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TO:	Housing Service Sub-Committee
PREPARED BY:	Chris Chalk (DH&CI)
SUBJECT:	VOLUNTEERING POLICY
DATE OF MEETING:	26 November 2024
APPROVED BY:	Paul Martin (CEO)

VOLUNTEERING POLICY

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VOLUNTEERING POLICY

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1. MILNBANK HOUSING ASSOCIATION (MHA) STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

MHA's mission is to provide excellent homes and services in a thriving community. We believe that people living in the MHA community should:

- Have warm, safe, and affordable homes, and receive excellent services from MHA.
- Live in neighbourhoods that are clean and well cared for, with real community pride.
- Have access to opportunities and services that promote a good quality of life.
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2. MHA's VALUES

Working as 'One Milnbank' so that we offer the same quality of services, support and housing to all tenants and residents.

3. LEGAL & REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

The Management Committee leads and directs MHA to ensure good outcomes for its tenants and other service users. The Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Framework Financial & Regulatory, Standard 6 states that the governing body and senior officers have the skills and knowledge they need to be effective. MHA adheres to all relevant legal employment requirements associated with this policy. Regulatory Standard 2 "The RSL is open about and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders. And its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities."

4. POLICY INTRODUCTION

- 4.1 MHA believes that volunteering has an intrinsic value for the community because it is underpinned by the principles of choice, exchange, active citizenship, lifelong learning and social inclusion. The Association endorses the definition of formal volunteering set out within Scotland's National Volunteering Strategy that:

"...the giving of time and energy through a third party which can bring measurable benefits to the volunteer, individual beneficiaries, groups and organisations, communities, the environment and society at large. It is a choice undertaken of one's own free will and is not motivated primarily for financial gain or for a wage or salary".

4.2 MHA also supports the aims of Glasgow's Strategic Volunteering Framework:

"Volunteering is a fundamental building block of civil society – it is recognised that volunteering opportunities have a positive impact on individuals, organisations and the wider community."

4.3 By supporting the development of both formal and informal voluntary support networks, MHA's primary aim is to add value to its existing services and extend the range of supports available to tenants, particularly those who are most vulnerable.

4.4 The aim of this policy is for MHA to:

- Promote and support a range of volunteering opportunities to improve the quality of life for residents and help to foster a caring and inclusive community.
- Develop a culture of volunteering within and across MHA services which is supported and valued by residents and staff.
- Improve the quality of life and opportunity for the community through volunteering and the provision of appropriate voluntary services.
- Develop good practice in volunteering to ensure high quality service delivery and provide a positive volunteering experience for volunteers.
- Work towards the recognised good practice principles and to contribute to relevant policy agendas.

4. PRINCIPLES OF VOLUNTEERING POLICY

5.1 Principles

MHA endorses the following principles of volunteering: -

- Recognises the added value that volunteering can bring to individuals and the local community in many areas of life

including social and community care, community development, the environment, education and lifelong learning.

- Recognises that the role of volunteers compliments, not replaces professional staff.
- Gives commitment to volunteering and promotes measures to support it.
- Will seek to ensure that its wider organisational policies will not adversely affect volunteering.
- Will aim to provide preparation, training and support to volunteers.
- Will adequately insure its volunteers in the course of carrying out their prescribed voluntary activity.

5.2 Practices

Based on the above principles MHA will implement the following: -

- Identify those areas and roles in which its services can be enhanced or extended appropriately through the involvement of volunteers and to ensure that these opportunities compliment the work of paid staff
- Recruitment and selection:
 - All volunteering opportunities will be advertised (where applicable) via MHA's resident communication systems (e.g. newsletters/website)
 - Prospective volunteers will be invited for an informal meeting and will be placed where appropriate
 - All volunteers are required to complete a 'starter form' (Appendix 1) which outlines the area they'll be volunteering in, the duration, number of volunteering hours per week etc.
- Volunteers are expected to adhere to the Associations Code of Conduct, policies and procedures including confidentiality, equal opportunities, health & safety and alcohol & drugs etc.

6. SELECTION, INDUCTION, TRAINING & SUCCESSION PLANNING

6.1 Selection

The nature of the task to be undertaken by a volunteer will often inform the selection process. As with paid staff, particular care needs to be taken when volunteers will have contact with vulnerable people or given positions of trust. The selection process will ensure that only suitable individuals are matched to these roles and may include training prior to placement or Disclosure Checks.

Other roles that are less formal and not within the scope of Regulated Work under PVG will not require the same level of vetting. All interested volunteers will be asked to informally meet the personnel responsible for the area in which they are volunteering, to talk through what's involved in volunteering and the range of volunteering opportunities that are available. These details will be collated and passed to the Corporate Services Manager to record on MHA's Volunteering Register.

6.2 Induction

This will take the form of a basic introduction to MHA and its services and an outline of where, as volunteers, they fit into the overall organisational structure. It will clarify a range of details (e.g. MHA's broad aims, policies and services, the premises, fire procedures, first aid, other health and safety issues, their role, duties, who will supervise and support them). The Induction is conducted by the Manager of the function where the volunteering is taking place.

6.3 Training & Development

This will vary depending on the nature and scope of each volunteering opportunity. Training is closely tied in with support. If applicable, training sessions will aim to give volunteers useful tools and resources, develop skills and awareness and prepare them for dealing with the sorts of issues and potentially challenging situations they may encounter as a volunteer. It should ensure that a quality service is being provided. Volunteers also become aware through training, of expectations; levels of commitment; reliability; confidentiality; accountability and responsibility and expected codes of conduct.

6.4 Succession Planning

As with Management Committee, the Association actively seeks to ensure that current volunteers are retained and that a supply of future potential residents within the community are interested in becoming volunteers. The Association recognises that volunteering is a crucial part of the Organisations Succession Planning going forward and reference to this is made within the Succession Planning Strategy. Volunteering has a positive impact on MHA's community and has the ability to develop the skills and knowledge required for individuals to become a future Committee Member.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

MHA acknowledges that volunteering brings a range of benefits to its services and believes that an effective partnership approach between residents, volunteers and staff will be achieved based on the principles and practices outlined above. The provision of high quality services to tenants is MHA's primary objective. In order to achieve this:

- 7.1 Volunteers engaged in MHA's services should:
- Know what is expected of them
 - Have clear lines of support and supervision
 - Be shown appreciation and have their efforts recognised by MHA
 - Have safe working conditions
 - Be appropriately insured under MHA's public & employers liability cover
 - Have clear channels for communicating difficulties or concerns
- 7.2 Volunteers have a responsibility to:
- Be reliable, honest and trustworthy in their dealings with people
 - Respect confidentiality and adhere to the terms of MHA's Code of Conduct
 - Undertake specified tasks in a manner which is consistent with the aims and values of MHA
 - Work within MHA's framework of policies and guidelines for services
 - Adhere to agreed lines of accountability
 - Inform tenants/service users that they are volunteers

8. HEALTH & SAFETY

MHA will be responsible for ensuring that it protects volunteers working within its services from any risks or hazards associated with their voluntary work. The activities of volunteers will be considered within the scope of its general risk assessment and MHA will take all reasonable and practicable steps to ensure the volunteers' health and safety. (E.g. establishing safe systems of work, not place at risk either the volunteers physical or mental wellbeing, providing relevant training and general advice).

9. EXPENSES

Volunteers should not be out of pocket for the work that they carry out on behalf of MHA. Upon receiving relevant receipts, expenses will be paid for items agreed that are incurred during the course of volunteering (e.g. travel, use of personal phone). Volunteers who are in receipt of benefits will be offered the services of MHA's Income Maximisation Team who, using DWP guidelines, will provide advice on this prior to anyone commencing volunteering.

All volunteers are entitled to a free lunch from Millie's café, each day that they volunteer.

10. RECOGNITION & ACCREDITATION

10.1 Recognition: Volunteers

The Association recognises the contribution volunteers make to the lives of MHA's residents and to its services, and for the added value they bring in terms of new initiatives and service flexibility, as well as promoting community engagement and involvement.

MHA will promote recognition as an integral part of its quality management structures. We understand that every volunteer is unique and that we will require a range of informal (e.g. Showcasing the work of volunteers via MHA's newsletter) and formal measures (e.g. Certificates for service, volunteer testimonials, celebrating 'volunteers' week) that will serve to highlight and validate the work of volunteers across MHA.

10.2 Recognition: The Organisation

MHA is accredited with the Volunteer Friendly Award Scheme which recognises organisations for their quality management and good practice in working with and supporting volunteers.

11. EQUALITY & HUMAN RIGHTS

MHA's is committed to equal opportunities, and we will respond to the different needs and service requirements of individuals, and we will not discriminate against any individual for any reason outlined in Equality & Human Rights Legislation.

12. DATA COLLECTION

MHA will manage all personal data in accordance with our obligations under the GDPR regulations and the Association's Policy.

13. POLICY MONITORING & REVIEW

The Volunteering Policy will be reviewed by the Housing Services Sub-Committee every 3 years or as otherwise deemed necessary.

VOLUNTEERS STARTER FORM				
PERSONAL DETAILS:				
Full Name:		Male		
		Female		
Address (including Postcode):				
Telephone No:		Date of Birth:		

<u>NEXT OF KIN DETAILS:</u>		
Name:	Address:	Relationship:
Telephone Nos:	Home:	Mobile:

DOCTOR'S DETAILS:		
Name:		
Address:		Telephone No:

VOLUNTEERING DETAILS:	
Area of Volunteering/Responsibilities:	
Personnel Responsible for Volunteer:	
Hours per day/week:	
Start Date:	
Duration:	
Authorised (HR):	
Signed (Volunteer):	