Care & Repair Leeds

Volunteers Policy

# Introduction

* 1. Care & Repair Leeds is the Home Improvement Agency for Leeds. It is an independent agency with charitable status. The aim of the agency is to promote independent living for older people, adults and children with disabilities and people on low incomes. It achieves this by providing a wide range of cost effective, efficient, client-centred services, which are flexible and can be adapted to meet changing needs.
  2. This policy covers the use of volunteers by Care & Repair Leeds. It includes the protection and support given to volunteers, the agreements that will be made with each volunteer, the responsibilities of the volunteers and the expenses that can be claimed by volunteers.

1. **The Principles of the Policy**

# Care & Repair Leeds values the contributions made by volunteers, will treat the volunteers fairly, provide adequate information and support for the volunteers and provide out-of-pocket expenses for volunteers. There will be no legally binding contract between volunteers and Care & Repair Leeds and no employment relationship will be created.

* 1. The Volunteer role is a gift relationship, binding only in honour, trust and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on Volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time or carry out the tasks provided. Likewise Care & Repair Leeds cannot be compelled to provide regular work, payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken.
  2. Volunteers are not to be used to replace paid workers. Volunteers will only be used to supplement the work of paid workers and not to substitute the work of paid workers.
  3. Volunteers will be seen as representing Care & Repair Leeds to members of the public

# Equal Opportunities

* 1. Care & Repair Leeds will aim to treat all volunteers in line with the agency’s equal opportunities statement, which is as follows:

“Care & Repair (Leeds) recognises that Britain is a diverse society and believes that no person or group should suffer discrimination on the basis of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, creed, gender, class, visible or invisible disability, sexuality, unemployment, trade union activity, domestic responsibility, marital status, or age; it also supports the Rights of People with HIV and AIDS. Care & Repair (Leeds) therefore declares its intention to work for the furtherance of equal treatment in employment, service delivery and committee representation.”

1. **Information and Support**
   1. All volunteers will be given adequate information about the work carried out by Care & Repair Leeds and about the specific areas of volunteering that they will be involved in. Induction and training will be provided in order for the volunteer to carry out their role, and a record will be maintained of all induction, courses and training undertaken. Support to individual volunteers will be provided by a named member of staff.
   2. If a volunteer has concerns about their volunteering or any dissatisfaction with their activities, they can discuss them with their named support worker, or, if this is not appropriate, with the Director of Care & Repair Leeds. The agency has a complaints policy, which can be accessed by any member of the public.
   3. Volunteers will not be paid for the work they carry out. However, in all other respects volunteers are entitled to treated on an equal basis with paid staff.
2. **Volunteers Agreement**

# A volunteer’s agreement will be drawn up with each volunteer in order to establish mutual expectations. The agreement will include the expectation for volunteers to follow the agency’s policies and procedures (particularly equal opportunities, health and safety and confidentiality), and to meet mutually agreed time commitments. It will also include the commitment of the agency to provide relevant induction and training, the name of the support worker, the payment of out-of-pocket expenses, to provide adequate insurance cover and to implement good health and safety practices. This agreement will not form a legally binding contract between volunteers and Care & Repair Leeds and no employment relationship will be created.

1. **Expenses**
   1. Volunteers will be able to claim out-of-pocket expenses in relation to their volunteering roles. They will be required to complete expenses claim forms and provide receipts for the expenses incurred wherever possible.
   2. These expenses can include travel to and from the place of volunteering, travel undertaken in the course of volunteering, meals and refreshments taken (up to the value of £3.50) during the course of volunteering and any other legitimate expenses agreed in advance with staff from Care & Repair Leeds.
   3. Care and Repair Leeds can pay up to the cost of a day rider bus fare or car travel within the boundaries of Leeds only.
   4. Volunteer drivers will be eligible to claim tax-free approved mileage rates (for 2012/13 the figure is 40p per mile for cars and vans, 24p per mile for motorcycles and 20p per mile for bicycles). They must inform their vehicle insurers of their voluntary activities, but this should not result in an increase in premiums. They will have to provide evidence of a current, valid driving licence and adequate insurance cover.
2. **Health and Safety**
   1. Care & Repair Leeds has a duty of care towards volunteers. All volunteers will be given adequate information, training, the use of safety clothing or equipment and supervision in relation to their volunteering roles.
   2. All volunteers are covered by the agency’s insurance policies for personal accident, public liability and employer’s liability. It is the duty of the Volunteer to ensure that they do not put themselves at risk at any point whilst performing duties whilst volunteering for Care & Repair.
   3. All volunteers involved in visiting clients in their homes or escorting them on trips or activities will be subject to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks at the Standard Disclosure level. This will be arranged and funded by Care & Repair Leeds.
   4. Volunteers who use their cars during the course of voluntary work must inform their insurance company that they are doing so. Volunteers should be aware that it is against the laws to make or receive a telephone call on their mobile phones whilst driving.
3. **Selection of Volunteers** 
   1. The process of selecting volunteers will aim to ensure a good match between the volunteer and the volunteer role description. References will be taken. Volunteers will be required to complete a Volunteer Application Form.
   2. For some Volunteer roles it is will be necessary for an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check to be carried out on the Volunteer. Volunteers will be informed if these checks need to be carried out.
   3. Care & Repair Leeds reserves the right to determine that a prospective Volunteer may not be appropriate. However, every effort will be made to direct unsuccessful applicants to other Volunteering opportunities
   4. Successful applicants will be asked to agree to the terms of the Volunteer Agreement. The Volunteer Agreement is a document setting out the guidelines on mutually agreed undertakings between the Volunteer and the Care & Repair Leeds. This document is not to be interpreted as being any form of contract, has no legal status and is not legally binding.
4. **Termination of Volunteer Role**
   1. The volunteering role will be terminated if the volunteer proves to be unsuitable, if the particular service ceases or if the volunteer wishes to withdraw their services.
   2. The volunteer will have regular supervision with a named member of staff. This will allow any concerns within the volunteering role to be discussed, with any expected improvements or changes as well as dates for this improvement to occur.
   3. If no improvement is noted the volunteer will be given a final warning.
   4. If no improvement is noted following the final warning the volunteer will be asked to leave. Care and Repair Leeds will provide information on other volunteering options within Leeds (i.e. the contact details of the Volunteer Centre Leeds) and if appropriate, will agree to provide references for the volunteer up to six months after leaving.
   5. If the volunteer’s behaviour contravenes Care and Repair Leeds policies on Safeguarding, Equal Opportunities, Health and Safety, Data Protection and Confidentiality then, dependant on the severity of the incident, Care and Repair Leeds may ask the volunteer to leave immediately.
   6. Everyone has a moral duty and legal obligation to protect others from harm and risk. Care & Repair deals with vulnerable adults. Any concerns you may have about any of the Care & Repair users you may come into contact with must be referred to your designated member of staff.
5. **Grievance Procedure**
   1. Any Volunteer has the right to complain if they are unhappy with their role or feel that they have not been treated fairly.
6. **Gifts**
   1. Volunteers should not accept gifts or money from members of the public they come into contact during their volunteering role.