

Volunteer Policy

1.0 Induction

- 1.1 Coastline Housing Ltd 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 staff 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.
- 1.2 For the purpose of this policy, the term volunteer includes people volunteering as part of the Partner Programme. Any areas where there are differences in approach, these are highlighted.

2.0 Statement of Equal Opportunity

- 2.1 Coastline Housing Ltd is an Equal Opportunity Employer. It aims to ensure that all applicants for either paid or voluntary positions are not treated less favourably because of their race, colour, gender, religious orientation, sexual orientation, age or disability etc. 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 special training where required enabling them to progress in the organisation.

3.0 Scope of Policy

- 3.1 This policy applies to all those people volunteering within Coastline Housing Ltd.

4.0 Definition of Volunteer

- 4.1 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 they are not considered to be employees of the organisation, are officially accepted and inducted by the organisation prior to carrying out any duties.
- 4.2 Volunteers need to:
- Be over 18 years of age;
 - Have successfully undertaken the selection and induction process, providing references and a satisfactory DBS check if necessary;
 - Follow the volunteer agreement;
 - Be included in and follow the rota of allocated attendance times for volunteers.
- 4.3 Responsibilities of Coastline Housing Ltd:
- To provide each volunteer with a volunteer role and task description
 - To provide each volunteer with effective support and supervision.
 - To actively involve volunteers in decisions about their task area.

4.4 Responsibilities of Volunteers:

- To perform their role to the best of their abilities and remain loyal to the values, goals and procedures of the organisation;
- To act within the professional boundaries of their role;
- To be willing to undergo any training where appropriate.

5.0 Expectations of Volunteers

5.1 Volunteers have the right to expect:-

- To be treated with respect by staff and clients;
- To have equality of opportunity;
- To be given a clear role description and for adaptations to the role to be considered to meet their individual needs, abilities and interests;
- To be supported, by staff, on a day to day basis in the tasks they undertake;
- To be provided with regular one to one supervision;
- To be reimbursed any travelling expenses incurred as a volunteer in accordance with policy;
- To receive a full induction into their role;
- To be provided with training appropriate to their role;
- To receive appropriate acknowledgement for their contribution to the service;
- To be consulted on all aspects of volunteering in Coastline Housing Ltd;
- To be kept up to date with any changes in the service;
- To have personal information treated with care and discretion. Such information will be shared within the organisation only on a 'need to know' basis;
- To have access to relevant volunteer policies and procedures;
- To have problems or complaints dealt with sensitively;
- To have the right to decline any demands that they feel are unrealistic; beyond their role and that they do not have the skills to carry out, without feeling guilty; and
- A reference on request.

6.0 Expectations of Coastline Housing Ltd

6.1 Coastline Housing will expect Volunteers:-

- To carry out the role agreed to the best of their abilities;
- To attend promptly on the days and times agreed with them and to provide as much notice as possible when prevented from attending;
- To attend training arranged for them;
- To attend other meetings as appropriate;
- To take an active part in the running and development of the service;
- To treat all staff and clients with respect;
- To abide by all relevant policies and procedures;
- To remain loyal to the organisation and its vision and values;
- To adhere to our confidentiality policy and agreement;
- To maintain professional boundaries;
- To welcome and maintain good relations with everyone you come into

contact with as a volunteer, whether they are other volunteers, staff, clients, partners, or the general public;

- To follow the health and safety guidelines, reporting anything that could be detrimental to personal health or safety;
- To notify Coastline Housing Ltd if you have a complaint or problem so they can make every effort to achieve a positive and amicable solution;
- To not bring Coastline Housing Ltd into disrepute i.e. represent the organisation while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, be involved with the theft of property nor misuse equipment or materials;
- To agree to a Disclosure and Barring Service check if it is required for your role; and
- To inform Coastline Housing Ltd if you are unable to continue volunteering.

7.0 Volunteer Recruitment and Selection

- 7.1 Recruitment: In the case of a volunteer vacancy, an advert for the relevant role will be placed in various media outlets. An arrangement form will be provided to any interested parties. Where there are no current volunteer vacancies, an expression of interest form can be provided to the individual. This information will be kept on record and the individual will be contacted when a vacancy arises. In some circumstances, if the volunteer has specific skills/knowledge that would be beneficial to the service a new volunteer role can be created around that individual.
- 7.2 Interviewing: An appropriate member of staff will assess the volunteer's suitability for the role. These interviews will determine the qualifications/skills/knowledge of the volunteer, their commitment to fulfil the role and their availability. The interviewer can also take the opportunity to answer any queries that the volunteer may have with regards to Coastline Housing Ltd. It will be appropriate at this stage to consider whether the role as defined can and should be adapted to suit the individual.
- 7.3 Conflict of interest: If a conflict of interest is declared by a volunteer, Coastline Housing Ltd will look at each case on an individual basis and decide whether it is appropriate for the volunteer to continue.
- 7.4 References: Two character references will be taken up prior to a volunteer commencing their role. Any doubts raised by a reference will be discussed with the relevant manager and they will decide whether the application can be taken forward. If a volunteer has accessed volunteering through the Partner Programme references are not required.
- 7.5 DBS Check: A DBS check may be necessary where the volunteer is likely to spend time alone with clients. Where a DBS check is required the process will be explained to the volunteer at induction and the relevant form completed. It should be explained to volunteers that DBS check results which show a criminal record will have to be disclosed to the Commissioner of the service, Cornwall Council, as required by the contract. In these circumstances the person's identity would not be divulged to the Council. Where a DBS check is required the volunteer may not commence their role until a satisfactory

response to the check has been received. The relevant manager will decide, depending on the outcome of the DBS check, whether it is appropriate for an application to be taken forward.

- 7.6 Unsuccessful Applicants: If a volunteer is unsuccessful in the selection stage, they will be provided with a letter informing them that they have been unsuccessful. This will detail the reasons why they have been unsuccessful and will signpost them to Volunteer Cornwall for further volunteer opportunities.
- 7.7 Volunteer Roles: Volunteers will be provided with a volunteer role. Roles can be adapted or changed to suit the needs, skills and interests of volunteers. These can be reviewed at any time. Requests for new volunteers should be submitted to the volunteer worker management relevant Manager.
- 7.8 Employees as volunteers: Coastline staff can be recruited as volunteers as long as the tasks carried out are not part of their normal daily duties. Relatives of staff can volunteer but members of their family who are employees may not directly supervise them. Staff may not be coerced into voluntary work.
- 7.9 Coastline Housing Homeless Service clients as volunteers: Current and past clients of the Homeless Service can access the volunteer scheme through the Partner Programme. A client must have exited all Coastline Housing's homeless services for at least 6 months before they can be considered for a volunteer role rather than a Partner Programme role. This will be determined on an individual basis by the Volunteer Worker and the relevant Manager.
- 7.9.1 Coastline Housing Homeless Service's Partner Programme: The Partner Programme enables current clients of the Homeless Service to volunteer within the service. The programme offers extra support to clients throughout their volunteer placement. The Partner Programme has a four staged approach which enables clients to start with roles which have lower responsibility and can progress to roles with increased responsibility. The programme is only advertised within the service. Clients are only required to complete an expression of interest form and are not required to provide references or a DBS check. Partner Programme roles are developed around the client's skills/knowledge/ interests. After an initial interview with the Volunteer Worker, the decision is made whether they are accepted onto the partner programme. If the client is not suitable at that time, they will be provided with a progression letter which will give them a date for this decision to be reviewed and actions they need to take within this time.

8.0 Volunteer Records

- 8.1 Volunteer records will be maintained on each volunteer including dates of service, roles performed, training received and evaluation of performance. They will be held by a designated member of staff responsible for co-ordinating volunteers in the relevant service. All personal information will be processed in accordance with Coastline's Data Protection Policy and the Data Protection Act.

9.0 Supervision of Volunteers

- 9.1 The allocated Volunteer Worker will supervise the activities of volunteers on a daily basis. The Volunteer Worker will also provide structured 12 weekly supervisions for volunteers and 6 weekly supervisions for Partner Programme volunteers. The Volunteer Worker will guide the activities of the volunteer and will be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance.
- 9.2 Induction: All volunteers will be required to complete an induction. Here they will be given a general picture of the nature of the organisation and an overview of the policies that may concern them, i.e. confidentiality policy, Health & Safety. Each volunteer will be supplied with a personal copy of the volunteer handbook which draws together pertinent information and guidance.
- 9.3 Trial period: Volunteers are accepted subject to a trial period of one month. During this period, the volunteer will receive guidance from the relevant members of staff and the Volunteer Worker. If volunteers are deemed to be unsuitable to their current role they may be re-assigned to another role. Should this occur, they will be given the appropriate training required for them to complete the task satisfactorily.
- 9.4 Adherence to policies: Volunteers are required to adhere to all relevant policies such as the following: Volunteer, Confidentiality, ICT, Professional Boundaries, Lone Working, Health and Safety, Equality and Diversity, Safeguarding Adults and Safeguarding Children and the Volunteer Agreement. This list is not exhaustive.
- 9.5 Confidentiality: Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all privileged information involving clients, members of staff, volunteers or other persons or the overall business of the organisation. Any infringement of the confidentiality policy could result in termination of the volunteer's placement with the organisation.
- 9.6 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.

10.0 Support and Recognition

- 10.1 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, up to a maximum of the cost of a day bus pass.
- 10.2 Insurance: Public Liability is provided for all volunteers engaged in the organisation's business.
- 10.3 Informal recognition: All staff 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”s to a concerted effort to include volunteers as full participants in decision making and implementation for tasks which involve the volunteer.

10.4 Formal recognition: Volunteers are invited to some of Coastlines Celebration events and other formal events which this is appropriate.

11.0 Exiting Volunteers

11.1 Exit interviews, where possible, should be conducted with volunteers who are leaving. The interview should ascertain why the volunteer is leaving, suggestions the volunteer may have for improvements and the possibility of involving the volunteer in some other capacity with the organisation in the future.

12.0 Review and Development

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

- All volunteers and staff 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 Worker who will ensure they are considered by the relevant manager at the next manager’s meeting.
- Satisfaction questionnaires will be requested from each volunteer on an annual basis and responses considered by the relevant managers.
- An annual review of all aspects of volunteering including policy and procedure will be held. This review will be conducted by the Volunteer Worker and relevant managers. It will involve the active participation of volunteers.
- All feedback received during the year will be considered by the Volunteer Worker and relevant managers, together with any exit interview records from the year, at a specially convened meeting. All volunteers will be invited to take part in the meeting if they so wish.
- The results of the annual review will be published to all volunteers and staff in writing. The report will set out the feedback received, the issues considered in the review and the decisions/ actions made.