VOLUNTEERING LIFE CYCLE

Engagement and Recruitment
Committed to promote Diversity and Inclusion.

Induction/Onboarding
Robust process to ensure volunteers feel welcomed and prepared.

Orientation & Integration
Reinforcing support and expectations to help volunteers feel confident.

Ongoing Volunteer Management
Empowering and motivating volunteers through continuous support.

Feedback & Recognition
Ensuring volunteers feel heard and celebrated for their contributions.

Volunteer Impact Analysis
Telling story behind the numbers to give a 360 degree view of volunteer impact.

Volunteer Exit Process
An opportunity to gather a useful feedback and to thank volunteer for their time and commitment.

Red Kite Community Housing

Overview

As a tenant-led organisation, Red Kite are committed to ensuring that our volunteer structures and volunteer experience supports the enhancement of a strong tenant voice. Consistency and clarity in the volunteer experience are vitally important in making sure that we continue to work in close partnership with our tenants to realise the potential in our communities.
This document outlines the different stages of the Volunteer Life Cycle and identifies and addresses obstacles and barriers within the volunteer journey. It also emphasises the importance of capturing and holding the volunteer's motivation early and using the marketing, communications, recruitment and retention strategies to enhance and maximise the volunteer life cycle.

1. Engagement and Recruitment
Our volunteer engagement approach focuses on keeping our volunteers active and interested and avoiding volunteer burnout. Currently, we are engaging with our volunteers via regular catch ups, volunteer newsletter, panel meetings and appreciation events. Our Tenant-led status demonstrates our ongoing commitment to increasing the range of ways that tenants can meaningfully influence Red Kite decision-making and means that we will need to always be considering how this work will grow and develop further.

How do we do it?

- Kirona Forms are currently our main and biggest source of recruiting new volunteers. The Community Engagement Support will perform the initial volunteer suitability checks on Open Housing before passing on any application to the Digital Engagement Specialist. If there are any concerns the digital Engagement Specialist will raise it with the ASB team before taking forward an expression of interest. This is to protect the overall wellbeing of our volunteers and to avoid placing potential volunteers in an inappropriate situation.

Area to be checked	**Who by?**
Recent or high-level rent arrears (that exceed more than one-month arrears)	Community Engagement Support and Digital Engagement Specialist
Vulnerability (for flagging any support needs)	Community Engagement Support and Digital Engagement Specialist
Recent and serious ASB issues that constitute a breach of tenancy	Community Engagement Support and Digital Engagement Specialist
Flags for behaviour	Community Engagement Support and Digital Engagement Specialist
Overall suitability check (ensuring that the tenant is not likely to be subject to tenancy action for serious breach of tenancy and does not present safety concerns to staff or other volunteers.)	Staff member completing Kirona form referral

- Our annual programme of events such as Neighbourhood Awards, Community mornings etc. also helps us to engage and recruit new volunteers.
- We acknowledge that our staff members across the organisation can play a vital role in helping us recruiting new volunteers. Our Quarterly Engagement Forum will bring together staff who facilitate groups within the volunteer structure, we will seek to develop this work by identifying Engagement Champions across frontline teams who can also refer in potential volunteers.
- Training staff on engagement will also foster better relationships between volunteers and staff as well as help volunteer retention. Training will also be provided to frontline staff to enable them to more easily identify new tenant volunteers in their day-to-day interactions

1.1 Finding motivation

Each volunteer is unique and will have different motivation and skill sets, and we need to capture and hold that interest early enough to build rapport and maximise the success of the volunteer life cycle. Understanding what motivates our potential volunteers, such as their preferred timings, working style and their lifestyle, leads to smarter recruitment which in turn helps to improve volunteer retention.

1.2 Marketing

The use of well-designed marketing material and innovative ways to engage and recruit new volunteers is essential.

How we aim to attract new volunteers?

- We continue to review and revamp our volunteer webpage to help attract new volunteers. The website provides clear information about the different volunteering opportunities available, what's involved with each one, the support volunteers receive and what they will gain from being involved.
- We are keen to use our social media platforms (such as Facebook and Instagram) to inform residents about volunteering opportunities and engage with them digitally.
- Leaflets to send out to residents and for colleagues to leave these leaflets with residents on a home audit. These can also be distributed to key community partners to help spread the word in our communities.
- We also use the Red Kite digital newsletter to promote volunteering opportunities. This has a reach of over 4000+ residents and is a great way to attract new volunteers.
- We look to utilise opportunities to include volunteer promotional material within any bulk communications to residents, incorporating leaflets, posters or promotional materials.

1.3 What's on Offer

We recognise that there is a need to continually review and develop our volunteering activities. Offering a balanced programme of opportunities that are accessible to all residents. Offering more bitesize, one-off and varied activities to attract a wider and more diverse pool of potential volunteers. We will ensure clearly defined role briefs help to match volunteers to the right volunteering opportunities for their unique skills and circumstances, a 'one-size fits all' approach is always to be avoided.

1.4 Diversity, Inclusion and Engaging with harder to reach demographics

We are committed to recognising and celebrating the diversity within our communities. As a result, we must make sure that our engagement approach, structure, and strategies for realising potential are not only effective but also promote equal opportunities for our residents to involve as and when they want.

How do we do it?

- By identifying any barriers or challenges that stop residents from engaging with us. Our annual volunteering survey and our monitoring of diversity levels within our engaged volunteer pool will be key methods for identifying challenges and rectifying them. Tolerances for diversity will be developed as part of the actions outlined in the 2021-2026 Resident and Community Engagement Strategy Action Plan and the Corporate Journey.
- Capturing residents' interest and passion and finding out the issues that matter most to them.
- The Covid-19 pandemic has provided a huge push to digital engagement. Providing IT support to customers is key as we recognise that this can help to overcome key barriers posed by face-to-face engagement. This might include those with caring responsibilities or perhaps certain health conditions, creating spaces for all residents to be able to engage with us without needing to attend a specific location to participate.
- To engage people from a diverse range of backgrounds we remain committed to offering flexibility in our volunteering opportunities, so they consider volunteer availability as well as the needs of the organisation.
- Our pilot work with the Young Resident Forum demonstrated that young people have packed schedules, with college, various extracurricular activities and work. Asking people directly about their preferred timings to engage and how often they would like to be invited to the forum was key. Offering tangible support that enables them to lead meaningful community projects that enhance their CV's has also helped to attract young residents.
- Not everyone has access to a personal vehicle, so meetings and events should be scheduled in locations that are easily accessible by public transportation. We have seen from experience that offering transportation support can help increase resident participation. We can provide a taxi for those that do not have other methods of transportation available to them. An ongoing hybrid approach to engagement can also help to overcome some of these barriers.
- We are committed to ensuring that our volunteers are never out of pocket when volunteering with us and our expenses policy will provide support to cover any reasonable costs associated with the voluntary activity they are undertaking with Red Kite. This helps to ensure that financial circumstances are never a barrier to having their voice heard.

2. Induction/Onboarding

2.1 Robust Process

We will provide a clear and comprehensive induction process to ensure volunteers feel welcomed and prepared.

The purpose is to bring our new volunteers up to speed, providing a welcome start to their Red Kite Housing journey with a blend of learning opportunities.

The induction programme* includes these key elements:

- Pre-induction process
- Induction process (including sharing the printed Red Kite induction booklet)
- Post Induction process
- IT requests
- Training requests
- Volunteer Reviews

It is important that we treat all our volunteers fairly and ensure they have all the tools and information to hand to work successfully with Red Kite

**Please refer to the induction checklist for core components to each key element of the induction programme.*

2.2 Branded Welcome Pack

A welcome pack is the tangible start of the volunteer journey and will demonstrate Red Kite's commitment and investment to valuing and supporting our volunteers. Developing a bespoke and professionally branded product will make the lasting impression and maximise the impact. A great way of adding excitement and demonstrating how much we value our volunteers as well as providing the core information needed by our volunteers.

3. Orientation & Integration - Reinforcing support and expectations

A well delivered orientation process will let volunteers know what they're getting into and will help them feel more confident when they start volunteering. The integration process helps reinforce good performance and emphasises the training and support available for volunteers to achieve the same. Therefore, it is important to take the time to introduce our volunteer programs to each new volunteer.

How do we do it?

Thoughtfully designed ***Presentation*** can be very useful to deliver this part of the process effectively. The content should include:

- Sharing our mission with volunteers
- How staff will coach and support the newcomer
- Put a spotlight on the training available to conduct the role effectively

- Provide an overview of the different volunteer opportunities available so they have a 360-degree understanding of our wider volunteering activities and how they all connect.
- Establish expectations of volunteers
- Show volunteers how they will make a difference
- Connect their motivation with organisational goal – this could be a bespoke slide based on an individual volunteer and may include some examples.
- By arranging meetings with the chairperson and staff group lead ahead of volunteers joining their first observation session. This helps to ensure the volunteer is welcomed and fully supported during their initial meetings.

4. Ongoing Volunteer Management

As soon as a volunteer has been successfully recruited, an ongoing volunteer management process kicks in which consists of scheduling volunteers, and empowering and motivating them to fulfil their roles well. It is critical that we effectively track the time given by our volunteers, utilising ***timesheets*** and shared calendars to capture accurate information. RotaCentral have delivered a demo session to the team with a view to deliver a pilot using this approach. The team will always consider how software can be used to help us to more accurately monitor volunteer activity for KPI reporting and volunteer wellbeing.

An important aspect of volunteer management is to ensure that they are kept motivated. If a volunteer starts losing interest in their allocated task/group, then they should be provided with opportunities to try new activities or different panels to see if they are a better match for the volunteer.

All new volunteers are asked to read and sign the Ground Rules for Volunteers form* that is sent to them during the induction process.

Volunteers can apply to get involved providing they:

- Are committed to the Mission, Vision and Values of Red Kite and the role of the group they sign up to and agree to keep to our Behaviour Charter. Volunteers will also be expected to become a member of Red Kite.
- Sign an agreement to confirm understanding of the ground rules and that they always agree to observe them.
- Volunteers keep to their tenancy conditions

If volunteers do not keep to the ground rules they may be asked to stand down from volunteering.

If a volunteer has previously been excluded from any involvement activity they cannot reapply to get involved again unless Board approval has been given to do so.

**Please refer to the Ground Rules for Volunteers form for key components*

4.1 Opportunities to Grow and Build Useful Skills

We hold a dedicated tenant training budget to support volunteer attendance and involvement in a wide variety of development opportunities, including conferences, training sessions, TPAS member events, visits to other housing associations and involvement in regional or national panels and consultation. We will deliver internal training courses for all volunteers on key topics such as challenging effectively, chairing skills and scrutiny, often delivered by expert TPAS trainers.

Volunteers within RRT will have access to dedicated 1-2-1 support that is provided by the independent tenant advisor/ group mentor for RRT. Currently this is Christine Mitchell from High Quality Interactions (HQI).

The development of a formal or informal mentoring programme **"Buddy me"** is an excellent opportunity for more established volunteers to gain mentoring and coaching skills. This recognises and promotes their expertise, whilst creating a space for them to share their learning, tricks and tips with new volunteers. We recognise that feeling welcomed by the group of existing volunteers is critical in retaining volunteers and the buddy programme helps to establish this.

4.2 Communication

Communication is the heartbeat of effective volunteer management. Our ability to clearly communicate activities, outcomes and impact will have an impact on volunteer retention rates and volunteer satisfaction. The Covid-19 pandemic has made communication even more important, placing emphasis on finding innovative ways to digitally engage with volunteers. Key channels for communication with our existing pool of volunteers includes: email, volunteer newsletter, events programme, and monthly meetings.

5. Feedback & Recognition

Feedback is a key element to ongoing learning, allowing us to resolve any issues pro-actively and help volunteers feel heard. Implementing and facilitating regular two-way feedback between volunteers and the staff team is a must and can be done informally via a quick call, an email, or through the annual volunteering survey.

5.1 Honouring & Celebrating Volunteers (Ongoing)

Every volunteer's time is precious, and they give this generously to our organisation when there are many other causes requiring volunteers. It is crucial that we honour their commitment, recognise the difference they are making and celebrate their passion. A small gesture goes a long way such as sending a birthday card, a thank you note on their volunteering anniversary or sending flowers to recognise their extra mile contribution in organising a big event. The team utilise occasions like the annual National Volunteer Week (which runs in the first week of June) to publicly celebrate the commitment and impact of our volunteers.

6. Volunteer Impact Analysis (Quarterly Review & Annual Report)

How much the work performed by volunteers makes a difference to Red Kite services and helps us to realise the potential in our community.

It's important to capture and monitor key metrics, so we can report success to our wider organisation through the annual report and continuously monitor for any areas requiring improvement.

6.1 Why it is important to capture? Volunteers want the time they give to be worthwhile and to see the difference they are making. Community members want to know that the organisations in their communities are helping the people and causes that are important to them, and we want to ensure that tenant voice is incorporated in everything that we do at Red Kite. In meeting the expectations of the regulator and responding to developments from the Social Housing White Paper, it is key that we capture data to sufficiently evidence our achievements and compliance. With the right volunteer impact data and volunteer feedback, we can equip ourselves with the information to provide full assurance to our board members and the regulator.

6.2 What should we capture? The goals we set should determine which KPI's we track, like the team response rates for new volunteer inquiries, volunteer satisfaction and retention rates. It is also important to go beyond the basic measure of "number of hours worked" and incorporate qualitative approach to tell the story behind the numbers. Both quantitative and qualitative methods can be used to report on impact, and together they present a 360-degree view of volunteer impact. Finally, it is also useful to review the internal and external factors and obstacles affecting our ability to retain and recruit volunteers. Addressing any issues such as personal conflict between group members or a break down in staff-volunteer relationship promptly and pro-actively.

6.3 How do we capture this?
The team will report monthly KPI data to the business, monitoring several key aspects of volunteer activity and impact.
Volunteer influence data is captured primarily through meeting minutes and the key decisions log that the team should monitor and maintain. Meeting minutes show instances of residents influencing key decisions and keep records of volunteer activity for audits or regulatory IDA.
An important method for collecting this type of data is through volunteer surveys. For surveys, it is important to keep up-to-date contact records for each of our volunteers. We aim to conduct two annual surveys; one with staff and one with volunteers to gain general sense of how well volunteers are performing and help identify any areas for improvement. TP Tracker, provided by Arena Partnerships has been used by the team to store volunteer data for both monthly and annual reporting. The gathered data can be used in the annual report to showcase the overall impact of our volunteers.

7. Volunteer Exit Process

- Volunteer to notify us via email or phone call about them stepping down
- Complete and send electronic leaver form to HR, Business Support and IT to arrange deactivation of their account and arrange collection of any equipment
- Ensure return of any devices or equipment, ID badge and any confidential paperwork via courier
- Arrange farewell interview
- Update the volunteer spreadsheet, the relevant areas of our CRM systems, and inform relevant volunteer groups, and staff (including the Communications team)
- Arrange to send a thank you gift within a week of resignation being received
- Keep in touch (depending on the case) - **"Alumni"** even someone who stops volunteering with us can remain a supporter (if we offer that chance and keep in touch). Alumni volunteers can even help in short-term roles and serve as great champions as long as we keep

communication open and ask. If a volunteer who is stepping down from a formal role consents to staying on our records in this way, we will record this on the volunteer database.

8. Final words

The Volunteer Lifecyle outlines the core components of our approach to supporting volunteers to have a positive experience of working in partnership with Red Kite. This document helps to ensure we remain tenant-led, with a robust volunteering programme that listens to and celebrates a strong tenant voice.
Other key internal documents that outline our approach to engagement include:

- The Resident and Community Engagement Strategy (plus Tracker and Action Plan)
- The Corporate Journey
- RRT Policy Review Process
- Volunteer Induction Booklet

Other key external documents that shape our approach to engagement include:

- Consumer standards (particularly the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard)
- Together with Tenants Charter
- NHF 2020 Code of Governance
- The Social Housing White Paper and Charter for Social Housing Residents