

# Supporting Older People

## VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

For: .....



**Tel: 01423 531490**

Community House  
46-50 East Parade  
HG1 5RR

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

Registered Charity Number: 1155682

**Funded by:  
The Brelms Trust**



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**About Supporting Older People**

**Our Mission - "We aim to alleviate loneliness and isolation often experienced by older people living on their own."**

Supporting Older People is a registered charity working with the over 60's in the Harrogate & District area.

We are a dedicated charitable organisation with three part-time staff and over 80 volunteers. We currently have over 100 clients, and we have supported over 3000 people since our foundation in 1982.

Our core work is our Home Visiting Service. We recruit and support suitable volunteers, who then visit older, isolated people who have been referred to us by community care workers, Home from Hospital agencies, GPs, etc.

Volunteer visitors offer support and friendship, usually on a weekly basis. This contact makes a lasting difference, raises self-esteem, maintains independence and greatly improves quality of life for the older person and, often, the volunteer.

We encourage volunteers of all backgrounds and ages. We support young volunteers, some of whom choose to volunteer with SOP as part of their application for the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. This has been beneficial in integrating generations and several schools have embraced this opportunity.

We enhance emotional well-being in an age-group where loneliness and depression is an ever-increasing problem. Human companionship is essential to good health. We would argue that it is fundamental to our very existence as functioning human beings and underpins our physical, spiritual and emotional state.

We have a varied activities programme including Tea & Talk, Lunch Club, Outings and our Over Sixties Singing Group. We celebrate International Day of Older People and celebrate Christmas with parties for clients and volunteers.

Further details are on our website [www.supportingolderpeople.org.uk](http://www.supportingolderpeople.org.uk).

I confirm that the Home Visiting Scheme Manager and I have read and discussed this handbook as part of my induction and I understand the guidance and agree to follow it. I will raise any concerns arising from this with SOP staff.

Signed..... (volunteer)

Date.....

Signed..... (Home Visiting Scheme Manager)

## Lone working and Keeping Yourself Safe

For the purposes of this role, you are classed as a “lone worker”. Please consider your own safety, as well as that of your client.

- Set boundaries for yourself which are realistic and that you are comfortable with
- If possible, let someone know where you are, and what time you expect to be home
- Try and use well-lit areas for parking
- Think carefully before giving your personal details such as your address to your client. Make sure you have thought of the possible consequences and whether you are prepared to accept these
- Leave if a client shows threatening behaviour and report any issues to the Home Visiting Scheme Manager immediately
- Assess risks in your client’s home and be aware of the risks
- Try not to use your client’s electrical equipment
- If you are taking a client outside their home, assess what the client and you can manage and do not to exceed this
- Contact the Scheme as soon as possible with any concerns you have – even if they may appear small

***In an emergency, use the contact telephone number(s) you have been given***

## Boundaries for Volunteers

### Do:

- Listen and let the person talk
- Observe confidentiality at all times (adhering to the policy)
- Let the client or the office know in good time if you cannot attend or are going to be late. Let the office know if you are unable to visit for more than two weeks.
- Inform the Home Visiting Scheme Manager of any concerns or incidents such as strange behaviour or deteriorating health, in an emergency use the contact details you were given for your client (GP or next of kin)
- Respect the client as an individual – you may not agree with them but they are entitled to their views
- Leave the clients home immediately if they are showing threatening behaviour and report any issues to the Home Visiting Scheme Manager
- If you are taking the client outside the home assess what the client and you can manage and do not exceed this
- If the client has a memory book or calendar put the date of your next visit in the book/calendar
- If possible, phone on the day to confirm your visit
- Respect the client’s dignity if they would like to give you a small gift or take you for a coffee
- Make sure the support you give the client is legal and above board
- Reassure the client our service is free for the Home Visiting
- Discuss any concerns with either Kate or Julia from Supporting Older People
- Get receipts for café visits etc if the family have left money to use

## Boundaries for Volunteers -

### Don't:

- Do not accept money from clients
- Do not accept large gifts, a small token on a special occasion maybe accepted if refusal would cause offence. But the line between a gift and a payment must never be crossed
- Do not buy large gifts, household items etc (small gifts for birthdays and Christmas are fine)
- Do not administer medications
- Do not undertake any form of personal care eg bathing, nail cutting, helping to the toilet – manicures are acceptable
- Do not lift or move heavy objects
- Do not lift the client
- Do not undertake DIY tasks
- Do not do regular household chores (light gardening is fine as is baking together)
- Do not become involved in family disputes or personal affairs
- Do not enforce your political or religious views
- Do not offer any counselling or advice work – discuss any concerns with Supporting Older so we can signpost to the correct help
- Do not invade someone's personal space/privacy

## Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an essential requirement in the project, to protect the privacy and dignity of both clients and volunteers.

Under normal circumstances, any information told to you in confidence must not be passed on to anyone else without the consent of the person in question.

However, if someone informs you that they have been abused, or that a criminal offence has occurred, confidentiality may be waived, in the interest of the person being abused or at risk of abuse (Please see also our Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy).

Such matters must be discussed with the Project Manager before any confidential information is passed on.

Remember that confidentiality must be observed, regardless of whether the information is given face-to-face, by letter or by telephone. It applies to information disclosed to you by staff, other volunteers and clients.

## Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

Supporting Older People has a commitment to safeguarding **all** vulnerable adults, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or religion.

***It is the duty of all employees and volunteers to follow this policy.***

Abuse may be physical, sexual, discriminatory, neglect, financial or psychological. If you become aware of any signs of abuse, this **must** be reported straight away, initially to Kate Rogata at Supporting Older People (Tel: 01423 531490), who is Supporting Older People's designated Referrer. Alternatively, you can report this directly to North Yorkshire Safeguarding Adults.

Your findings should be recorded in the Safeguarding Adult Record Book (found in the Safeguarding Adult box file in the office).

## What you can expect from us:

We greatly value your offer to volunteer with Supporting Older People and we want your volunteering experience to be a positive and rewarding one.

- Ensure that you know what your volunteering will involve and what it should not involve.
- Offer support, information and relevant ongoing training.
- Reimburse pre-agreed out of pocket expenses.
- Provide you with emergency contact details for your client so that, should an emergency arise, you can access the appropriate help.
- Support you in your choice to stop volunteering with us at any time, but please do let us know.
- Consider seriously any suggestions or criticisms.
- Provide you with Public Liability Insurance cover.

## Health and Safety Policy Equality and Diversity Policy

Please ask the Home Visiting Scheme Manager or telephone the office on 01423 531490 if you require a copy of the above policies.

## Complaints Procedure for Volunteers and Clients

We aim to deliver services of a high standard, working within best practice guidelines. Therefore, we take complaints from people who use or provide our services very seriously. If you have a concern about our services, or your treatment by it, please mention it to the Scheme Manager. If the response does not, or cannot readily resolve the matter, there is a formal Complaints Procedure available to assist you.

### The procedure

- Send your complaint in writing to the Scheme Manager at the registered office. The only exception to this is a complaint about the Scheme Manager. In such cases, send your complaint to the Director at the same address
- Please state your complaint as clearly and as briefly as possible. If you would prefer to make a verbal complaint, and would like some-one to write it out, please request this. A form of complaint is available if required.
- Once your written complaint has been received, you will receive a formal written acknowledgement. The complaint will then be investigated. Depending on the nature of your complaint, the investigation may or may not call for a discussion with you. You will then receive a written response to your complaint within four weeks of it being received in writing.

## The Appeal Procedure

- If you are dissatisfied with the response, you can appeal within the following two weeks. To make an appeal, write to the Director at the registered office stating the reasons for your dissatisfaction.
- The Director will assess what further investigation is necessary and ensure that it is done. This will usually mean that someone not previously involved will have a second look at the investigation to date and your outstanding concerns. Someone independent of the project will be involved at this stage.
- The Director will write to you informing you of the outcome of the Appeal within eight weeks of the receipt of your appeal letter.

## The Outcome

If it is found that you have received a poor service, or have been unfairly treated, for whatever reason, you will receive a written apology. If something has gone wrong, it may not be possible to put it right, but if we can, we will.

Furthermore, we will ensure that we learn from any problems that have occurred, so that we can take steps to ensure that they do not occur again but your name will be confidential to those involved with the complaint procedure.

Such matters must be discussed with the Project Manager before any confidential information is passed on.

Remember that confidentiality must be observed, regardless of whether the information is given face-to-face, by letter or by telephone. It applies to information disclosed to you by staff, other volunteers and clients.

## Volunteer Role Description

**Role Title:** Volunteer Visitor/Befriender

**Responsible to:** Befriending and activities manager

**Overall purpose of the role:** To offer one-to-one befriending to older people living in the community.

### Areas of responsibility:

- To meet the person you visit regularly, usually for one or two hours per week or per fortnight for conversation and/or suitable activities.
- Be reliable and let us know if you are experiencing difficulties fulfilling your role. Let us know any changes in your personal circumstances that may affect your volunteering.
- To establish appropriate boundaries in the befriending relationship.
- To attend training courses/support meetings whenever possible.
- To feedback any concerns you may have.
- To give the Home Visiting Scheme Manager notice if you will be unable to visit for more than 2 weeks.
- Inform the Home Visiting Scheme Manager or the office if you wish to withdraw from the scheme.

***If you have any questions or concerns about your role, please have a chat with the Home Visiting Scheme Manager***