



Volunteering policy

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Glossary

Equality	Equality means treating everyone with fairness and respect and appropriately to their needs. We recognise that people have different needs, situations and goals, and work with our customers to ensure our services meet their needs.
Diversity	Diversity means recognising that individuals are unique. We aim to use these differences to the benefit of the organisation and our customers. We believe in recognising these differences to help us to create a productive and effective workforce that delivers services to our diverse communities.
Equality Act 2010 – the general duty	The General Duty states a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act; • advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; • foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
Protected characteristic	The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination on the basis of ‘protected characteristics’. These are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disability • gender reassignment • pregnancy and maternity • marriage and civil partnerships • race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour and nationality • religion or belief (including no belief) • age • sex (previously gender) • sexual orientation.
Volunteer	A person engaged in a voluntary or unpaid capacity to assist in the delivery of services to CBH’s customers’.
Volunteering	This can be an activity that an individual carries out on their own or as part of a group. Employees may choose the type of volunteering activity that they wish to take part in; as a rule the activity must be unpaid and must benefit others in the community.

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1. Introduction & purpose

At CBH, our overall ambition as set out in our Strategic Plan 2017-22 is to be the trusted choice for local housing, property and community services. We plan to do this by serving our communities and delivering services that are valued by our customers. Focusing on our community work will help us develop the partnerships that deliver for our communities. The aims of the Community plan are:

- To raise awareness of our work in the community
- To make a difference in our communities
- To bring together organisations and residents for the benefit of the community.

2. Policy aim

Having a clear volunteering policy will:

- encourage and support our staff to use their one volunteer day a year to benefit the local community;
- help us to recruit volunteers from the local community into CBH;
- set out what volunteers can expect from volunteering for us, including gaining new skills and training;
- set out what is expected of volunteers at CBH;
- help us to meet the three aims of the General Duty under the Equality Act 2010;
- help us to meet our equality objectives; and

The aim of this policy is:

- To actively support and promote volunteering both within and outside of CBH contributing to the success of the Community Plan
- To promote best practice by providing a framework which sets out our expectations, rights and responsibilities of those volunteering with CBH;
- To ensure a consistent approach to the management and support of volunteers; and
- To ensure the application of equal opportunities in relation to volunteering.

Community organisations, tenants, leaseholders, staff and volunteers will do all they can to treat people fairly as well.

3. Staff volunteering outside of CBH

We actively encourage our employees to become involved in the local community through volunteering and lending their support to projects that enrich the quality of life and opportunities for local people.

Supporting volunteers helps us to build relationships with local communities and improve how we are perceived within it. Employees who undertake voluntary work can use the skills that they have developed at work to aid the wider community.

All employees are entitled to an annual staff volunteering day which is to be used within the Borough of Colchester; members of staff are able to arrange their own volunteering day or to attend one organised through CBH

Any employees wishing to attend a volunteering day should agree this with their line manager in the first instance, and complete the Volunteering Sign Up form which can be found on SharePoint.

4. Individuals volunteering for CBH

Volunteers are a valuable resource that exist alongside our paid staff. We recognise the benefits that volunteers bring to the organisation, and we hope to give our volunteers an opportunity to exercise their skills in a different environment and to undertake new experiences.

Volunteering is a valuable resource that exists alongside existing staff. Volunteers are not used to replace or substitute paid staff members.

CBH involve volunteers in order to:

- Provide outreach into the community
- Provide opportunity for community involvement
- Provide additional services when resources are not otherwise available
- Build links to other groups/communities
- Respond to requests from the community
- Provide outlet for special skills
- Offer the right for everyone to contribute
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- Foster good relations between different groups

4.1 Status of volunteers

Volunteers are not employees and will not have a contract of employment with us. Our expectation is that it will provide opportunities for work experience for volunteers, and the volunteer in turn will meet the role's requirements. However, the volunteer is free to refuse the role and we is not obliged to provide the work. It is also expected that should CBH or the volunteer be unable to meet the expectations set out above, they will give as much notice to the other as possible.

4.2 Our commitment to volunteers

We acknowledge that volunteers contribute in many ways; that their contribution is unique and that volunteering can benefit users of services, staff, local communities and the volunteers themselves.

We value the contribution made by volunteers and are committed to involving volunteers in appropriate positions and in ways which are encouraging, supportive and which develop volunteering.

We recognise that volunteering is an exchange. We value and benefit from the skills and knowledge volunteers bring and in return we aim to ensure volunteering with us is a positive experience.

We will:

- ensure that volunteering with us is a rewarding experience
- ensure that volunteers feel valued and appreciated
- provide volunteers with a Volunteer Pack which will provide them with all the information they may need
- provide volunteers with clear meaningful roles and tasks, which are relevant to their skills, interests and capabilities
- ensure that volunteers have a clear understanding of what is expected of them
- provide a safe working environment for volunteers
- provide adequate induction, supervision and support to enable volunteers to carry out their duties successfully
- provide appropriate and additional training where necessary, allowing volunteers to develop their skills
- ensure equal access and will not discriminate
- deal with any disciplinary and grievance matters in a reasonable and fair way manner
- ensure that volunteers are covered by insurance

4.3 What we ask of volunteers

We ask that volunteers agree to:

- accept and adhere to the procedures outlined in their Volunteer Pack
- complete a basic DBS check if the role requires
- adhere to all Health and Safety policies and procedures
- understand and adhere to our equal opportunities commitments and legal obligations
- be committed, reliable and punctual
- give sufficient warning if they are unable to honour commitments
- attend essential training and support sessions, and ask for additional help and support if needed
- respect confidentiality
- follow the grievance and disciplinary procedures
- act appropriately
- inform us of any pre-existing medical conditions or special needs that might affect their ability to undertake certain tasks
- provide feedback, suggestions and recommendations regarding their role.

5. Recruitment and selection

We are committed to equal opportunities and believe that volunteering should be open to all regardless of age, disability, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage or civil partnership. We ensure that volunteering opportunities are widely promoted to make them accessible to all members of the community.

5.1 Application process

Individuals who wish to volunteer for CBH will be required to complete a Volunteer Application Form. If needed, help will be given to individuals who may require assistance in completing the application form.

Each person will be assessed against criteria outlined in the volunteer task description, and potential volunteers may be invited to a formal or informal interview where further discussions about the post and their suitability will take place. Prior to accepting any volunteer for placement, we will seek references and where appropriate complete a Basic DBS check.

5.2 Volunteer pack

On commencing his/her volunteer work, the volunteer will receive a Volunteer Pack which will include:

- General information about CBH
- A copy of our Volunteering Policy
- Health and Safety Guidelines
- Details of where he/she can access our policies and procedures
- Information about the service area they will be working in and role they will be carrying out
- Name of supervisor, team leader and relevant manager
- Any other relevant information

6. When a volunteer leaves

We ask that volunteers give us as much notice as they are able to before leaving.

Before a volunteer leaves they may be asked to complete a questionnaire and/or attend an informal meeting with their supervisor to discuss:

- Their best and worst experiences whilst volunteering
- If they felt they had received enough training
- If appropriate, the reason they are leaving
- Any suggestions on how we can improve what we offer volunteers
- Feedback on how well we felt the volunteer performed in their role.

7. Expenses

Volunteers are eligible and entitled to reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred whilst carrying out their role, this includes reasonable travel

expenses incurred when travelling to and from the place of volunteering. Prior approval must be agreed and given by the volunteer's manager/supervisor before claiming expenses.

8. Health and safety

The health and safety of our staff and volunteers is paramount. All volunteering activities within CBH are subject to risk assessment by managers/supervisors prior to consent being given to participate in the activity, and we ask that volunteers accept their responsibility to work safely.

During their induction volunteers will be given a briefing on emergency procedures such as fire safety, first aid and accident reporting, and we will provide volunteers with appropriate guidance on any health and safety issues that arise.

All volunteer and work experience placements will be provided with written risk assessments for each task they will be undertaking.

9. Grievance and disciplinary procedure

Clearly-defined grievance and disciplinary procedures are important because they provide both volunteers and paid staff with a structured mechanism for resolving conflicts and handling problems.

9.1 Grievance procedure

This following procedure allows volunteers to resolve any problems that cause them concern during their stay.

- If a volunteer has a problem with an employee or another volunteer, they should first discuss the matter with their supervisor in the first instance.
- If they feel that they cannot talk to their supervisor then they should approach their team leader.
- If the problem still cannot be resolved in this way then volunteers should write to their named manager.

9.2 Disciplinary procedure

This procedure occurs when we have concerns about the volunteer.

- If a supervisor is unhappy with a volunteer's conduct and/or behaviour or work they will talk to the volunteer and try to resolve the problem.
- If the problem continues or a more serious behavioural problem arises then the team leader can terminate the volunteer's involvement with immediate effect.

10. Confidentiality

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of privileged and sensitive information which they may be exposed to whilst volunteering. This confidentiality agreement includes information involving members of staff, volunteers, councillors, customers and matters relating to confidential CBH business.

Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in termination of a volunteer's placement.

Any information obtained and processed in accordance with this policy will be done so in compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

11. Equality and diversity

CBH is committed to treating people with fairness and respect, and appropriately to their needs.

We strive to meet in full our responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty, and to do more. We are committed to opposing all forms of discrimination and unfair treatment on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

- We aim to advance equality of opportunity, and equality of access to our services, for all groups
- We involved our tenants and leaseholders and we work with partners in our community to tackle prejudice and advance understanding
- We seek to embed equality into the day-to-day business of our organisation. Our Equality Objectives are driven and monitored through our strategic plan and its delivery plans, and our approach and progress is scrutinised by our Board
- We are committed to openness and transparency and we publish policies and strategies, along with their 'Equality Impact Assessment', which help to ensure fair treatment towards all groups
- We aim to be a leader within our community.

We all have a responsibility to tackle discrimination and ensure we do not discriminate on any unreasonable grounds. We also expect that our individual board members, staff, contractors, partner organisations, tenants, leaseholders and volunteers will do all they can to treat people fairly as well.

12. References

- CBH Community Plan
- CBH Equal Opportunities Statement
- Equality Act 2010
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

13. Related documents

- Health and safety Policy
- Lone worker policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Information & confidentiality policy
- Volunteer Application Form
- Equality Monitoring Form

Document control sheet

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Document amendment history

Version	Type	Date	Brief Description of changes
1.0	New	June 2019	This policy is an amalgamation of the Staff Volunteering policy and Volunteering for CBH policy.