

## **ARK HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD (ARK)**

**POLICY REF: HR35**

**Version 2.0 – January 2017**

### **VOLUNTEER POLICY**

#### **1.0 ARK'S VALUES**

1.1 Our organisational values are the basis for everything that we do, from providing housing, care and support to tenants and service users to ensuring that staff have clear standards of performance set. ARK believes that everyone should have the opportunity to lead a happy, healthy and safe life. We value:

- The worth of each person
- Trusting relationships
- Understanding difference
- Challenging oppression
- Personal and organisational accountability
- Caring for our physical environment
- Enjoyment

1.2 All ARK policies and procedures are underpinned by our values and we will ensure that our employees are treated fairly, consistently and in line with our values.

#### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

2.1 ARK recognises that achieving the aims and objectives of the organisation may be aided by the active participation of citizens in the community. A volunteer can be described as an individual, who put their experience, knowledge and skills at the disposal of an organisation, without expectation of financial compensation. Volunteers are to be distinguished from students, work placements or secondees where the primary aim is usually for the student or secondee to obtain certain work experience.

#### **3.0 PRINCIPLES**

3.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide volunteers with support, and to ensure that they have a consistently positive experience across the organisation.

3.2 Volunteers are viewed as a valuable resource to ARK, in providing new skills and perspectives, ensuring our services meet the needs of service users as well as increasing our contact with the local communities. ARK encourages

the involvement of volunteers within the organisation and is committed to ensuring that:

- Volunteers complement the work of staff, and the volunteer will not be used as a substitute for paid work
- Volunteers are not asked to take on tasks formerly undertaken by staff in times of industrial action
- Staff at all levels work positively with volunteers and where appropriate will actively seek to involve them in their work
- Training and support is provided for those working alongside and managing volunteers
- The standard of care and conduct of volunteers should be of the same high quality as that of staff

3.3 A volunteer will not be considered as an employee of ARK. They will not be engaged on a contract of employment the engagement will be binding in honour only, there being no legal agreement between the organisation and the volunteer.

3.4 The relationship between ARK and the volunteer is based on trust and understanding, and depends on mutual expectations. ARK and the volunteer will each sign a letter of agreement which states the expectations of the volunteer (see Appendix A).

#### **4.0 RECRUITMENT & SELECTION**

4.1 Prior to recruitment the following areas must be agreed by the Manager.

- a) A *Voluntary Work Outline*, outlining the specific tasks, responsibilities and reporting lines of the Volunteer.
- b) A *Person Specification*, outlining the relevant experience, skills, knowledge, abilities and equal opportunity awareness necessary to carry out the role effectively.
- c) *Volunteering agreement document* outlining the duration, hours, expenses, insurance etc. relating to the placement.

4.2 Ideally Volunteers should have specific roles rather than being taken on to help out the organisation in general. Without defined roles Volunteers can lack direction or be given jobs that no one else wants to do. This could quickly lead to Volunteers becoming demotivated and leaving.

4.3 A voluntary work outline is similar to a job description and can be relatively simple and less formal. It outlines what tasks a Volunteer will perform and what skills and experience are needed. This helps to give both the Volunteer and ARK a clear idea of what they can expect of one another.

4.4 Recruitment of Volunteers will take place in accordance with ARK's current Recruitment & Selection Policy (HR01) either as part of a planned recruitment drive or following receipt of a speculative application from a Volunteer.

- 4.5 In accordance with ARK's Equality and Diversity Policy (HR04), Volunteer placements will be open to all individuals irrespective of race, gender, disability, sexuality, age or religious belief.
- 4.6 Following successful selection at interview, all Volunteers must provide the following documentation prior to commencing their placement.
- An up-to-date disclosure (Head Office placement) or PVG Record (Care and Support placement) from Disclosure Scotland as per ARK's 'Disclosure and Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme' Policy (HR02)
  - 2 satisfactory references
  - Proof of eligibility to work in the UK
- 4.7 Once all conditions have been met, a letter will be issued from the HR Department to the Volunteer, and a copy sent to the Manager, confirming details of the placement (see Appendix A).

## **5.0 INDUCTION & TRAINING**

- 5.1 A formal induction plan will be drawn together by the Manager and Volunteer within the first week of placement.
- 5.2 Each Volunteer will have a named member of staff as their main point of contact. They will receive regular supervision and support throughout their placement as well as on-going opportunities for learning and development.
- 5.3 The Volunteer will be made aware of relevant ARK policies and given guidance on the relevant practices and procedures.
- 5.4 Volunteers will be made aware of Health and Safety policies and practices within the organisation. ARK has a commitment to ensure that Volunteers are not exposed to unnecessary risks while on placement however, Volunteers also have a responsibility not to expose themselves and others to unnecessary risks.
- 5.5 Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all privileged information to which they are exposed during their placement. This may include information involving a member of staff, service user or other person or details of the overall business of ARK.

## 6.0 CONSENT

### Head Office

- 6.1 Where the volunteer is placed within one of the Head Office Departments and will be working with sensitive data the manager should ensure that appropriate consent is obtained from the parties concerned. Further advice can be obtained from the HR Department.

### Service User

- 6.2 The service user should be advised about any volunteer who is likely to be involved with their care and the fact the volunteer may need information about the service user, during the course of their duties.
- 6.3 In order to share personal data informed consent must first be gained from the service user or, where appropriate, their legal guardian or nominated Welfare Attorney. This means that the service user has been provided with sufficient information to enable them to understand what they are consenting to. In order to share personal sensitive data explicit consent must be gained. This will usually mean written consent evidenced by completion of ARK's Sensitive Data Consent Form (see Appendix B.)

Further information in relation to the requirements which must be fulfilled prior to sharing data or sensitive personal data with a volunteer are set out in ARK's Openness and Confidentiality Policy (G13) and Data Protection Procedure (G48).

The service user should be given a copy of any written consent given by them, and a copy should be placed in the individual's Care File.

If there is a doubt as to whether the service user is able to give consent, consideration must be given to whether the service user has the capacity to:

- Make this particular decision
- Understand and retain the information relevant to the decision
- Understand the consequences of deciding one way or the other
- Communicate the decision they have come to

Where an individual has been assessed as not having the capacity to make an informed decision, then decisions to disclose can be made by:

- The service users' Welfare Guardian
- A Welfare Attorney

- 6.4 A service user has the right to refuse information being shared with the volunteer. If that is the case, they must not be coerced and their refusal must be clearly noted in their Good Life Plan/Support Plan.

## **7.0 EXPENSES & INSURANCE**

- 7.1 ARK will meet all reasonable expenses incurred by the Volunteer whilst carrying out their duties on placement. These should be agreed beforehand with the Manager.
- 7.2 ARK's public and employers liability insurance policies cover the activities of volunteers whilst they are on ARK premises or engaged in any work on ARK'S behalf.
- 7.3 While it is not envisaged that Volunteers would be asked to use their private motor vehicles for conducting their volunteer task, if the need arises and by agreement, it is the Volunteers' responsibility to inform their insurer in writing that the vehicle is being used for voluntary work.

## **8.0 VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 8.1 Volunteers are expected to:
- Participate in induction sessions and any other core training that the Manager deems necessary
  - Comply with all ARK policies and procedures, particularly in relation to confidentiality, accident reporting and health & safety
  - Undertake their voluntary work at agreed times
  - Inform the relevant member of staff if they are unable to attend, and if possible provide advance notice that this is the case
  - Give reasonable notice if unable to continue volunteering

## **9.0 ARK RESPONSIBILITIES**

ARK will ensure:

- That each volunteer is appropriately inducted
- That the volunteer is accompanied at all times and will not place the volunteer, the service user (where applicable) or ARK in a position of risk
- That volunteer's are supernumerary and will not be utilised to fill vacant shifts or placed on the rota

- That volunteers are made aware of as much information as permitted regarding the work they will be completed (this may include access to service user's health, support plans, risk assessment and other supporting documentation where necessary)

## **10.0 DISCIPLINE & GRIEVANCE**

10.1 ARK is committed to dealing with any grievances volunteers may have. In line with this policy Volunteers have the right to discuss any concerns they may have with their named contact at any time. If the contact person is unable to resolve the problem they will refer the matter to the Manager, with the permission of the Volunteer

10.2 If ARK is concerned about the performance of a Volunteer an initial meeting will be called to resolve these issues. ARK maintains the right to terminate a placement should they have serious concerns about the performance or conduct of the Volunteer

## **11.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW OF POLICY**

The Head of People and Organisational Development will ensure that this policy remains relevant and effective and is reviewed on a regular basis.

**Approved by SLT in:**

**Approved by Board of Management in:**

**Approved by Unite**

**Next review of policy due by:**

**APPENDIX A**

**PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL**

22 October 2019

Dear

**VOLUNTEER**

I write to advise you that we would like to add your name to our Volunteer list.

1. Your name will be added to the Volunteer List upon receipt of your signed acceptance of this letter.
2. The department / service where you may carry out your volunteering will be X.
3. During your placement with ARK, X will be your first point of contact within the department / service, and is available to provide support and guidance on a day to day basis.
4. It is your responsibility to inform your named contact of any changes to your personal circumstances (e.g. change to address, telephone number or availability).
5. You are required to conduct yourself at all times, and to carry out the duties and responsibilities of your placement, in accordance with the standards laid down by ARK Housing Association.
6. During your placement with ARK you may become party to sensitive or personal information, and are therefore required to observe confidentiality at all times. Failure to do so may result in your placement being terminated by ARK.
7. Should you wish to raise a complaint or grievance at any time during your placement, please speak to your named contact in the first instance. If they are unable to resolve the problem, they will refer the matter to the Services Manager / Head of Department.
8. We have received a satisfactory Disclosure / Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme Record; however should you, at any point in the future, be charged with any criminal offence, you should declare this to your Manager immediately.

Please find enclosed the Social Services Council Code of Practice for both Employee's and Employer's. As a Volunteer you are also expected to adhere to this code. ARK Housing Association's Health and Safety Policy is available at your place of work.

Please retain one copy of this letter and sign the other copy and return it to the Human Resources Department in the envelope provided.

I take this opportunity to welcome you to ARK Housing Association and wish you well in your volunteer placement.

Yours sincerely

Walter Kane  
Head of People and Organisational Development

CC, Manager

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I acknowledge receipt of my Volunteer Placement letter and confirm I have read and understood the information contained in it. I understand this document contains information only, and does not constitute a contract of employment with ARK Housing Association Ltd.

Name: .....

Signed: .....

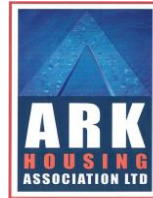
Date: .....



**APPENDIX B**

**Sensitive Data Consent Form**

**This form can be adapted according to individual circumstances.**



The Data Protection Act 1998 requires Ark Housing Association Ltd to obtain your written consent to keep and use sensitive personal information. Sensitive information falls in one of the following categories:

- Racial or ethnic origin
- Political views
- Religious beliefs
- Membership of trade union
- Physical or mental health
- Sexual life
- Any alleged criminal offence
- Any legal proceedings connected to an individual.

We will not process or keep any of this information unless you give us your written permission.

The particular type of sensitive information which we propose processing in your case is as follows: **<INSERT DETAIL>**

We propose processing the information in the following way:

By sharing the information with **<INSERT NAME>** who is a volunteer

The sensitive personal information that you give us will only be used for the purposes you have agreed below:

To allow **<INSERT NAME>** to assist ARK in providing a service to you as previously agreed, in his/her capacity as a Volunteer

We will not disclose this information to any other person or organisation without your permission. If you object to such disclosure, please tick this box.

We will take reasonable precautions to prevent the loss, misuse or alteration of your personal data.

Please sign here to show that you agree to us using your data in this way.  
I agree to the above use of my data.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

