Age contact as well who will be able to offer support.

# **Remember, look after yourself, there is only one you!**



**Independent  
Age**

Independent Age  
18 Avonmore Road  
London  
W14 8RR

T 020 7605 4200  
E [charity@independentage.org](mailto:charity@independentage.org)  
[www.independentage.org](http://www.independentage.org)  
**Helpline 0800 319 6789**



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