

Volunteer Policy

1.0 Purpose

1.1 Coastline encourages volunteering in all areas of the organisation. It recognises and appreciates the positive contribution volunteers can make to the organisation and that volunteering can help individuals reach their own personal development goals. The purpose of this policy is to provide direction and guidance to both colleagues and volunteers in regards to Coastline's volunteer scheme. This policy is not a legally binding document but is purely to serve as an internal guide.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 The volunteer scheme is managed by the Volunteer Manager, from within the Community Investment Team, is accredited by Investing in Volunteers, and has a Steering Group with membership from Non-Executive Directors, the Executive Team, volunteers, and Coastline colleagues from teams that host volunteers.

2.2 The volunteer scheme has developed and expanded since its initial launch in 2013, to include the following under its umbrella of support:

- *Coastline Volunteer Opportunities*
Providing voluntary roles across a number of Coastline's teams and projects. These roles are open to all, including customers and non-customers.
- *Partner Programme*
Enables individuals accessing Coastline's Homeless Service to volunteer within the service with additional support, providing employability skills and a positive focus during an individual's journey through the service.
- *Miners Minders*
A group of customers within our Miners Court Extra Care scheme who are supported in donating their time. Their tasks range from befriending new customers, assisting with events and taking the lead on social activities in the evenings.
- *Customer Voice*
Customers, and community members with an interest in social housing, who are supported to donate their time by getting involved in the scrutiny of the organisation, shaping service design & delivery as part of the wider involvement and engagement model. A conduit for all involvement and engagement, who make recommendations to the Customer Experience Committee.

3.0 Statement of Equal Opportunity

3.1 Coastline Housing is an Equal Opportunity Employer, which means we believe in the fair treatment of all our volunteers/ colleagues and commit to promoting diversity in our recruitment practices. We welcome applications from all sections of the community irrespective of an applicant's age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage, civil partnership, sexual orientation, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion or belief. The policy aims to ensure that no one is disadvantaged by conditions that are not justifiable. All volunteers are to be treated equally and given specific training and equipment where required, to enable them to carry out their role.

4.0 Scope of Policy

4.1 This policy applies to all those volunteering across the Coastline Group.

5.0 Definition of a Volunteer

5.1 A volunteer carries out a task on behalf of an organisation without expecting any form of remuneration apart from the agreed reimbursement of expenses. Volunteers, although not considered to be employees of the organisation, are officially accepted and inducted by the organisation prior to carrying out any duties.

6.0 Young Volunteers

6.1 There are specific requirements for young people, under the age of 18, who would like to volunteer with Coastline. These are as follows:

- Volunteers must be at least 14 years of age.
- Parental/ guardian consent must be obtained prior to the young person becoming a volunteer.
- Volunteer roles/ tasks will be age appropriate and provided to the parent/guardian and volunteer to view and agree in advance of the role being undertaken.
- Young Volunteers cannot volunteer before 7am or after 7pm.
- Young Volunteers cannot volunteer during their school hours.
- In term time, Young Volunteers can donate no more than 2 hours per day and no more than a total of 12 hours per week
- Outside of term time, Young Volunteers can donate no more than 5 hours on a weekday or Saturday and 2 hours on a Sunday. Young Volunteers cannot donate more than 25 hours per week out of term time.
- Young Volunteers will be provided with 2 weeks away from their volunteer role during the school holidays, in one calendar year.

6.2 Young Volunteers will be provided with additional supervision and a robust risk assessment.

7.0 Expectations of Volunteers

7.1 Volunteers have the right to expect to: -

- Be treated with respect by colleagues, other volunteers and customers;
- Have equality of opportunity;
- Be given a clear role description and for adaptations to the role to be considered to meet their individual needs, abilities and interests;
- Be supported by colleagues in the tasks they undertake, and provided with regular supervision;
- Be reimbursed any travelling expenses incurred as a volunteer in accordance with procedure;
- Receive a full induction into their role and training appropriate to their role;
- Receive appropriate acknowledgement for their contribution to the service;
- Be consulted on the delivery of the volunteer scheme and kept up to date with any changes in the service;
- Have any problems or complaints dealt with sensitively in accordance with the complaints procedure;
- Have their personal information treated with care and discretion, in line with GDPR: such information will be shared within the organisation only on a 'need to know' basis;
- Have the right to decline any requests that they feel are unrealistic, beyond their role or that they do not have the skills to carry out, without feeling guilty or having an onward impact on their involvement with the organisation;
- Be given the opportunity and support to apply for external/ internal vacancies with the Coastline Group; and receive a reference on request.

8.0 Expectations of Coastline

8.1 Coastline will expect Volunteers to: -

- Uphold Coastline's values:
 - To put customers first;
 - Being open honest and accountable;
 - Strive to be the best and
 - To value each other;
- Carry out the role agreed to the best of their abilities;

- Attend promptly on the days and times agreed, providing as much notice as possible when prevented from attending;
- Attend arranged training and other meetings, as required;
- Take an active part in the running and development of the service;
- Treat everyone that they meet while conducting their role with equal respect care and consideration, and not act in a way that discriminates against particular individuals, groups or interests;
- Abide by all relevant policies and procedures;
- Remain loyal to the organisation, its vision and strategic objectives;
- Adhere to the Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement;
- Abide by our Data Protection Policy at all times;
- Maintain professional boundaries and declare any potential conflicts of interest at the earliest opportunity;
- Follow Safety, Health and Environmental policy guidance, reporting anything that could be detrimental to a person's health, safety or wellbeing;
- Notify Coastline if they have a complaint or concern so that every effort can be made to achieve a positive and amicable solution;
- Not conduct themselves in a manner that could be regarded as bringing Coastline into disrepute;
- Adhere to Coastline's policy and procedure regarding Gifts and Hospitality;
- Agree to a Disclosure and Barring Service check if required for their role;
- Inform Coastline if they are unable to continue volunteering; and
- Complete an exit interview, to enable their feedback to inform improvements to the scheme.

9.0 Volunteer Recruitment and Selection

9.1 Coastline's volunteer scheme has a different recruitment and selection process, depending on the area of the business in which an individual would like to volunteer. These processes are set out in the following documents:

- Volunteer Recruitment and Selection Procedure
- Customer Voice Recruitment and Selection Procedure
- Partner Programme Recruitment and Selection Procedure
- Miners Minders Recruitment and Selection Procedure

10.0 Volunteer Records

10.1 Volunteer records will be maintained for each volunteer, which will include the following information: volunteer contact details, emergency contact details, dates of service, roles performed, training received, supervision notes and evaluation of performance. They will be held by a designated colleague responsible for co-ordinating volunteers: the Volunteer Manager.

All personal information will be processed in accordance with Coastline's Data Protection Policy, General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Data Legislation.

11.0 Induction and Training

11.1 Induction: All volunteers will be required to complete an induction. They will be given a general picture of the nature of the organisation and an overview of the policies that may concern them. Each volunteer will be supplied with a personal copy of the relevant volunteer handbook which draws together pertinent information and guidance.

11.2 Adherence to policies: Volunteers are required to adhere to all relevant policies such as the following: Volunteering, ICT, Lone Working, Safety, Health & Environmental, Equality & Diversity, Safeguarding Adults, Safeguarding Children, Data Protection, Gifts & Hospitality and the Volunteer Agreement & Expectations. This list is not exhaustive, and may include more specialised policies depending on the host team's area of work.

11.3 Confidentiality: Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all privileged information involving customers, members of colleagues, volunteers, other persons or the overall business of the organisation. Any infringement of the confidentiality agreement could result in termination of the volunteer's placement with the organisation.

11.4 Training: All volunteers will receive task specific training that will equip them with the necessary information and skills to complete their tasks to a required standard. Volunteers will be encouraged to undertake basic training appropriate to their roles. Development opportunities and onward training will be made available.

12.0 Supervision and Support

12.1 Supervision: Colleagues will supervise the activities of volunteers on a day-to-day basis within their team. The Volunteer Workers and/or Volunteer Manager will also provide regular one-to-one or group supervisions for volunteers, depending on the individual needs of the volunteer and the area in which they volunteer.

12.2 Reimbursement of expenses: Volunteers are eligible for reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred while undertaking their role for the organisation. Prior approval must be sought for any major expenditure. Travel expenses will be reimbursed, at the appropriate mileage rate for car users and at the cost of the ticket for users of public transport.

12.3 Insurance: Public Liability is provided for all volunteers engaged in the organisation's business.

13.0 Recognition

13.1 Informal recognition: All colleagues responsible for volunteer supervision are encouraged to undertake methods of recognition of volunteer service on a regular basis throughout the year. These methods of informal recognition should range from the simple "Thank You" to a concerted effort to include volunteers as full participants in decision making and implementation for tasks which involve the volunteer.

13.2 Formal recognition: The contribution of volunteers should be formally recognised via an annual volunteer statement, celebration events, publishing volunteer stories/articles, alongside nominations for internal and external awards.

14.0 Exiting Volunteers

14.1 Where possible, exit interviews should be conducted with volunteers who are leaving. The interview should ascertain why the volunteer is leaving, acknowledgement of achievements made, and suggestions the volunteer may have for improvements, alongside the possibility, where appropriate, of involving the volunteer in some other capacity with the organisation in the future.

14.2 In every case, it is important that the volunteer is thanked and appreciated for their contribution. This should be followed up with an appropriate letter or email.

15.0 Review and Development

15.1 To develop and maintain best practice the following arrangements will be made: -

- All volunteers and colleagues will be encouraged to raise at any time any ideas, suggestions or critical comments regarding the volunteer scheme. These will be raised with the Volunteer Manager who will ensure they are considered by the relevant manager.
- Satisfaction questionnaires will be requested from each volunteer on an annual basis and responses considered by the Investing In Volunteers Steering Group, to inform onward Action Plans and scheme updates.
- An annual review of all aspects of volunteering will be held. All feedback received during the year will be considered. This review will be conducted by the Investing In Volunteers Steering Group, involving the active participation of volunteers.
- The results of the annual review will be published in the Annual Volunteer Statement. The statement will highlight the feedback received, identified areas for development and actions to take forward.