Volunteer policy

1. Introduction

The Keniston resident panels are made up of a number of volunteers who are our residents, working to ensure that local voices are able to influence the delivery and design of our housing services. Volunteering is one way that our residents are genuinely involved in this work.

A 'volunteer' is defined as someone who commits time and energy for the benefit of others. There is no financial reward, but any out of pocket expenses will be paid for. For Keniston, a volunteer is a person who makes a commitment to support Keniston in order to support resident engagement in the design and delivery of housing services.

2. Benefits of Volunteers

The benefits to Keniston of volunteers:

- Volunteers can bring a perspective to our work that reflects the views of the local community.
- Volunteers can help to shape services we currently provide.
- Residents are more likely to identify with members of their own community, particularly if those communities are seldom heard.

3. Benefits for volunteers

The benefits of volunteering with Keniston include:

- Providing people with new challenges and a chance to learn new skills.
- Volunteering can be a stepping stone into employment or training opportunities.
- Volunteering can provide opportunities to meet other people.
- Volunteering can provide an opportunity to be involved with something interesting, absorbing and rewarding.

4. Recruitment

- All Keniston residents are automatically eligible to join the resident panel. Member preferences are agreed on joining.

- All Keniston residents are eligible to apply for the Scrutiny Panel, but members are interviewed and selected based on the person specification for the role.

- All opportunities for involvement will be advertised via the Resident panel newsletter, meetings, adverts, leaflets, by email and information stands at events.

5. Induction and Training

- Volunteers will be invited to a meet and greet induction to find out about Keniston and meet some of the staff. These are held when we have enough members interested in attending.
- The purpose of an induction is to welcome new members to our panels and make them feel a valued addition to the team. Induction will also cover roles and responsibilities.
- When available, training will be given to volunteers to enable them to develop and improve their performance and personal development, taking into consideration the needs of the panels and the resources available.

6. Volunteer rights and Responsibilities

Our volunteers can expect to:

- Be given a task description depending on the role outlining the tasks they will be asked to perform and the level of responsibility which goes with them.
- Have out-of-pocket expenses reimbursed.
- Feel valued, supported and be treated with respect.
- Be able to express their concerns or grievances.

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7. Keniston expects its volunteers to:

- Do their best when carrying out their roles.
- Follow our policies, procedures and good practice guidelines.
- Not act in a way which would bring harm to the Keniston reputation.
- To treat with respect our staff, other volunteers, visitors, other agencies and organisations we work with.
- Let the appointed person know if they are going to be late or unable to attend their agreed day / time.

8. Confidentiality

- Keniston has an explicit Confidentiality Policy that all members of our committee, staff and volunteers must adhere to.

9. Conflict of interest

- All members are expected to comply with our Conflict of Interest Policy, which includes completing an annual declaration.

10. Resolving Problems

- The relationship between Keniston and our volunteers is entirely voluntary and does not imply any contract. However, it is important that we are able to maintain our high standards of quality and service, and it is also important that our volunteers should enjoy making their contribution to our service.
- If volunteers have a complaint or grievance about our organisation, a member of staff, or another volunteer, then please come and discuss this with us.

Contact information

Your main point of contact is **Lynn Russ** Engagement & communications officer, however if she is not available you can contact Sue McDonnell Operations Director.

Keniston Housing Association 13 Artington Close Farnborough Kent BR6 7UL
Email: lynnruss@kenistonha.co.uk or suemcdonnell@kenistonha.co.uk
Phone: 01689 889700