

VOLUNTEER POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 HOMELINK is committed to involving a diverse range of volunteers to support its work. It recognises that volunteers are an important resource in helping HOMELINK achieve its aims and bring a wealth of expertise, knowledge, experience, and skills.
- 1.2 HOMELINK's volunteer roles aim to provide volunteers with a rewarding, worthwhile and enjoyable experience.
- 1.3 This policy sets out the principles of how HOMELINK involves volunteers, and what volunteers can expect by way of support whilst volunteering.
- 1.4 HOMELINK defines a volunteer as someone who freely chooses, without remuneration, to give their time to undertake tasks and activities to help the charity achieve its aims.
- 1.5 This policy, the management and reporting of volunteer work generally, does not apply to Trustees / Committee members who are part of the organisation's governance structure, have more specifically defined roles and responsibilities, and to whom other specific policies apply.

2. Volunteer Management

- 2.1 HOMELINK will appoint a Trustee to take lead responsibility for volunteering.
- 2.2 The lead Trustee will support the work of the Volunteer Coordinator, who together with the nominated member of staff will have responsibility for day-to-day operations in relation to volunteers.
- 2.3 A Volunteer Management Handbook (formerly the Volunteer Coordinators Manual) will set out in more detail how the various elements, including recruitment, induction & training, support, and problem-solving will work in practice.

3. Recruitment

- 3.1 HOMELINK is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of its work. It aims to reflect the wider community in all those who work or volunteer for the organisation.
- 3.2 Vacancies will be advertised widely, including on the HOMELINK website, other websites, newspapers, magazines and social media, to maximise the reach and opportunity for the wider community.
- 3.3 The recruitment process will be summarised on the organisation's website.

- 3.4 Volunteers will be able to have an informal discussion about the role before applying.
- 3.5 Recruitment will involve a relatively informal interview with two HOMELINK representatives (at least one member of staff) – typically the Volunteer Coordinator and the nominated member of staff, and sometimes a nominated Board member.
- 3.6 Volunteer applicants will be asked to complete a simple application form setting out their interest in applying and their skills / experience in relation to the role being advertised.
- 3.7 Volunteers will be asked to provide two references – where the volunteer's circumstances warrant only one reference, this will be allowed at a Client Manager's discretion.
- 3.8 A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check will be required where a volunteer is likely to come into contact with clients / or a client's personal information.

4. Volunteer Roles

- 4.1 HOMELINK will only recruit volunteers for defined roles – both short- and longer-term placements. This is important to ensure that volunteering with HOMELINK is meaningful and productive both from the volunteer's and the organisation's perspectives. It is also important to help ensure that the aspirations / expectations of the organisation and the volunteer are stated and met.
- 4.2 The core roles identified below will each have defined role descriptions.
 - Fundraiser
 - Events
 - IT
 - Office Administration
 - Communications
 - Small Grants
 - Data Base Entry
 - Impact Assessment
 - Outreach
- 4.3 Where a new role is required, this will be discussed between the lead Trustee, Volunteer Coordinator and Client Managers.
- 4.4 Existing volunteers at the time of this Policy being adopted will be issued with a Role Description and asked to sign a Volunteer Agreement.
- 4.5 Where possible, roles will be amended to suit the needs, aspirations, skills / experience of a volunteer – maximising both their and the organisation's benefit.

5. Induction and Training

- 5.1 All volunteers will spend an hour with the Volunteer Coordinator and a Client Manager to receive a basic induction to the organisation, and to ensure that the

volunteer has all that they need to start their role. Additional time will be provided depending on the role and the volunteer's training needs.

- 5.2 Training will be provided to volunteers by HOMELINK's Data Protection Officer (DPO) in HOMELINK's data privacy policy and procedures before any voluntary activity takes place.
- 5.3 Volunteers with client facing roles or access to our database will be required to undertake the ESCC online course on Safeguarding Adults.
- 5.4 Additional appropriate training will be given to volunteers, according to which area they choose to volunteer in and individual training requirements e.g. office, events, fundraising etc. HOMELINK is committed to continuing personal development of volunteers through the provision of training.
- 5.5 Further training should be discussed and determined together with the volunteer's named contact person during support meetings.
- 5.6 CONFIDENTIALITY is a strict requirement of all those working in the charity. Volunteers will be expected to adhere to HOMELINK's Code of Practice.

6. Support

- 6.1 HOMELINK will provide support to volunteers to enable them to work for the benefit of the charity and its clients.
- 6.2 The form of support provided to each volunteer will vary dependent upon the nature and the duration of the role.
- 6.3 As a minimum, each volunteer will have a named contact.
- 6.4 In addition to individual contact with their named contact, all volunteers will be invited by HOMELINK to attend periodic 'keep in touch' meetings of all volunteers. These will be held biannually (virtually or in person). The meetings will enable two-way communication with volunteers – capturing good practice, providing an opportunity to share ideas / suggested improvements, and an update on the organisation's work more generally.
- 6.5 The nature and frequency of contact with a volunteer's named contact and progress review meetings will be set out in the Volunteer Agreement provided at the point of recruitment.
- 6.6 HOMELINK has Employers Liability and Public Liability insurance that provides cover for volunteers under 80 years of age whilst undertaking voluntary work approved and authorised by the organisation.
- 6.7 HOMELINK will do all it can to ensure the wellbeing of its volunteers. This will include the nominated member of staff risk assessing all volunteer roles before they are undertaken, all new roles before they are advertised, and periodic review / review as circumstances require.

Volunteers are expected to ensure their own health and safety and also those they come into contact with while volunteering, by being aware of the fire safety arrangements at the different venues used by HOMELINK.

7. Expenses

- 7.1 Agreed out-of-pocket expenses will only be reimbursed in exceptional circumstances and with the prior agreement of the Treasurer.
- 7.2 Wherever possible the cheapest form of public transport should be used. Where necessary, agreed car journeys are reimbursed at the prevailing HMRC rate – at the time of policy approval 45p per mile.

8. Problem-Solving

- 8.1 It is important that problems or complaints are dealt with fairly, openly and consistently. We hope that most problems can be solved informally. If there is a problem with the behaviour of a volunteer, or a volunteer wishes to make a complaint, the organisation would hope to resolve this informally.
- 8.2 In each instance, where a problem cannot be resolved informally, the matter will be formally dealt with by the Volunteer Coordinator / an appropriate nominated member of staff. If unresolved, the issue will be considered by the designated Trustee for Volunteering. If still unresolved, a final appeal can be made to the Chair of Trustees.

9. Recognition and Valuing

- 9.1 Volunteers who have worked with HOMELINK for at least six months will be provided with a reference on request.
- 9.2 Volunteers will be made aware at recruitment (as part of the Volunteer Agreement) that they will be expected when they leave to complete an online exit survey. Feedback is important to enable HOMELINK to monitor progress and develop the approach – ensuring volunteers have a good experience and stay longer, whilst also helping ensure it is productive for the organisation.

10. Monitoring and Review

- 10.1 HOMELINK Management Committee will receive quarterly reports from the Volunteer Coordinator on progress of the volunteer programme covering recruitment, training, leavers, achievements and issues.
- 10.2 In addition to this policy volunteers will be expected to adhere to other relevant HOMELINK policy including:
 - Equality Diversity & Inclusion
 - Health & Safety
 - Data Protection
 - Code of Practice
 - Safeguarding
 - Conflict of Interest