

**We really
need people
like you to
help people
like you.**

Volunteer Policy
March 2009



As soon as I was diagnosed with glaucoma, I had to give up my job. I thought I was on my own with nowhere to turn.

John had a demanding job, when at the age of 30 his career and future were suddenly shattered by glaucoma, which causes damage to the optic nerve.

One of our volunteers visited John to assess his needs, and he was given aid to help him read.



Our aims and objectives

Elizabeth Finn Care aims to relieve need and distress among people from a professional, similar or closely associated background, of British and Irish nationality and their immediate families, regardless of religious denomination, political opinion, ethnic background, gender, disability, marital status, sexuality, age or place of residence.

Its policy is to safeguard dignity and independence. Need and distress may include difficulties associated with advancing years, infirmity, disability, social isolation or financial need.

It does this in three ways:

- **By giving grants and allowances** to those with limited financial resources living in the community.
- **By providing accommodation** for older people in Elizabeth Finn Homes.
- **By helping with fees** in other homes.

What do our Volunteers do?

A Volunteer is a person who donates time, effort and skills towards assisting an organisation in its work, without the expectation of financial reward. Volunteers share the aims and objectives of their chosen organisation and work, either individually or as a group, to further those aims. In return, they receive appreciation and support and the satisfaction of knowing that their contribution has made a positive difference to the organisation's advancement and the welfare of the people it serves.

Elizabeth Finn Care and Volunteering

Volunteers play a major role in our work at Elizabeth Finn, taking on a range of tasks alongside, and complementary to, the work of the professional staff. Without our volunteers, we at Elizabeth Finn Care could not fulfil the objectives of the charity, nor possibly hope to meet effectively all the calls made upon it for local assistance.

The help you give

Our Volunteers help us through any or all of the following:

- Being an Authorised Visitor to potential and existing beneficiaries (those receiving financial support from Elizabeth Finn Care) in their area.
- Membership of a County Committee, raising funds and awareness at a local level
- Providing social support to the residents of an Elizabeth Finn Home
- Fundraising as an individual through events such as the Marathon
- Being an “ambassador” for Elizabeth Finn Care, taking every opportunity to raise awareness of its aims and objectives, encourage further support and increase the number of beneficiaries.

Our Commitment to you as an Elizabeth Finn Care Volunteer

- You will be provided with a copy of the *Volunteer Handbook*, which explains the structure of the charity, the function of each department and the role of volunteers within that structure. You will also receive regular news and up-dates concerning the activities and progress of Elizabeth Finn Care.
- We do not expect you to incur personal financial loss as a result of your contribution to Elizabeth Finn Care’s work. You will be reimbursed for all your reasonable out-of-pocket expenses and will be provided with all necessary stationery, equipment and materials to help you with the tasks you undertake on our behalf.

- You will be adequately protected by Elizabeth Finn Care's insurance against claims arising from third parties and against personal injury or loss not covered by your own insurance, as a result of your activities for and on our behalf. Copies of the insurance are available upon request.

NB: If you are driving your own vehicle on Elizabeth Finn Care business you should check with your motor insurance provider that their policy covers the voluntary activity you may be asked to undertake. If you are charged an additional premium, please let us know and we will refund the difference to you.

- You will be consulted and your views taken into account wherever possible, as part of Elizabeth Finn Care's decision-making processes.
- You may choose to be involved in whichever of Elizabeth Finn Care's activities you prefer and will not be pressurised to undertake work for which you feel unsuitable, unqualified or which is inconvenient for you.

- Elizabeth Finn Care will hold volunteer conference(s) annually to listen to what you have to say, and to keep you up to date with what is happening.
- We will provide you with the necessary induction, training and on-going support to enable you to take on the tasks within your chosen volunteering role at Elizabeth Finn Care. Our aim is to help you contribute to the high standards required by Elizabeth Finn Care and to help you to gain as much as possible from your contribution.
- By working alongside the paid staff you should both gain from the experience, the roles being complementary. Whilst the paid staff carry overall responsibility for day-to-day operational matters within Elizabeth Finn Care, they will seek advice and support from you and other volunteers as appropriate, and ensure that full recognition and appreciation are given. In return, we would hope that you feel able to support fully our aims and objectives and to carry out your role effectively, thus helping us to maintain our high standards throughout the organisation.

I ran the London Marathon for Elizabeth Finn Care, and loved it. The idea of helping so many kept me going.

Running the marathon is just one of the many ways you can help us to help others.

Last year people abseiled, organised tea parties, held jumble sales, ran bridge events and walked across the UK, all for Elizabeth Finn Care.



Our way of working

1 How we Recruit our Volunteers

Our volunteers find out about us via family and friends, or through research about volunteering opportunities agencies such as Volunteer Centres, REACH, or through web sites such as Do-It.

Every volunteer will need to complete an application form, including the names and addresses of two referees, for information and record purposes, so that we know what they wish to do, and so that their requirements, interests and skills can be recorded in confidence. This is not only to be sure that Elizabeth Finn Care can maximise their contribution, but also be certain of optimal satisfaction for the volunteer.

All Elizabeth Finn's new volunteer Visitors and Friends in our Homes will be required to undergo a satisfactory Standard Criminal Records Bureau check, and be registered on the Independent Safeguarding Authority's lists when this programme is launched.

If we have to reject your application to become an Elizabeth Finn Care volunteer, we will write to you to explain the reasons for our decision. It is not always necessary to reject a volunteer because of a previous conviction, and all such cases will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, in the most discreet way possible.

2 Our need for References

Our Head Office team needs to make formal enquiries as to the suitability and integrity of each new volunteer.

Under the provisions of the Care Standards Act 2000, if you are volunteering in Homes and/or as an Authorised Visitor in the community, visiting vulnerable people, you will also be required to make a Standard Declaration of any criminal convictions. This is necessary to safeguard the organisation, its volunteers and its beneficiaries. All the information we receive will be held in the strictest confidence in accordance

with the Data Protection Act 1998 and will not necessarily stop you taking part in Elizabeth Finn Care activities. If you would like to see a copy of the information we are holding about you at any time, we can send you a copy.

3 Induction and Training for Elizabeth Finn Volunteers

When you talk to us about volunteering at Elizabeth Finn, we will explain the range of activities available. Once you have decided what you would like to do, we will offer you training in your chosen area(s) of work. This may take the form of a one-to-one discussion with an existing volunteer or member of staff, or a group training session.

If you decide to become an Authorised Visitor and/or a Friend in an Elizabeth Finn Home, where you would have direct contact with beneficiaries and residents, you will not be able to start volunteering until you complete the training. We will keep you informed of new training opportunities and will also ask you to attend 'refresher' training, ideally annually,

although this may be extended to bi-annually, subject to the agreement of the relevant training organiser.

4 How we support you while you are volunteering with Elizabeth Finn

You are entitled to expect confidential support and advice about your work at any time and we will give you the contact details of the person to whom your enquiries should be addressed. We at Elizabeth Finn are committed to doing all we can to retain our volunteers for as long as possible. You should not be deterred from continuing your support because of uncertainty about your role, or dissatisfaction with the way we value your contribution.

We at Elizabeth Finn place great value on the opinions of our volunteers. From time to time we organise events such as Volunteer Conferences for the express purpose of allowing our volunteers to give feedback on the organisation and its policies and services.

5 Out of Pocket Expenses

We do not expect Elizabeth Finn's volunteers to carry out their role at their own expense and will reimburse reasonable out-of-pocket expenses. The expenses we will reimburse include:

- Travel to and from Head Office
- Travel whilst volunteering
- Meals taken whilst volunteering
- Postage and telephone costs
- Reasonable costs for the care of dependants while volunteering

6 Your Health and Safety

Elizabeth Finn Care complies with all relevant legislation in order to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of its volunteers and staff. We address health and safety issues during training but you as a volunteer are expected at all times to conduct yourself in such a way as not to put your own, your colleagues' or their external contacts' interests at risk.

Elizabeth Finn Care has a duty of care to take reasonable care to avoid causing harm to others, and this applies to our volunteers. We will take reasonable steps to ensure that the likelihood and

potential seriousness of injury to our volunteers is reduced. We have undertaken a risk assessment of all our volunteering roles, which will be reviewed and updated annually. If you would like to see a copy of this Risk Assessment it is available from our Case Department.

7 Keeping Things Confidential

The maintenance of strict confidentiality is an essential feature of Elizabeth Finn Care's service to its beneficiaries and residents. It is in this way that their privacy and dignity is safeguarded. There are other aspects of our activities, which may, on occasions, require discretion as to the extent to which they are discussed outside Elizabeth Finn Care. You will receive guidance during your induction and training about confidentiality, but it is crucial that you understand that it is your responsibility to be aware of and adhere to Elizabeth Finn Care policy on confidentiality at all times.

We will always keep your own personal details safe and never pass them on to other agencies without your prior explicit consent.

8 Equal Opportunities

It is our policy at Elizabeth Finn Care to support the principles of equal opportunities in all our activities. Elizabeth Finn Care opposes all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of age, ethnic or cultural background, religious or political belief, gender, disability, sexuality, marital status, place of residence or offending background. All who work or volunteer for Elizabeth Finn Care, in whatever capacity, are expected to adhere to this policy.

9 What to do if things go wrong

We hope that you will never need to make a complaint about how you have been treated, but in case you do, we have devised a policy to deal with this. All volunteers may file a complaint against any member of staff should they so wish. The processes to be followed are laid out in the Compliments and Complaints Procedure, and a copy is available from the Case Department or from Elizabeth Finn Homes as appropriate, and any complaint will be treated with the utmost seriousness.

10 Should you wish to stop Volunteering for Us

If you want to stop volunteering for Elizabeth Finn Care we will offer you a letter of reference, along with a statement of your achievements, should you wish to volunteer for another organisation. If you wish we can arrange an exit interview so that you can give feedback on your time with us. We will ask every volunteer who leaves us to fill out an exit questionnaire (attachment 2). This will help us to improve our support for volunteers in the future.

In some very rare circumstances, we may need to ask a volunteer to leave Elizabeth Finn Care. We reserve the right to require the resignation of any volunteer whose activities are deemed to be inappropriate, or detrimental to the interests or reputation of the charity. The Chief Executive would take such action only after the fullest investigations and consideration of all relevant facts.



51%

of adults are involved in formal volunteering each year

£40bn

is the calculated amount of economic Value of formal Volunteering



60%

say volunteering gives them an opportunity to learn new skills

£400m

is the estimated amount of total public sector support for volunteering



50%

of all volunteers get involved because they were asked to help

**I volunteer
for Elizabeth
Finn Care and
am reminded
every day how
much my help is
appreciated.**



Volunteer agreement

Elizabeth Finn Care expects our Visitor Volunteers:

- To treat all information about applicants, beneficiaries, residents and their families as confidential.
- To be reliable and to keep appointments.
- To be honest and accountable in fulfilling commitments.
- To help staff understand the needs and concerns of applicants, beneficiaries and residents
- Where applicable, to return a Visit Report to the Caseworker in good time.
- To participate in training when this is provided.
- To listen.
- To be empathetic with applicants, beneficiaries, residents, their relatives and carers and with employees of Elizabeth Finn Care.
- To uphold the ethos of Elizabeth Finn Care including its equal opportunities policy.

The Volunteer can expect from Elizabeth Finn Care:

- To be recognised, respected, valued and appreciated.
- A clear role description.
- To provide a full induction and training as necessary to fulfil the volunteer role.
- To provide a named supervisor and support through regular meetings.
- To treat volunteers in line with Elizabeth Finn Care's Equal Opportunities Policy.
- To implement good health and safety practice.
- Flexibility in the amount of time spent helping Elizabeth Finn Care by agreement with the relevant department.
- Not to be overburdened with time or responsibility. Frequency of visit, volume of work and geographical issues to be agreed with the volunteer in advance.
- The reimbursement of out of pocket expenses where there are receipts or similar evidence of cost to the volunteer.

- Necessary insurance cover.
- Information about Elizabeth Finn Care activities and appropriate involvement in its decision making processes.

Equal opportunities statement

Elizabeth Finn Care wholeheartedly supports the principles of equal opportunities in all its activities and opposes all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of ethnic or cultural background, gender, age, marital status, sexuality, disability, religious or political belief, place of residence or offending background.

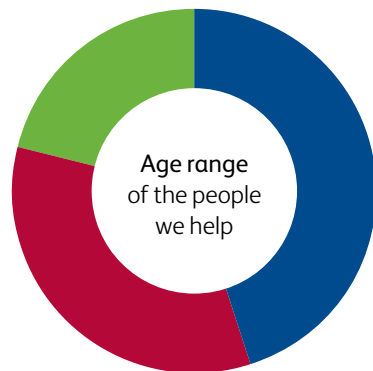
Our policy is to respect both the spirit and the letter of the laws regarding equality of opportunity and non-discrimination in Elizabeth Finn Care’s activities and to value the diversity of individuals throughout the community. We consider this to be an integral part of our ethos when recruiting volunteers and assessing applicants to Elizabeth Finn Care. Every possible step will be taken to ensure that individuals are

treated equally and fairly and that decisions on recruitment, selection and training of volunteers are based only on objective and role related criteria. Elizabeth Finn Care has a corresponding equal opportunities policy governing employees of Elizabeth Finn Care.

Our beneficiaries

21%

Aged 21–49



34%

Aged 70+

45%

Ages 40–69

Undertaking by a Volunteer

- I will co-operate with Elizabeth Finn Care and its staff in the fulfilment of Elizabeth Finn Care's responsibilities towards its applicants, beneficiaries, residents and their families.
- At all times, present and future, I will respect the confidence of the applicant, beneficiary or resident and will not disclose any matter to any person other than an appropriate member of staff at Elizabeth Finn Care.
- I understand that should it be felt that it is inappropriate for me to continue as a volunteer, I may be requested to stop. Similarly, I am free to cease acting as a volunteer for Elizabeth Finn Care at any time.
- I have read and understood Elizabeth Finn Care's equal opportunities policy and will comply with it.
- This agreement is not intended to be a legally binding contract between us and may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party. Neither of us intend any employment relationship to be created either now or at any time in the future.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Sample Volunteer exit questionnaire

Dear Mrs XYZ,

We are sorry to learn that you have decided to stop Visiting on behalf of Elizabeth Finn Care. Our Visitors' contribution is crucial to our successful delivery of benevolence and we value your feedback. Therefore, I would be most grateful if you could complete this short questionnaire, and return it to me in the envelope provided.

Where appropriate, please answer the questions as fully as possible. You will notice that the form is completely anonymous and your responses will only be used for internal monitoring purposes. However, they will give us the opportunity to make our support of volunteers as effective and useful as possible. If you would like to talk to me about the questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

On behalf of us all at Elizabeth Finn Care, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your contribution to our work.

Yours sincerely,

BJ Clover,
Director of Casework

Volunteer Questionnaire

1. Please tell us why you have decided to stop volunteering for Elizabeth Finn Care.

2. Are you continuing to volunteer for other charities?

3. Have you found the experience of volunteering for Elizabeth Finn Care to be everything that you wanted it to be?

4. Have you enjoyed the experience?

5. What did you find particularly fulfilling?

6. What did you find least fulfilling?

7. How could we improve our support to you as a volunteer?

8. Would you recommend Elizabeth Finn Care to friends and colleagues as somewhere they should volunteer?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form. Your comments are extremely valuable to us. Please return it to the Director of Casework at Head Office.

Undertaking by a Volunteer

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Thank you for taking the time to complete this form. Your comments are extremely valuable to us. Please return it to the Director of Casework at Head Office.

Sarah ran the Marathon for Elizabeth Finn Care two years ago and loved the feeling of contributing to a good cause.

Now, Sarah volunteers and organises events in her local area and gets that same feeling from helping people.



**We could
not give the
care we give
without you.**

Elizabeth Finn Care

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