



## THE CARES FAMILY

### VOLUNTEER POLICY

#### **Introduction**

The Cares Family's vision is of **socially connected communities** in which people feel **less lonely, more united** and that they **belong**. Our mission is to **bring people together across generations, backgrounds and experiences** to build community and connection.

We are a family of six charities; East London Cares, Liverpool Cares, Manchester Cares, North London Cares, South London Cares, and The Cares Family. In this policy 'The Cares Family' refers to all six charities.

Our five local charities bring older and younger neighbours together to share time, laughter, new experiences and solidarity within their local communities.

Our national charity works to bring about systemic, cultural and narrative change – while also providing our local charities with senior leadership, fundraising and operational support.

Since 2011, our model has grown from a tiny idea in a single place into a national leader. Combined, North London Cares (founded 2011), South London Cares (2014), Manchester Cares (2017), Liverpool Cares (2018) and East London Cares (2019), have **connected some 30,000 older and younger people** to share **over 1 million interactions and 250,000 hours**.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidance on how The Cares Family works with volunteers, to ensure consistent good practice. It sets out the broad principles for involvement with The Cares Family and serves as a guide for everyone within the organisation – staff, board members, partners and neighbours.

It underpins and complements our Younger Neighbour and Older Neighbour Handbooks which set out who we are and how we work.

#### **Definitions, roles and responsibilities**

We believe that everyone involved in The Cares Family is a neighbour, giving their time and energy to share stories, laughter and experiences with other neighbours in the community. We aim to facilitate friendships and mutually beneficial relationships between people who may not otherwise have met, and we believe that everyone can contribute, share and learn from each other.

However, due to our intergenerational model and to ensure that we are communicating our work and impact clearly with all stakeholders, we often find it useful to differentiate between older and younger neighbours, community partners, and volunteers. Below is a list of the definitions used at The Cares Family. People can sit under multiple categories; for example, someone can be an older neighbour as well as a fundraising volunteer, or a community partner at work as well as a younger neighbour in their free time.

**Older neighbour**

Anyone aged 65 or over who is interested in, or has taken part in, our Social Clubs and Love Your Neighbour programmes, and/or has received support through our Outreach programme.

**Younger neighbour**

Anyone aged between 18-64, who has signed up to get involved in our programmes, who has attended an induction, joined a social club, or been part of our Love Your Neighbour programme. To help us reach more people, and due to the process younger neighbours follow to join our community network, they are also sometimes referred to as volunteers.

**Community partner**

Anyone who is connected to, or involved in, our community network through their work or professional interests. Community partners can include (but are not limited to) health workers, local community group members, business owners, activity facilitators, freelancers and charity workers.

**Volunteer**

Anyone who has given their time, skills or expertise, without pay, to aid the running of our Social Clubs, Love Your Neighbour or Outreach programmes, and/or has participated in fundraising activities or our national Projects work.

**Corporate Volunteer**

Anyone who has volunteered with The Cares Family through their workplace, and whose workplace has made a financial contribution to support our work.

**Our Principles**

We recognise that volunteers contribute a huge amount of energy, enthusiasm, skills and commitment to our work, and that our work is impossible without the voluntary effort of our neighbours.

We are committed to ensuring volunteers are involved in a way that is meaningful, rewarding and safe for them, and we will be welcoming and professional in our engagements with them. We also want to ensure that volunteers feel supported, valued and have the knowledge and resources they need to perform their role effectively.

The Cares Family will hold all volunteers accountable for their behaviour to ensure the safety of all neighbours in our network.

The Cares Family will not introduce volunteers to replace paid staff.

**The Cares Family Values**

Our values are an important part of what it means to be part of The Cares Family. They are for us as staff, but also for our partners, neighbours and volunteers — we expect everyone to act in accordance with them when taking part in our programmes and activities.

**Kindness**

We are empathic, respectful and optimistic, putting people at the heart of everything we do. We ask that volunteers approach all interactions with other community members with kindness and empathy.

**Community**

We are rooted in place, representing local people's whole stories and authentic language, and passionate about the power of collective agency. We often seek to engage volunteers who live or work in the communities we're based in.

### ***Trust***

We are dedicated, responsive, reliable and accountable to people in their neighbourhoods as well as our valued partners. We trust volunteers to be respectful and kind to each other, neighbours and to staff.

### ***Bravery***

We are ambitious for our neighbours and our model, and aware of the power of openness and honesty in leadership. We welcome feedback, input and suggestions from volunteers, and we champion skill-sharing. We aim to support neighbours to feel confident in sharing their interests, hobbies and skills with each other.

### ***Learning***

We constantly appraise and innovate in our work, developing the most relevant, creative and adaptable approaches. We also expect our volunteers to learn from feedback, evaluation and communication with our staff and neighbours.

### **Fairness, equity and anti-discrimination**

The Cares Family is an anti-racist, anti-discriminatory organisation, and is committed to ensuring that the recruitment and treatment of our volunteers is carried out without prejudice regarding gender, sexual orientation, marital status, race, age or religious belief or disability.

We strive to build an inclusive and welcoming community, so discrimination of any kind will not be accepted. We ask that anyone who experiences or witnesses racism, homophobia, ableism or any other form of prejudice during our activities, informs a Cares Family staff member as soon as possible.

### **Recruitment**

The Cares Family engages new volunteers in several ways, including, but not limited to:

- Social media and digital storytelling;
- Volunteering fairs, centres and websites;
- Workplaces and corporate partners;
- Community partner meetings and events;
- Word-of-mouth, and peer-to-peer recommendations;
- Student unions and volunteering networks;
- Pro-active outreach.

We prioritise outreach and engagement in our core boroughs/wards and aim to encourage a diverse network of volunteers, reflective of the areas we work in. Volunteers do not have to live or work in our core boroughs/wards (excluding our Love Your Neighbour programmes), however a connection to these places is encouraged.

### **Types of volunteering**

Volunteering roles include (but are not limited to):

- Signing up as a younger neighbour to join Social Clubs and Love Your Neighbour;
- Helping the Outreach team with flyer dropping, street outreach and community events;

- Taking on challenge events or peer to peer fundraising to help us raise the income we need to deliver our work;
- Corporate Partnerships and volunteering through your workplace;
- Facilitating, performing or delivering a social club;
- Supporting our national Projects work.

### **Signing up to volunteer**

Volunteers can support and get involved with The Cares Family's activities in many ways, and we advise anyone interested in becoming a volunteer to sign up via our local websites at [North London Cares](#), [South London Cares](#), [Manchester Cares](#), [Liverpool Cares](#) and [East London Cares](#).

All volunteers will need to complete an induction.

Some volunteering roles will require an enhanced DBS check and a declaration of unspent criminal convictions. If a person has unspent criminal convictions, it does not necessarily mean they will not be welcome to volunteer with us, but we will follow up to ask for more information.

The Cares Family reserves the right to decline a volunteer at any stage. Reasons for this may include, but are not limited to:

- They are under 18 years old;
- They have not followed The Cares Family's policies;
- We are aware of inappropriate behaviour, racism or other forms of discrimination in their recent past (which is verifiable by a staff member);
- They are unable to acquire a clean DBS check;
- There is a conflict of interest.

### **Inductions and training**

All volunteers will receive an induction before taking part in our activities. We can deliver inductions in many ways and will choose the method most suitable based on the volunteer's availability and how they plan to be involved. The types of inductions we currently host are:

- Group younger neighbour inductions, in-person or online;
- One-to-one phone calls, video calls or in-person meetings;
- Group corporate inductions prior to a social club;
- 'Lunch and learn' style inductions, hosted with community and/or corporate partners.

Inductions are an important part of the volunteer journey and include information about safeguarding, our mission and vision, how to take part and what to expect.

Additional training such as first aid and Love Your Neighbour induction training may also be required depending on the type of volunteering.

### **Safeguarding**

The Cares Family is committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing and independence of adults who are experiencing, or at risk of, abuse and neglect.

We will take every reasonable step to ensure that adults at risk are protected where our staff, volunteers and partners are involved in the delivery of our work. All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately, in accordance with our Safeguarding procedures.

Our volunteer inductions cover the principles of safeguarding, as well as what to look out for and what could be cause for concern. Volunteers are expected to raise any concerns, big or small, about any adult at risk quickly and directly with a member of staff. Concerns can also be raised with The Cares Family's designated safeguarding lead, Roxi Rustem, via email at [roxanne.rustem@thecaresfamily.org.uk](mailto:roxanne.rustem@thecaresfamily.org.uk) or by calling 07840 066 239.

Please refer to [The Cares Family's Safeguarding Policy](#) for more information.

### **Expenses**

We aim to engage volunteers who live or work in our target areas to help build local connections and community. Due to the nature of our programmes and the number of younger and older neighbours involved, The Cares Family is unable to reimburse volunteer expenses except in exceptional circumstances. This includes travel costs, food, refreshments, clothing, petrol or other expenses.

There may be occasions where volunteers take part in a specific project, for example supporting Outreach with door knocking or enjoying a trip with their Love Your Neighbour match. In these instances, and with prior agreement, volunteer expenses will be reimbursed.

### **Health and safety**

The Cares Family will provide adequate training and feedback for volunteers in support of our [health and safety policy](#).

Smoking and excessive alcohol consumption is not permitted while taking part in our Love Your Neighbour, Social Club and Outreach programmes. However, there are occasions where The Cares Family may provide limited alcoholic drinks (for example, at a celebration or bespoke Social Club or at a fundraising event).

Drug use is never permitted during any of our activities.

All Programme Coordinators and Heads of Programmes have received first aid training and are the designated first aiders during Programme activities. There will also be a designated first aider available at all fundraising and Projects events.

### **Insurance**

The Cares Family insurance is provided by Access Underwriting Ltd. Our insurance covers public and products liability, environmental clean-up and our various public events, which are licensed where required. The Cares Family has been assessed as fit for service, and for this insurance policy, by the provider. We will review the insurance annually at the time of renewal.

Volunteers are fully covered by our insurance whilst they are on the premises or engaged in any activities on behalf of The Cares Family. The Cares Family public liability and personal accident insurance does not cover personal possessions — volunteers are advised to make their own arrangements and to take normal precautions with their own belongings.

### **Data protection**

Please see our [privacy notice](#) for more information on how we will collect and manage your data.

### **Communication and support**

We aim to keep in regular contact with all volunteers in our network, this usually looks like a monthly email update that includes a Social Club booking link. Volunteers may also occasionally receive emails about Love Your Neighbour, Outreach and Fundraising if they have participated in

these programmes or have opted in to receive those emails. All volunteers have the option to opt out of emails at any time.

Love Your Neighbour volunteers are asked to submit a visit log when visiting their Love Your Neighbour match, and the Love Your Neighbour Coordinator may occasionally need to follow up with an email or phone call to discuss details of your visit.

All programmes have at least one local Programme Coordinator who is available to answer questions or talk through any support a volunteer needs to participate in our activities.

**Feedback, suggestions, concerns and complaints**

We welcome and encourage feedback from our volunteers and recognise feedback as a vital contribution to our processes and programmes. Feedback, suggestions, concerns and/or complaints can be shared directly with all local charities and the central Cares Family team at any time. Teams can be contacted using the following details:

[The Cares Family](mailto:hello@thecaresfamily.org.uk) | [hello@thecaresfamily.org.uk](mailto:hello@thecaresfamily.org.uk)

[North London Cares](mailto:hello@northlondoncares.org.uk) | 0207 118 3838 | [hello@northlondoncares.org.uk](mailto:hello@northlondoncares.org.uk)

[South London Cares](mailto:hello@southlondoncares.org.uk) | 0207 118 0404 | [hello@southlondoncares.org.uk](mailto:hello@southlondoncares.org.uk)

[Manchester Cares](mailto:hello@manchestercares.org.uk) | 0161 207 0800 | [hello@manchestercares.org.uk](mailto:hello@manchestercares.org.uk)

[Liverpool Cares](mailto:hello@liverpoolcares.org.uk) | 0151 659 1789 | [hello@liverpoolcares.org.uk](mailto:hello@liverpoolcares.org.uk)

[East London Cares](mailto:hello@eastlondoncares.org.uk) | 0207 118 4949 | [hello@eastlondoncares.org.uk](mailto:hello@eastlondoncares.org.uk)

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