

# SUPPORTING TENANT AND RESIDENT VOLUNTEERING POLICY

<b>Version Number</b>	V4
<b>Date of Current Version</b>	November 2022
<b>Approved by / Date</b>	H Stockham / November 2022
<b>Annual Review Date</b>	December 2023*
<b>Full Review Date</b>	December 2023*

<b>Executive Summary:</b>
The aims of the policy are to highlight the importance of volunteers and their work across Rochdale Borough, to detail the support we offer to volunteers in various settings, and to demonstrate how we work to provide positive outcomes for tenant and resident volunteers and how we protect their safety, health and wellbeing.

<b>Policy Grouping/Directorate(s)</b>	Customer & Communities	
<b>Author Name / Job Title</b>	Philip Worthington (Community Investment Manager)	
<b>EIA Completed</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Publication</b>	Intranet <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Website <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Notes:</b>		
*Review delayed due to a review of the wider service area taking place. The review is expected to be complete by June 2024.		
This policy will remain in place until the review is complete.		

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy outlines the role of Rochdale Boroughwide Housing (RBH) when supporting tenants and residents in a diverse range of volunteer opportunities. This includes both volunteering directly for RBH and for partner organisations that provide services in our neighbourhoods.
- 1.2 RBH recognises that volunteering is critical to the successful delivery of many services that benefit our tenants and the communities in which they live. We are therefore committed to supporting volunteers in any setting where their involvement leads to positive outcomes for tenants.
- 1.3 RBH defines a volunteer as anyone who offers their time for the benefit of others without receiving financial reward.

## 2 Context

- 2.1 An estimated 1,239 VCSE organisations are supported by 42,626 volunteers every year in Rochdale borough. These volunteers give roughly 158,000 hours of their time to support these organisations each and every week. This is the equivalent of £78 Million that volunteers give to Rochdale borough each year. ([Rochdale State of the Sector 2021](#))
- 2.2 In the financial year 2019/20, 36 projects and organisations that RBH funded through the Members' Community Fund were supported by 153 local residents that gave 14,807 hours of their time. In addition, Your Local Pantry clubs in Kirkholt and Smallbridge were supported by 18 dedicated volunteers that gave over 5000 hours of their time to help redistribute almost 20 tons of surplus food, providing tenants with £48,000 of savings.
- 2.3 As an anchor organisation within Rochdale Borough we have a responsibility to ensure the long-term sustainability of the local VCSE sector. Without the hard work of dedicated volunteers, many of our local VCSE sector organisations would not be able to operate. So, by investing in these volunteers we are also investing in the thousands of people who benefit from services delivered by VCSE organisations.

## 3 Aims & Objectives

- 3.1 The aims of the policy are:
  - To highlight the importance of volunteers and their work across Rochdale Borough
  - To detail the support RBH offers to volunteers in various settings
  - To demonstrate how RBH works to provide positive outcomes for volunteers and how we protect their safety, health and wellbeing
- 3.2 The policy fits with the mutual values of RBH:

**Responsibility** - We acknowledge we have a responsibility to support all those who volunteer their time in projects delivered by both RBH and partner organisations, where those projects produce positive outcomes for tenants. We also recognise

we have a responsibility to support local VCSE sector organisations, and one of the ways in which we can do this is by supporting their volunteers.

**Equity** – Anyone who wants to volunteer their time for the benefit of others should be able to access opportunities to do so. We will work to ensure that any barriers to volunteering for RBH or for partner organisations are removed. This policy clearly demonstrates the support that is on offer for volunteers and how volunteers can access that support. RBH commits to providing this support to all volunteers that meet eligibility requirements.

## **4 Policy Statement**

**4.1 Volunteer Settings** – the following are examples of settings where tenant and resident volunteers may be engaged. RBH will offer support to volunteers engaged in all these settings:

- Your Local Pantry – a Pantry operated by RBH or a Pantry operated by a partner organisation in an RBH neighbourhood
- Members' Community Fund Projects – all projects that are funded through our Members' Community Fund
- Tenant and Resident groups – all tenant and resident groups operating within an RBH neighbourhood e.g. Tenant and Resident Associations (TRAs) or Tenant Managed Organisations (TMOs)
- Other community groups – all other volunteer-led community groups operating in an RBH neighbourhood that benefit tenants and residents
- Partner Organisations – any VCSE organisations that have been commissioned by RBH to provide services for our tenants or in our neighbourhoods, or where their services have significant and tangible benefits for our tenants or the communities in which they live

**4.2 Volunteer settings that are not covered by this policy:**

- Work experience within RBH – opportunities for tenants and residents to volunteer within RBH will be governed by the relevant procedure
- Service improvement, consultation, co-design and co-production – the Engagement Strategy and associated policies will be adhered to when supporting involved tenants
- Employee volunteering in the community – employees will be governed by the same policies when they are volunteering in the community as part of their official RBH duties

**4.3 Support for Volunteers** – RBH will provide support for all volunteers offering their time in the settings detailed in 4.1, this support will include but is not limited to:

- Access to accredited and non-accredited training courses delivered by RBH. These courses will be relevant to the duties associated with the volunteering activity. This may include where there is a legal requirement to complete training before carrying out certain activities, or where the training will reduce the risk of the volunteering activity. Examples might include Pantry volunteers having access to a Level 2 Food Safety and

Hygiene qualification, or a gardening group having access to a moving and handling qualification.

- Access to accredited and non-accredited training courses delivered by partner organisations. Where there is a requirement for volunteers to gain new skills and qualifications to carry out their duties effectively, or where those skills and qualifications would reduce the risk of the volunteering activity, and when these new skills or qualifications are not delivered by RBH, we will secure access through partner organisations. Where there is a cost to access these skills and qualifications, RBH will only cover this cost if there is a legal requirement for volunteers to have them in order to carry out their duties. Examples might include bookkeeping courses for treasurers of TRAs and COSHH for gardening groups.
- Support for volunteers in lead roles in grassroots voluntary and community groups. Where volunteers are in a leading role within a voluntary and community organisation operating in one of our neighbourhoods, support will be offered to the volunteer to help build their capacity and that of their organisation.
- Volunteers may be offered a 1-2-1 assessment with the Work and Skills Project Coordinator to identify their skills and aspirations. The Work and Skills Project Coordinator will then make referrals to relevant internal and external teams. This may include training providers, RBC or the RBH Engagement Team.
- A DBS checking service for volunteers who are required to undertake regulated activity as part of their duties in projects and organisations that have been funded by RBH. More detail on this is provided in the DBS Checks for Volunteers Procedure which has been included as an appendix at the end of the document.

## **5 Monitoring**

- 5.1 This policy will be monitored quarterly by the Community Investment Team to ensure any required amendments to the policy are actioned with the introduction of any new legislation affecting the DBS, or with any changes to the definitions of regulated activity.

## **6 Review**

- 6.1 All RBH strategies, policies, service standards and procedures are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are 'fit for purpose' and comply with all relevant legislation and statutory regulations.
- 6.2 This policy will go through the full policy approval process every 3 years and will undergo a desktop review annually. This is to ensure that it is fit for purpose and complies with all relevant and statutory regulations.

## **7 Links with Other RBH Documents**

7.1 This policy links to the following policies and strategies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Engagement Strategy
- Risk Management Strategy
- Community Investment Strategy

## **8 Appendices**

Appendix 1 – DBS Checks for Volunteers Procedure