



Caraway Volunteer Handbook

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Caraway Volunteer Handbook

Welcome

Welcome to **Caraway**! Thank you for choosing to give your time, heart, and kindness to support older people in Southampton. Your role as a volunteer is deeply valued, and we're so glad you are part of this growing, caring community.

Caraway exists to:

- Combat loneliness
- Create community
- Celebrate life

Volunteers are at the heart of everything we do, helping to build meaningful relationships and improve quality of life for older people.

This handbook is here to help you volunteer safely and effectively—and to enjoy being part of Caraway. It's not a contract or employment agreement, but a guide to how we operate, what we believe in, and how we look after one another.

About Caraway

Our Mission & Vision

The charity Caraway was founded in 2018 to support the spiritual care and well-being of older people in Southampton.

We do that through:

1. **Chaplaincy:** Our Anna Chaplains, Chaplains for Dementia and trained volunteers provide spiritual care - through listening, conversation, prayer, reflection or signposting.
2. **Care Home Support:** We work in care homes to support both older residents, their families and staff.
3. **Creating Community:** Developing opportunities in the community for older people to meet and share together.
4. **Combating Loneliness:** Through the above as well as special support for those living with Dementia and those who care for them.





Our Values & Culture

- We come from Christian roots (linked with Anna Chaplaincy and the Bible Reading Fellowship, both allied with the Church of England), but we work with older people and welcome volunteers of all faiths or none. We simply ask that volunteers are sympathetic to the Christian values and are comfortable that many of our activities may be held in church buildings.
- We believe in kindness, listening, respect, and dignity.
- Our volunteers may operate in churches, people's homes, via phone or at community venues—and that flexibility is part of who we are.

How We're Structured

Caraway is a registered charity (Charity Number: 1177743) based in Southampton. We have:

- a Board of Trustees
- a Staff Team
- Anna Chaplains and Anna Friends
- Volunteers

Volunteer Roles

Caraway offers a wide variety of volunteer opportunities. You may choose to contribute in ways that match your skills, interests, and availability.

Key Volunteer Roles

- **Caraway Chaplains and Anna Chaplains** - offering a listening ear
- **Anna Friends / Chaplaincy Support** – providing spiritual and emotional care
- **Care Home Visitors** – offering companionship and support
- **Memory Café Leads** - responsible for the running of a Memory Café
- **Memory Café Helpers** – supporting people living with dementia and carers
- **Fundraising Volunteers** – organising events or campaigns
- **Event Helpers** – assisting at one-off community events
- **Administrative Support** – helping behind the scenes
- **Prayer support** - individual or group prayer



What We Ask of Volunteers

- **Commitment:** While there's no formal contract, we hope you'll consider volunteering long-term. Many of our volunteers stay with us for years and become part of the "Caraway family."
 - Be reliable and communicate clearly about availability
 - Attend agreed sessions or notify us if you cannot
- **Young Volunteers:** If you are aged 16–18, you're very welcome to volunteer alongside an adult but cannot undertake 1-2-1 work alone unless it has been agreed you are capable of this.

Conduct

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect
- Maintain appropriate boundaries
- Represent Caraway positively in the community

Training & Support

- We provide training so you feel confident in your role.
- You'll have supervision and support—you're not on your own.
- For phone-based volunteers: if you use your own phone, we ask you to keep a log of calls and submit an expenses form. If needed, we can provide a phone and a SIM card.

Health, Safety & Wellbeing

- We care deeply about your safety and wellbeing. We carry out risk assessments for all roles.
- You should follow Caraway's health & safety guidelines, including reporting any accidents, near misses, or concerns to the volunteer coordinator.
- If anything about your role changes (for example, you start doing face-to-face visits instead of telephone calls), please tell us so we can support you appropriately.



How to become a Volunteer

- Read through the Volunteer section on our website.
- Complete a New Volunteer Application Form.
- One of our Team Members will then contact you for an initial conversation either over the phone or a coffee to work out where you can best get involved and to explain the process further.
- Complete your DBS checks and appropriate Safeguarding Training.
- Read through this handbook and relevant policies.

Policies & Standards

Code of Conduct

As a Caraway volunteer, we ask you to:

- Treat everyone—older people, carers, other volunteers—with dignity, respect and kindness.
- Follow confidentiality and safeguarding rules (see below).
- Be reliable: let us know if you can't do something so we can plan accordingly.
- Be open to feedback, and ask for help if you're unsure about anything.

Disciplinary Process

If concerns arise (e.g. performance issues), here's how we'll handle them:

1. A conversation with your volunteer coordinator to understand what's happening.
2. Support, mentoring, or more training, if needed.
3. If issues persist: a formal meeting and a written record.
4. In rare cases, it may be necessary to ask a volunteer to pause or stop their volunteering. This would be confidential, and you would have the right to appeal to the trustees.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

We are committed to treating everyone fairly, according to the **Equality Act 2010**. [Charity Register](#)

That means respecting all protected characteristics (such as age, race, faith, gender,



disability) and promoting an inclusive culture.

If you have any questions or challenges, please talk to a member of the leadership team.

Data Protection & Confidentiality

- As a volunteer, you may hear or see sensitive personal information (for example, about someone's health, family, faith).
- You have a legal and ethical responsibility to handle this information carefully, not retain it when it's not necessary, and follow our data protection procedures.
- Any written notes, logs or reports should be treated securely. If you're unsure how to store or pass on information, please ask.

Safeguarding

We take safeguarding extremely seriously. All volunteers must read and follow our Safeguarding Policy. If you have any concerns about someone's safety (including another volunteer), you must tell a safeguarding lead promptly.

The Caraway Safeguarding Trustee and **Designated Safeguarding Lead** is: Barry Toward, Trustee, 07305 290 461, barrytoward52@gmail.com

Problem-Solving & Communication

Sharing Concerns

If something isn't working - whether it's about your relationship with a client, or your role more generally - please come to us early.

We will:

- Listen to your concerns in confidence.
- Try to resolve issues through conversation, mediation, or reassigning roles.
- In cases of serious concern, escalate to leadership or the trustees.

Making a Complaint

- If you have a complaint about Caraway, start by talking to your volunteer coordinator.
- If it's not resolved: put it in writing and send it to a staff member or a trustee.
- We'll investigate, respond fairly, and keep your feedback confidential.

If There's a Complaint About a Volunteer



- **Safeguarding issues:** if a concern relates to safety, we follow our Safeguarding Policy. It may be necessary to involve external authorities (e.g. social services or the police).
- **Non-safeguarding issues:** these will be handled internally, but sensitively. Possible outcomes include suspension, training, or changing the volunteer's role.
- In rare cases where a volunteer is no longer suitable, we may ask them to stop their work with us, with a confidential explanation and the right to appeal to the trustees.

Practical Information

Recording Your Time

- We ask volunteers to log their hours (e.g., phone calls, visits, travel) so we can report our impact to funders and to the Charity Commission.
- This helps us show how much our volunteers contribute -and helps us plan resources too.

Expenses

- We don't expect volunteers to be out of pocket.
- Reasonable expenses (travel, phone credit, etc.) can be claimed. Just complete an expenses form and submit it to your coordinator.
- If needed, in some instances we can provide a phone and SIM card to use for Caraway calls; you can top up and claim back the cost.

Communication

- We keep in touch via email, newsletters, training sessions and occasional team meetings.
- If you have questions, ideas, or feedback, please reach out to your volunteer coordinator or another member of the leadership team.

Our Legal & Ethical Commitments

- Caraway is registered with the **Charity Commission** (No. 1177743). [Charity Register](#)
- We comply with UK laws and regulations, including the **Data Protection Act 2018 / GDPR**.
- We follow the **Equality Act 2010** in all our activities.



- Our volunteers are required to act ethically, treat personal data confidentially, and report safeguarding concerns.

Volunteer Responsibilities

- Read and follow all relevant Caraway policies.
- Ask for help, advice or clarity when you need it—especially on safeguarding, confidentiality or data protection.
- Report any accidents, incidents, or concerns (including about your own safety or the safety of others).
- Let us know if your circumstances change (e.g. the nature or frequency of your volunteering).
- Treat your volunteering time with respect—as an important gift to our community.
- Keep your training up to date and provide us with relevant documentation.

Recognition & Feedback

- We strongly believe in the value of volunteers.
- We will regularly seek your feedback (via conversations, surveys, or meetings) about how things are going.
- We will offer ongoing training opportunities.
- We want you to feel supported, appreciated, and heard.
- At the end of each year (or via our annual planning), we will recognise your contribution and celebrate what we've achieved together.

Thank You

Thank you again for volunteering with Caraway. Your compassion, kindness, and presence make a real difference in the lives of older people in our community. You are part of something special - a network of care, concern, and connection that reflects our shared values.

If you ever have any questions, ideas, or feedback, please don't hesitate to reach out. We're here with you - and we're grateful for you.



Volunteer Role Descriptions

Memory Café Helper

Purpose of the Role

To support the running of Caraway's Memory Cafés by welcoming guests, helping create a warm, friendly environment, and assisting with activities that support people living with dementia and their carers.

What You'll Do

- Welcome attendees with warmth and friendliness
- Help set up and clear away tables, chairs, refreshments and resources
- Support people living with memory loss to engage in conversation and activities
- Serve drinks and refreshments
- Chat with carers and offer a listening ear
- Assist staff or Anna Chaplains during group activities (e.g. crafts, singing, reminiscence)
- Notice any concerns and report them to the Café Lead

Skills & Qualities Needed

- Friendly, patient and approachable
- Comfortable chatting with older adults and carers
- Willing to listen and show empathy
- Reliable and able to work as part of a team
- Being open to ongoing training and development

Things that are not expected of you and fall outside of this role:

- Personal Care
- Shopping
-

Time Commitment

Usually **2–3 hours**, once or twice a month (depending on the café and your availability).



Chaplain Assistant/Anna Friend

Purpose of the Role

To support an Anna Chaplain in their work offering spiritual care, companionship and signposting for older people, either in their own homes or community group settings.

What You'll Do

- Accompany the Anna Chaplain on visits, to events or groups
- Offer a listening ear, conversation, and gentle companionship
- Support simple spiritual activities (e.g. reading material, prayers if appropriate, offering comfort)
- Help prepare resources, refreshments or small activities
- Assist with note-taking or practical tasks after visits
- Communicate any concerns or safeguarding issues to the chaplain promptly

Skills & Qualities Needed

- Compassionate, calm and respectful
- Comfortable in church settings and with Christian values
- Good listener; able to maintain confidentiality
- Reliable and punctual
- Being open to ongoing training and development

Things that are not expected of you and fall outside of this role:

- Personal Care and Shopping

Qualifications required - Caraway will support you with obtaining these.

- Enhanced DBS Check
- Basic Awareness Safeguarding Course and Foundations Safeguarding Course (both online).
- 1-2-1 Training if appropriate to your role.

Time Commitment

Flexible depending on your availability and the chaplain's rota - typically **2–4 hours a week or fortnightly.**



Care Home Visitor

Purpose of the Role

To help reduce loneliness and bring companionship to older people living in care homes by visiting regularly, chatting with residents and offering gentle support.

What You'll Do

- Visit a care home regularly to spend time with residents
- Offer friendly conversation, reminiscence and encouragement
- Support group activities if desired (e.g. crafts, quizzes, gentle singing)
- Build trust and relationships over time
- Be alert to changes in wellbeing and report concerns to the Care Home Lead or Anna Chaplain
- Help create a sense of warmth, dignity and belonging

Skills & Qualities Needed

- Warm, patient and kind. You should be a good listener and dependable.
- Enjoy talking with older people
- Respectful of residents with dementia or complex needs
- Comfortable following safeguarding and care home guidelines
- If working 1-2-1 - willing to undertake appropriate training.
- Being open to ongoing training and development

Things that are not expected of you and fall outside of this role:

- Personal Care and Shopping

Qualifications required - Caraway will support you with obtaining these.

- Enhanced DBS Check
- Basic Awareness Safeguarding Course and Foundations Safeguarding Course (both online).
- 1-2-1 Training if appropriate to your role.

Time Commitment

Typically **1–2 hours weekly or fortnightly**, depending on your availability.



Telephone Support

Purpose of the Role

To provide regular, supportive telephone calls to older people who may feel isolated, bereaved or lonely.

What You'll Do

- Make scheduled calls to one or more individuals
- Offer companionship, encouragement and a listening ear
- Keep brief notes of call dates/times (for your own records and expenses)
- Share any concerns about wellbeing or safety with the coordinator
- Maintain confidentiality and boundaries
- Build a positive, supportive relationship over time

Skills & Qualities Needed

- Warm, friendly telephone manner
- Good communicator and excellent listener
- Empathy, patience and sensitivity
- Reliable and consistent - people look forward to your call
- Able to keep brief records and follow guidance
- If working 1-2-1 - willing to undertake appropriate training.
- Being open to ongoing training and development

Qualifications required - Caraway will support you with obtaining these.

- Enhanced DBS Check
- Basic Awareness Safeguarding Course and Foundations Safeguarding Course (both online).
- 1-2-1 Training if appropriate to your role.

Time Commitment

Usually **1–2 calls per week**, about **20–30 minutes each**.



General Volunteer

Purpose of the Role

To provide flexible support across Caraway's activities, depending on your interests and skills. You may help with events, mailings, admin, fundraising, or occasional projects.

What You'll Do (depending on need)

- Help at community events or one-off gatherings
- Support administrative tasks (e.g. leaflet distribution, simple data entry)
- Assist Anna Chaplains or staff with practical tasks
- Help with fundraising events or collections
- Provide occasional help at Memory Cafés or other groups
- Offer practical help such as setting up venues, preparing refreshments or tidying up

Skills & Qualities Needed

- Flexible and willing to help where needed
- Friendly, dependable and positive
- Good communicator and reliable
- Able to work with others and follow guidance
- Being open to ongoing training and development
- No specific experience required—just enthusiasm!

Qualifications required - Caraway will support you with obtaining these.

- Enhanced DBS Check (dependent on scope of tasks undertaken)
- Basic Awareness Safeguarding Course and Foundations Safeguarding Course (both online) (dependent on scope of tasks undertaken).

Time Commitment

Flexible and agreed according to your availability.