



# Customer Rewards and Recognition

## Policy and Procedure

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**Look Ahead**  
CARE, SUPPORT AND HOUSING

## Our mission

**Working with people to make choices, achieve goals and take control of their lives through high quality care, support and housing.**

## Our values

**Excellence**

**Aspiration**

**Partnership**

**Trust**

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# Policy

## 1 Scope

- 1.1 This policy and procedure applies to all customers involved in co-production, customer involvement and volunteering activities at a local and central level. The policy does not cover Corporate Volunteers and Student Placements.
- 1.2 We recognise and value the contributions customers can make to our organisation, our services and our customers' experience. Look Ahead particularly values the insight of people with experience of using support services.
- 1.3 This policy sets out Look Ahead's approach to recognising and rewarding Look Ahead customers for their involvement.
- 1.4 Look Ahead has developed this policy to ensure the approach to reward and recognition is consistent, providing guidance for all managers, staff and the central Volunteering Team on the reward and recognition of volunteers. It outlines roles, responsibilities and essential recording requirements to ensure volunteers can be rewarded for their involvement and meet financial audit requirements. It takes particular account of volunteers who are also existing Look Ahead customers.

## 2 Policy Statement

- 2.1 This policy is underpinned by the organisations customer co-production and engagement strategy and is closely aligned to the organisation's Volunteering Policy. This policy should also be read in conjunction with the Volunteering roles and responsibilities and volunteering handbook as well as the following policies and procedures:

Volunteering Policy and Procedures	Health and Safety
Finance Policies	Safeguarding
Professional Boundaries	Confidentiality and Data Protection
Lone Working	Professional Boundaries
Code of Conduct	Gifts and Hospitality
Positive Pathways	

- 2.2 Look Ahead's reward and recognition policy sets out a framework to reward volunteers for their time co-producing and volunteering with us whether this is in local services, Head Office or supporting the wider work of the organisation.
- 2.3 This policy applies to all agreed activities for Peer Support volunteering and **does not** take account of any activity not agreed within the framework set out in the volunteering policy and procedures.

- 2.4 Look Ahead aims to provide a consistent approach to rewarding peer support volunteering work by managing reward and recognition centrally.

### 3 Definitions

- 3.1 **Co-production** involvement opportunities can include involvement in the below, however, this list is not exhaustive:

- Recruitment
- Consultation
- Scrutiny panels
- Corporate events support
- Local co-production initiatives

Specific co-production volunteering includes:

- Volunteers with lived experience seeking to volunteer as Peer Support Volunteers (PSV)
- Volunteers with lived experience seeking to volunteer as Central Services Volunteers (CSV)
- Volunteers with lived experience seeking to volunteer as Quality Checkers
- Volunteers with lived experience seeking to volunteer as Experts by Experience Trainers

### 4 Key principles

- 4.1 Reward and recognition at Look Ahead focusses on valuing every customer and volunteer's contribution and/or providing and increasing their social and life skills as well as volunteering, employment, training and education (ETE) prospects.

- 4.2 Look Ahead will:

- Operate a **Reward and Recognition scheme** that recognises and rewards customers and volunteers for their contribution and added value they bring to Look Ahead locally and across the wider organisation. Please see **Section 7 – Procedure** for more details.
- Remove financial barriers that may exclude customers from getting involved and engaged and opportunities to build their confidence, develop new skills, and enhance their ETE possibilities
- Celebrate achievements and contribution
- Be explicit about the skills and qualities that co-production, volunteering, customer involvement can develop.
- Provide customer and volunteers clear information on how we reward and recognise them prior to commencing co-production, involvement and volunteering

activities with Look Ahead, clearly setting out any arrangements for reimbursement of expenditure.

- Ensure volunteer reward and recognition is centrally administered to ensure consistency of application.
- Record and monitor all volunteering activity, reward and recognition to safeguard our volunteers and customers and provide evidence of financial outgoings to meet audit requirements.
- Seek feedback from those who volunteer and our customers to shape our reward and recognition offering

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## Procedure

### Rewards – Incentives - Recognition

The following section is summarised In Appendix 1

#### Reward

##### Financial Inclusion

- 5.1 Look Ahead recognises that financial barriers can prevent some customers from taking involvement opportunities. For example, a customer in Kent may not be able to afford to travel into central London to become involved in a scrutiny panel. To prevent this from becoming a barrier to involvement, Look Ahead seeks to remove financial barriers from our customer involvement opportunities.
- 5.2 We provide travel expenses as a standard to all customers and lived experience volunteers without subsidised travel (i.e. freedom pass) and cover lunch for those who participate for either 4 hours or more, or over the lunch period, whichever is applicable.
- 5.3 Travel expenses are paid where the customer is expected to travel on public transport to participate in agreed volunteering or co-production activities.
- 5.4 Travel expenses will not be paid where the customer/ volunteer has a freedom pass or any other travel grant. Travel expenses will not be paid without a valid receipt. Pay as you go oyster top ups will not be accepted. Customers should be supported to register their oyster card in order to obtain travel history for receipt of travel expense purposes.
- 5.5 In instances where a customer does not have a valid receipt, any reimbursement decisions will be considered on an individual basis at the discretion of the Customer Experience Director. Where a discretionary payment is agreed the reimbursement will be capped at the return fare to the customer's home.

##### Subsistence

- 5.6 Luncheon Vouchers or the cash value will be issued where a volunteer is undertaking full day quality audits or Experts by Experience training up to the

value of £5. Lunch or Luncheon vouchers will be made available to volunteers volunteering or attending learning events over 4 hours or over the lunch period ( 12- 2pm), whichever is applicable

### **Digital Inclusion**

- 5.7 In the digital world we live in, Look Ahead recognises the potential for utilising technology within our involvement opportunities. For example, virtual customer panel meetings etc. However, we also recognise that our customers are often digitally disadvantaged, and can lack access to these technologies.
- 5.8 To prevent this from becoming a barrier to involvement, we will cover the cost of any extra data, phone minutes or other mobile top-up's up to a maximum of £10. Any customer that needs this form of support should ask their support worker to liaise with the Senior Co-Production Officer.
- 5.9 Additionally, we will also offer a free conference calling service to enable participation in meetings. Within any virtual meeting, we will endeavour to offer a range of options to become involved, e.g. offer the option to dial in via telephone if the customer does not have access to a smartphone or laptop.

## **Incentives**

### **Vouchers**

- 5.10 Where customers are involved in sustained involvement initiatives or involvement opportunities where they share their expertise, we will endeavour to offer gift vouchers as a reward (dependent on budget). Any customer that is offered a gift voucher is individually responsible for disclosing this to any relevant bodies, i.e. DWP.
- 5.11 Examples of activities that fall in to this category are whereby we reserve the right to offer incentives to provide feedback for example, annual customer surveys. These prize draws will be clearly published and will take the form of gift vouchers. Any customer that is offered a gift voucher is individually responsible for disclosing this to any relevant bodies, i.e. DWP.
- 5.12 Prize Draws: individual feedback responses will be logged, and where the necessary data has been provided (i.e. name and service/address), they will be entered into a prize draw. Numbers will be randomly drawn by colleagues/ customers not associated with the survey or customer.

### **Personal Development**

- 5.13 We recognise that volunteering and co-production opportunities provide those involved with a variety of immaterial rewards by way of personal development

these include the opportunity to shape and influence, develop social skills, training and work skills, and gain routes to employment.

### **Shape and influence:**

- 5.15 Customers have the opportunity to shape, influence and be involved in decision making via a number of platforms. These involvement opportunities facilitate partnership working with customers, enabling us to design and deliver higher quality services. Involvement in sustained co-production projects allows customers to direct and shape projects that will impact them.

Examples of opportunities to shape and influence are:

- Involvement in scrutiny panels such as the Tenant and Landlord Panel and the Care and Support Forum provide a channel to challenge our performance and affect change on a senior level. We are held accountable by an action plan that is created after each meeting based on customer feedback.
- Customer engagement in recruitment, either by sitting on interview panels, participating in an interview activity/presentation, or by providing questions for use in an interview.

### **Social and communication skills:**

- 5.14 Involvement in engagement opportunities also provides a chance for customers to develop their social and communicative skills in a safe and supportive environment.
- 5.15 The variety of opportunities available enables customers to experience a range of environments, and develop a broad suite of skills. Engagement in opportunities such as:
- The Tenant and Landlord Panel offer an experience of formal meetings, and how to clearly communicate your opinions and experience in a professional setting.
  - Delivering or co-delivering training allows customers to experience public speaking, and the opportunity to constructively communicate their lived experience. Some engagement opportunities offer experience of navigating a team-based setting, whilst others provide an opportunity for 1-1 communication.
- 5.16 All of these experiences can help to develop confidence and provide a broader social network for customers who may otherwise be at risk of social exclusion. Customers gain experience in flexibly adapting styles of communication to suit different people, with a range of communicative styles and needs.

## **Training and Work Skills**

5.17 Involvement opportunities also provide an opportunity for customers to develop transferable skills and training in readiness for work-based environments. In addition to the communication and influencing skills discussed above, customers can also gain the following experience and skills:

- Punctuality and reliability
- Experience of working in a team
- Increased resilience
- Evaluative skills and attention to detail by becoming a quality checker or member of a scrutiny panel
- Access to further training via the e-learning suite and Experts by Experience training (if appropriate to their involvement)
- To feel empowered by their lived experience and to view it as strength.
- Boosted confidence and self-belief
- Supportive working environment and regular supervision (if applicable to their role)
- Being a valued and useful member of the team
- The knowledge that they are directly working towards Look Ahead achieving its organizational aims, and improving the quality of service we provide.
- The ability to flexibly access other engagement opportunities within Look Ahead if they identify a gap in their skills
- Employment/CV support and references (if the customer has been engaged in sustained involvement, i.e. 6 months of volunteering).
- EBE training provides the opportunity to gain training experience, an accredited qualification (Train the Trainer), and content development skills.
- Engagement as a Peer Support Volunteer provides experience of support work and access to a 7 week induction training. PSV's can also access further education with the Open Book Project.
- Involvement in recruitment offers an insight into the interview process and increases preparedness for future interviews. Customers can learn what employers are looking for, and how best to answer interview questions.
- Central Services Volunteers gain exposure to a central services department, working within a professional team with the opportunity to enhance their CV and develop skills for future roles.

## **Routes to Employment**

5.18 As detailed above, all involvement opportunities provide a chance for customers to develop increased readiness for work. Any customer that is involved in an opportunity that requires sustained commitment is able to be provided with a reference. Depending on the type of involvement, the customer's performance and

organisational need, customers may also be encouraged to apply for relevant roles internally within Look Ahead.

- 5.19 Our Peer Support Volunteering programme offers additional routes into volunteering and employment with both Look Ahead and other agencies.
- 5.20 Customers can be linked in to volunteering opportunities with other providers (i.e. Salvation Army, St Giles, Evolve, Richmond Fellowship etc.). If the volunteering placement is successful, the PSV can be put on a pathway into direct employment at Look Ahead as a relief Bank Worker).

## Recognition

- 5.21 All volunteers who complete volunteer training and are accepted as a volunteer will receive a certificate of completion. Customers engaged in other initiatives whereby training has been completed will also receive a certificate.
- 5.22 At Look Ahead we encourage customers and staff to give direct feedback to the volunteer for their input. This feedback can be sent to our central services teams who centrally administer our reward and recognition scheme.
- 5.23 Look Ahead values the work of our volunteers/ customers wherever they come from. An annual or bi-annual conference celebrating the achievements of our customers/ volunteers is organised by the Customer Experience and Communication Teams supported by colleagues and customers. We also have an annual Christmas event for volunteers to attend that is organised by the Senior Volunteering Project Officer.
- 5.24 Look Ahead will regularly spotlight volunteers, not only to give them opportunities to share their stories to inspire others, but as a way of engaging and highlighting the benefits of getting involved. We will showcase these stories in whatever format the volunteer would prefer e.g. via the website, customer magazine, case studies etc.
- 5.25 We will also endeavour to regularly say thank you to those that are engaged within our opportunities via written and verbal communication. This may include letter of recognitions, cards or email.

## 6 Roles and responsibilities

- 6.1 Whilst customers and volunteers will have dedicated support while undertaking activities or volunteering roles, **all staff** are responsible for providing general support and ensures their health and safety at all times.

6.2 **The Customer Experience Team** has overall responsibility for providing a central support function for all reward and recognition queries from Peer Support volunteers and staff. The team is responsible for:

- Monitoring their individual communication streams for any volunteer feedback or queries regarding reward and recognition.
- Retaining all compliance paperwork centrally for each volunteer.
- Flagging any concerns to the relevant central services staff member.
- Managing the reward and recognition budget, reporting on expenditure and flagging risk to the SMT
- Informing the SMT of new reward and recognition opportunities for development/changes to the current offering, and requirements for policy update
- Managing the volunteer reward and recognition nominations for award events
- Promote customer involvement within Look Ahead to staff and raise the profile of customer engagement.

6.3 The individual responsibilities are as follows:

#### 6.4 **Senior Co-production Project Officer**

- To manage the customer Experience -co-production day to day central services reward expenditure maintain Petty cash undertake reconciliation and reports.
- To record and support Senior Customer Experience Managers to report on customer involvement to SMT, SLT and Board as required.
- Support customers to seek specialist welfare benefits or asylum status advice before undertaking any involvement activity, and ensure this is discussed prior to the involvement
- To advocate and promote for customer involvement at all levels.

#### 6.5 **Senior Volunteering Project Officer**

- To manage the day to day PSV expenditure budget, maintain Petty cash undertake reconciliation and reports.
- Support customers to seek specialist welfare benefits or asylum status advice before undertaking any volunteering activity, and ensure this is discussed prior to the voluntary placement.
- Liaise with services to develop partnerships and assess their volunteering needs
- With PSV supervisors establish progression pathways for individuals on placement in services, including opportunities to gain qualifications, access to apprenticeships and entry level jobs
- Manage and coordinate the implementation Look Ahead's reward and recognition offer across for Peer Support volunteers.

- Provide ongoing support and guidance for volunteers by acting as a single point of contact for communications

6.6 **Contract Manager/ Department Leads:** The Contract Manager has overall responsibility for the volunteer within the team or service. Specific responsibility for Reward and Recognition policy requirements are:

- **Ensuring that they allocate involvement budgets during budget setting to reward local customer involvement and co-production.** Managing the budget for expenses, reward and recognition held locally
- Promote the Reward and Recognition Scheme to staff and customers, and encourage colleagues, volunteers and staff to give feedback on their experiences
- Ensuring all key documentation is provided to Central Services team leads for every customer throughout the duration of their involvement and ensuring any agreement that comes to an end is appropriately documented, enabling the Central Services team lead to centrally award Reward and Recognition experiences.
- Supervisors understand the recording requirements for all involvement activity.
- Regularly following up on the involvement and conducting checks to ensure the appropriate receipts have been provided and the procedures and remit for expenses have been adhered to.

6.7 **Volunteer Supervisor/ Central Service leads**

- Making customers aware that there is guidance available at their local Job Centre on how volunteering can impact on benefits
- Ensuring each engagement activity and its duration are accurately recorded and reported to the relevant opportunity lead.
- Keeping records of activity complete and up to date.
- Provide individual direct feedback where possible on the quality of work undertaken to the opportunity lead and encouraging feedback from customers being supported by volunteers where applicable.
- Encourage customers to provide feedback on how involvement opportunities and the reward and recognition scheme can be improved.
- Ensuring any necessary expenses are covered in line with current limits set out within this policy.
- Ensuring the support planning documentation for all customers who engage with involvement opportunities includes reference to clear discussions regarding the importance of disclosing volunteering to the relevant benefit department (where applicable), any potential impact on benefits and arrears, and ultimately their accommodation.

6.8 **Support Workers**

- Evidence discussions with customers considering involvement opportunities and include reference to the importance of disclosing this to the relevant benefit department (where applicable), any potential impact on benefits and arrears, and ultimately their accommodation
- Record all involvement activity on the customer support plan
- Encourage customers who get involved to provide feedback on how engagement opportunities and how the reward and recognition scheme can be improved.

6.9 **Customer and Volunteers** have responsibility to:

- Keep records of expenditure including receipts for food or drink, travel tickets and any other expenditure agreed in advance of the involvement activity and present these to the supervisor or opportunity lead to reimburse.
- It is your responsibility to be aware of the impact of volunteering on asylum status and on benefits if you are claiming them. See appendix 2 for guidance on volunteering for Asylum Seekers.
- If you are an asylum seeker you are allowed to volunteer, but not undertake voluntary work. This information is a basic guide and you should seek further specialist advice before engaging in any involvement opportunity. The difference between volunteering and voluntary work is detailed below:
- **Volunteering: there is no obligation for you to complete the hours, it is unpaid work for anyone other than close relative, there no payment other than out of pocket expenses.**
- **Voluntary work: there is a contractual agreement to complete a certain amount of hours i.e. a 12 month unpaid internship, you are performing a role that a salaried worker would usually undertake; you are paid either through money or benefits in kind.**
- Keep receipts for expenses, your benefit provider might ask for them as proof.
- **If you get Universal Credit** - tell your work coach when you plan to start volunteer work - you can do this by adding a note to your online journal. Payments for expenses aren't counted as earnings and don't affect how much Universal Credit you'll get. For more information please visit <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/benefits-introduction/how-volunteering-affects-your-benefits/>

6.10 Maintain agreed attendance, informing the supervisor/activity lead of any changes to agreed time commitments. Where extra expense is likely to be incurred, this should be discussed with the supervisor/contract manager/opportunity lead in advance of undertaking the activity.

6.11 Expenses and volunteering undertaken outside of those agreed will not be recognized under Insurance liability, expenses or any other policy.

## **7 Diversity & Inclusion**

- 7.1 Look Ahead will continue to develop its approach to customer recognition and reward to ensure the framework develops over time. Pivotal to its development is the ongoing consultation with our customers and volunteers to ensure our offering continues to deliver recognition and reward that meets the needs of our volunteers, builds customer delight/satisfaction, and effectively rewards those who become involved for their contribution. Central administration of the reward and recognition scheme is intended to provide consistency in our approach to rewarding volunteers/customers.
- 7.2 The scheme will be managed collaboratively by the Senior Volunteering Project Officer and Senior Co-Production Project Officer, and will be reported on to the Director of Customer Experience and SLT as required.

## Appendix 1 – Summary of Reward and Recognition

Reward & Recognition	Customer/Lived experience volunteer co-production	Peer Support Volunteer (PSV)	Central Service Volunteer (CSV)	Quality Checker	EBE trainer	Member of customer scrutiny panels
Travel Expenses reimbursement*	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Lunch*	YES	YES	YES			YES
Luncheon/Meal Vouchers/				YES	YES	
Clinical Supervision		YES	YES		YES	
Certificate		YES	YES	YES		YES
Reference	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Qualification					YES	
Training	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Annual Volunteering event		YES	YES			
Gift Vouchers	Where applicable*			YES, 1 per QA completed	YES, 1 per day of training completed	YES, 1 per panel attended

\* Applicable to sustained involvement in co-production activities/projects, dependent on budgetary constraints. Please see 5.10 for further details.

## Appendix 2: Asylum Policy Instructions

**This has been extracted from the Home Office guidance on “Permission to Work (Version 6.0) 1 April 2014, Home Office”**

### Voluntary Work

- There is a distinction between voluntary work and volunteering. Volunteers are not workers for the purposes of the national minimum wage and do not qualify for it. Voluntary workers are still defined as workers, but they are exempt from being paid the national minimum wage, so they can give their time for free to charitable or public sector organisations. Key elements in establishing whether someone is a voluntary worker are whether there is an obligation on the individual to perform the work, and in return an obligation on the organisation to provide it; and whether the individual is rewarded for that work, through money or benefits in kind.
- Voluntary work cannot be undertaken by asylum seekers or failed asylum seekers awaiting the outcome of an application for asylum or further submissions, unless they have been granted permission to work under Paragraph 360 of the Immigration Rules. Further information is available on the Home Office website under Preventing Illegal Working.

### Volunteering

- The legal distinction between an employee and a volunteer is complex given the differences between the types of voluntary work and volunteering activities that individuals can be involved in. The principal difference is that volunteering must not amount to unpaid work, or job substitution. In particular:
  1. there should be no payment, other than reasonable travel and meals expenditure actually incurred (not an allowance for the same);
  2. there should be no contractual obligations on the volunteer;
  3. the volunteer is helping a registered voluntary or charitable organisation (or organisation that raises funds for either);
  4. the volunteering is for a public sector organisation; and
  5. The volunteering is not a substitute for employment (i.e. fulfilling a role that a salaried worker would normally fulfil).
- If in doubt about whether a specific opportunity constitutes voluntary work or volunteering activity, organisations should seek independent legal advice. Whilst volunteering can be undertaken at any stage of the asylum process, such activities must not interfere with scheduled events such as a substantive asylum interview, regular reporting event or re-documentation interview. Such events will not be rescheduled to accommodate volunteering activities. Although it is accepted that volunteering contributes positively to the community it must not obstruct the

asylum process or undermine the removal of those who do not need protection and have no entitlement to remain in the UK.

- It is Home Office policy to support asylum seekers volunteering for charities or public sector organisations but it is the responsibility of any organisation considering recruiting volunteers to ensure that such activity does not constitute voluntary work or employment. The organisation should undertake all relevant safeguarding checks required. The personal details provided by the applicant as part of the immigration process, cannot be confirmed by the Home Office for use in any other context other than immigration matters.

## Glossary

Term	Definition

## Related documents

Document	Link
Connected Policies	Volunteering Policy Co-production and Customer Engagement Strategy
Forms and Letters	
Information Sheet	
Easy Read	
External Websites	
Legislation/Regulation	

## Version Control

Version no.	1	Date effective:	September 2020
Brief summary of changes:			
Colleague consultation:	Policy Group Colleagues across all specialisms		
Customers consulted:	Customers across all specialisms, Peer Support Volunteers, and learning from complaints and recommendations		
Results customer consultation:	Customers expressed that they wanted a range of reward and recognition options. Monetary reward was not a significant driver and recognition and life skills from involvement carried greater weight		
Other consultation:			
Signed off by:	Policy Group		
Author:	Nicole Njie & Kate Mahoney		
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Services we would be proud  
for our loved ones to receive