

Volunteer Policy

Policy title	Volunteer Policy
Version	2
Approved by	Board of Trustees
Date approved	February 2022
Policy owner	Director of Corporate Services
Policy manager	Head of Volunteer Transformation
Date of last minor update	
Related procedures	
Date for next full review	February 2025

Our vision

We can all live a happy, connected and purposeful later life

Our mission

To ensure that as we grow older, we all have the opportunity to live well with dignity, choice and purpose

Our values

Purpose-driven – Compassionate – Expert – Collaborative -
Accountable - Inclusive

1. Purpose

This Policy provides a framework for the involvement of volunteers across Independent Age. It outlines the standards we are committed to and ensures that all volunteers understand what they can expect while volunteering with us.

2. Policy Statement

Whether playing an active role in their communities, being a trustee, raising greater awareness of important issues, campaigning for change or raising funds, volunteers play an essential role in increasing the impact of Independent Age.

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

We will ensure that all the volunteer roles we create will be developed in a way that enables people from different backgrounds, including those experiencing inequalities, to build their skills and contribute meaningfully to our work. All volunteers are welcomed, supported and celebrated: their diversity and creativity increase our capacity and impact, enabling us to ensure that more people can grow old well, with dignity, choice and purpose.

3. Definitions

Definition of a Volunteer

A volunteer is someone who donates their time, skills and expertise to support the work of Independent Age. There is no contractual obligation for volunteers to attend their volunteering. But all volunteers are asked to sign a volunteer agreement detailing the commitment we expect from them in their roles.

Our volunteers are unpaid. Volunteering is not a substitute for paid employment and our volunteering roles complement the work of paid staff.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

All active volunteers and staff managing volunteers are responsible for:

- reading, complying with, and maintaining up-to-date awareness of this policy and all other relevant policies and procedures
- attending training as appropriate
- alerting their managers to inaccuracies in the policy
- clearly understanding their Safeguarding responsibilities, and reporting Safeguarding concerns as per our Safeguarding policy and procedures
- following the relevant incident reporting procedure informing the relevant parties in a timely fashion of any incidents or near misses encountered

Head of Volunteer Transformation

- ensuring this policy supports the implementation of Independent Age's mission and is in line with our organisational values
- ensuring this policy is reviewed and remains accurate and up to date

Volunteering Team Responsibilities

- developing safe and meaningful volunteering roles
- carrying out agreed onboarding processes fit for the type of volunteering role
- developing and/or delivering appropriate volunteer training for the type of volunteering role
- supporting and developing staff to manage volunteers
- following all other policies and procedures linked to the involvement of volunteering e.g. Complaints and Problem Solving, Safeguarding, Incident Reporting etc.
- communicating with and supporting the effective local communication with volunteers

5. Recruitment and Selection

Independent Age values diversity amongst its volunteers. We have comprehensive role descriptions for each volunteering opportunity with an explanation of the skills and experience needed and tasks which make up the role.

To apply for any of our volunteering roles, potential volunteers will have to complete an application form and the recruitment process specific to that role, which may involve a telephone assessment and training.

A criminal offence will not automatically prevent anyone from volunteering, and we will consider each case individually. Volunteers carrying out certain roles either unsupervised face to face or where regulated activity may form part of their role will be required to carry out a relevant criminal records check. .

We have no upper age limit for volunteers, but some roles will have a minimum age restriction which will be stated on the role description.

6. Volunteer Agreement

All volunteers when starting their roles with us will be asked to sign up to the volunteer agreement which makes clear Independent Age's commitment to volunteers and what Independent Age asks of its volunteers in return. A copy of the volunteer agreement can be found [here](#)

7. Expenses

Independent Age is committed to ensuring that volunteers are not left out of pocket whilst volunteering. We reimburse all reasonable travel and out of pocket expenses agreed in advance and evidenced by itemised receipts.

Detailed information on expenses can be found in the [Expenses Procedure](#)

8. Gifts

The giving and accepting of personal gifts between staff and volunteers or between volunteers and anyone accessing our services is discouraged as it could be seen to be made with the intention of influencing or raising expectations from the volunteer towards the person they support and/or a staff member. Further information on gifts and hospitality can be found in the [PDF Anti-Bribery Policy](#)

If a volunteer is offered a gift by the person they support and they are concerned about the impact of turning this down, the volunteer should speak to their Independent Age contact for advice.

If, in exceptional circumstances, a gift is accepted, it should be disclosed to the volunteer's Independent Age contact.

9. Support

Independent Age values the contribution made by all its volunteers. In order to enable volunteers to carry out their role to the best of their ability, every volunteer will have a named Independent Age contact who will provide them with regular opportunities to discuss their volunteering and air any problems.

10. Resolving Problems

Whilst we hope that volunteering with Independent Age will be a positive experience, there might be circumstances in which volunteers may find they have cause to raise a concern against a member of staff, another volunteer or a person accessing our services.

If a volunteer experiences a difficulty with any aspect of their role, we ask that they speak to their Independent Age contact as soon as possible for advice and support. If a volunteer experiences a problem with their Independent Age contact the Volunteering team will be the next point of contact to support the volunteer with their issue.

We hope that most problems can be solved informally and encourage volunteers wherever possible to raise these directly with their Independent Age contact so that any issues can be addressed promptly. However, if a volunteer is unable to resolve an issue informally, they should follow the formal complaints process.

Detailed information can be found in the [Complaints and Problem-Solving policy](#).

11. Health and Safety

The Health & Safety of our staff, our volunteers and all those who engage with us in our places of work is of paramount importance to us. The Health and Safety Policy which can be found [PDF Health & Safety Policy](#) details the responsibilities of Independent Age and of those who work and volunteer for us.

11. Training

All volunteers must attend all briefings and training relevant to their role and to complete any training renewals deemed necessary to the safe participation of their volunteering role.

12. Implementation

This policy will be available to all staff on the Policy Hub and available to all volunteers on the Volunteer Hub which is available on the Independent Age Website.

13. References

Volunteer Agreement

Expenses Policy and Procedure

Volunteer Complaints and Problem-Solving Procedure

Health and Safety Policy

14. Commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

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.

The contents of this document will be reviewed from time to time to ensure they remain aligned to our equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) commitments. Part of our commitment is to remain compliant with the Equality Act 2010, which enshrines everyone's legal rights with respect to EDI. In the UK, it is against the law to discriminate against someone because of a protected characteristic, i.e. because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

15. Feedback

If you have any feedback or have identified an issue or inaccuracy with this policy, please contact the Safeguarding, Compliance & Assurance Team at: Assurance@independentage.org