



# Volunteer Handbook



A vehicle for change in Tower Hamlet's health and social care services

## What is Tower Hamlets Involvement Network (THINK)?

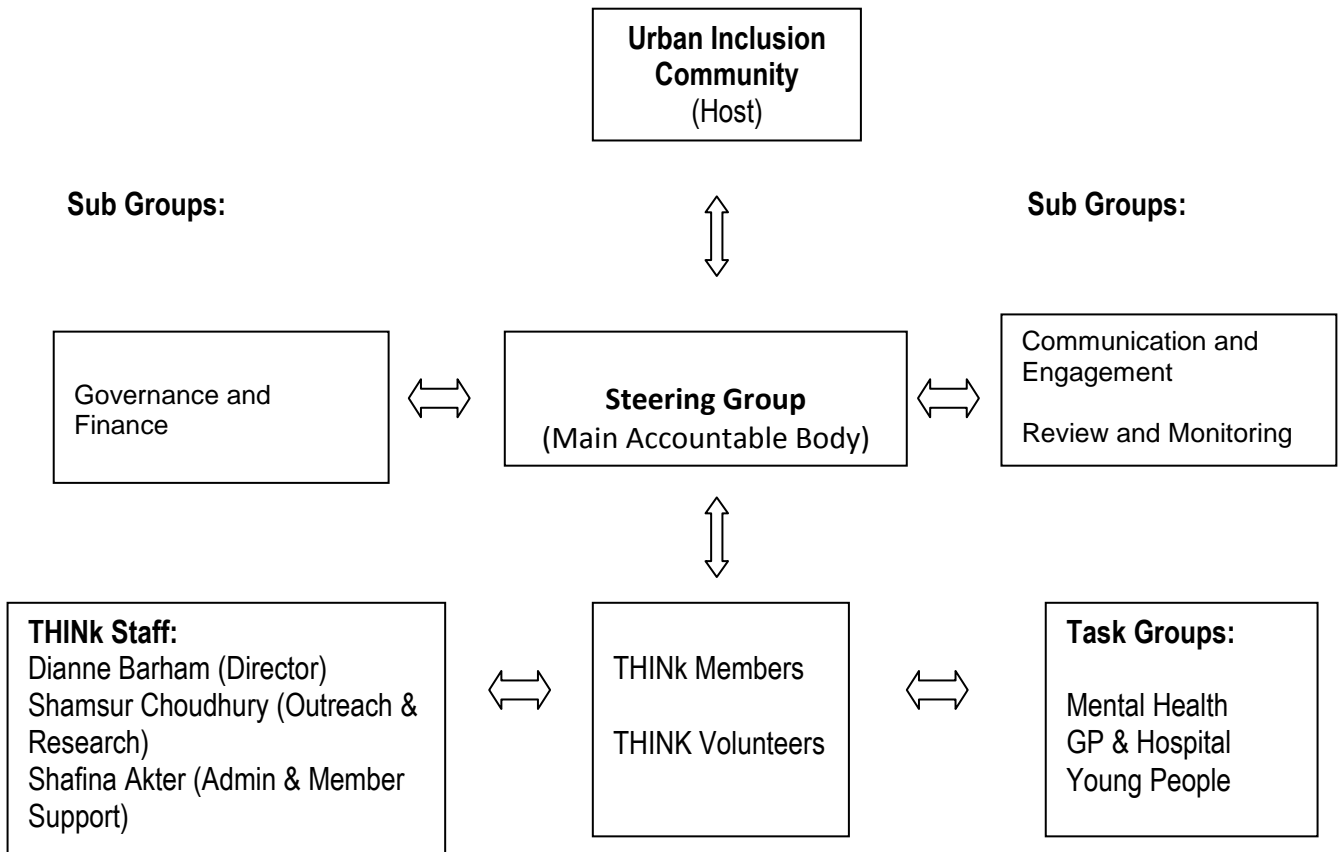
Tower Hamlets Involvement Network (THINK) is the Local Involvement Network, or LINK, for Tower Hamlets. LINKs have been set up in every area of England, funded by the Government and supported by an independent organisation, known as a Host. The host organisation for Tower Hamlets is a organisation called Urban Inclusion Community Ltd. THINK is a network of more than 700 local people and groups who believe that the users of local health and social care services often have the best ideas on how they can be improved. THINK's role is to gather those ideas and make sure that they are considered when services are being designed or their performance is being assessed.

## What does Tower Hamlets Involvement Network do?

- Promote and support the involvement of people in the commissioning, provision and scrutiny of local care services.
- Obtain the views of local people about their needs for, and their experiences of, local care services.
- Enable local people to monitor and review the commissioning and provision of care services.
- Convey local people's views to organisations responsible for commissioning, providing, managing and scrutinising local care services and recommend how services can be improved.



## Structure of Tower Hamlets Involvement Network (THINK)



## THINK Volunteer Statement

Volunteers are integral to THINK's strategy to widen the diversity of the membership base and dramatically increase the number of active members. They will also add to the capacity of THINK to produce comments and feedback through outreach and research work as well as take part in innovative projects, such as the THINK Champion and Mystery Shoppers schemes. THINK has a responsibility to offer the best support and training to volunteers in order to ensure that all Tower Hamlets residents are welcome and gain the most out of their time with THINK.

## Why are volunteers important to THINK?

- Add much needed capacity to help achieve THINK's aims
- Bring expertise, useful skills and fresh ideas
- Connect THINK more to the local community
- Allows THINK to act as a platform to help local residents gain work experience and achieve their personal goals

## What will volunteers do?

- Outreach work – getting comments and feedback from healthcare users and increasing THINK's membership base
- Research – helping to facilitate focus groups, get surveys filled out and undertake discovery interviews. Also, translation services.
- Marketing – managing the website, administering the database and helping with print media, such as leaflets and posters
- Become steering group and task group members
- Carry out Enter and View visits
- Work as mystery shoppers

## Why volunteer for THINK?

- Desire to improve the health system
- Work experience
- Gain experience in the health and social care sector
- Course requirement
- Give back to the community
- Corporate social responsibility

## Volunteer Expense Policy

It is a THINK policy that no volunteer be out-of-pocket as a result of their volunteering. We value the hard work and support volunteers provide to us and therefore we endeavour to cover all your expenses whilst you carry out volunteer work for us.

THINK volunteers can claim for reimbursement of the following expenses:

- Travel to and from the place of volunteering.
- Travel while volunteering.
- Meals taken while volunteering - this is subject to volunteering over 4 hours on the same day and to the value of £4.50.
- Care of dependants, including children, during volunteering **\*\***(under special circumstances and if agreed with supervisor)**\*\***
- Postage, phone calls, stationery etc. **\*\***(for phone calls reimbursement you will be required to provide evidence by giving us a copy of your monthly phone bill)**\*\***

### **Please make sure to keep all receipts safe**

If you are using your own car for volunteer work purposes, you are entitled to claim **0.40p per mile**. Please keep records of the mileage of each journey and make sure to note down the location 'to and from' of each journey.

Any anticipated further expenses will need to be discussed and agreed between the Volunteer and their supervisor.

### **You must retain all the receipts or proof of expenditure and attach these to the 'Expense Reimbursement Form' in order to obtain a reimbursement.**

At the end of every month please submit your expenses reimbursement form along with the receipts to our Volunteer Expenses Administrator. You can either send the form and receipts via recorded post or preferably deliver to the office in person.

**\*\*Please also make sure to claim within two months of the expenditure\*\***

### ***For further clarification on expenses please contact:***

Shamsur Choudhury (Volunteer Supervisor)  
E: [Shamsur.choudhury@thinknetwork.org.uk](mailto:Shamsur.choudhury@thinknetwork.org.uk)  
T: 020 8223 8750 (020 8223 8922 – main office number)

### ***For your monthly expense claim query please contact:***

Shafina Akter (Volunteer Expenses Administrator)  
E: [Shafina.akter@thinknetwork.org.uk](mailto:Shafina.akter@thinknetwork.org.uk)  
T: 020 8223 8922 – main office number  
(Available Mon-Thursday)

## **Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Policy**

As a Tower Hamlets Involvement Network (THINK) volunteer you may come in contact with vulnerable adults or children in the different settings of your volunteering capacity. The law requires all organisations to check that all individuals that come in contact with children or vulnerable adults are CRB checked.

- Tower Hamlets Involvement Network (THINK) will comply fully with the CRB code of practice, which can be found at [www.disclosure.gov.uk](http://www.disclosure.gov.uk) and will treat all applicants and existing staff and volunteers fairly. It will not discriminate unfairly against an individual on the basis of a disclosure of conviction or other information received from the CRB.
- Tower Hamlets Involvement Network (THINK) is committed to recruiting and retaining volunteers and to their fair treatment regardless of their ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, sensory impairment, physical or learning disability or offending background. Tower Hamlets Involvement network (THINK ) recognises the importance of a mix of talent, skills, potential, background, knowledge and experience and wishes to recruit and retain volunteers on this basis.
- Tower Hamlets Involvement Network (THINK) will ensure that the CRB Code of Practice is available to all volunteers. This can be downloaded from [www.disclosures.gov.uk](http://www.disclosures.gov.uk).

**Full information on the CRB can be found on [www.crb.gov.uk](http://www.crb.gov.uk)**

***For CRB check support please contact Shafina Akter on 020 8223 8922.***

## **Health and Safety Policy**

Tower Hamlets Involvement Network regards the promotion of Health and safety as a primary responsibility. The promotion and provision of a safe working environment is regarded as a mutual objective of the Directors and all employees. Tower Hamlets Involvement Network will take appropriate steps to ensure that, as far as is reasonably practicable, the place of work and its environment is safe and without risk to the health of volunteers.

Tower Hamlets Involvement Network will:-

- Ensure that where plant and equipment, etc., is used or where volunteers are concerned with the handling, storage or transport of articles or substances, safety requirements are met with the consequent avoidance of risk;
- Provide instruction, information and supervision to all volunteers, to ensure a safe working environment;
- Maintain an accident report book;

- Appoint a senior member of staff to have overall responsibility for health and safety matters;
- Undertake a six monthly review of health and safety and implement necessary recommendations.
- Consult with our volunteers on matters affecting their health and safety;
- Review and revise this Policy Statement and our Health and Safety Policy as necessary at regular intervals

***For further clarification on the Health and Safety policy Please contact Shamsur Choudhury on 020 8223 8750***

### **Volunteer Code of Conduct**

- To represent THINK in the outreach setting with professionalism, good manners and with due care to patients/ public right to privacy.
- To make sure not to jeopardise THINK's good name by behaving inappropriately with patients/public and service providers.
- To behave in a professional manner at all times
- To wear 'Volunteer Identity Badge' at all times. (Outreach and Enter and View Visit)
- To make sure that all information provided by patients/public in treated as confidential.
- To advise patients/public that all information supplied by them will be treated as confidential.

### **Insurance Statement**

As a volunteer, you are covered by Tower Hamlets Involvement Network's (THINK) host organisations insurance policy while engaged in approved volunteering activities. (Urban Inclusion Community Limited Employer's Liability)

### **Equal Opportunities Statement**

Tower Hamlets Involvement Network seeks to involve volunteers from a variety of backgrounds in its work and to offer opportunities irrespective of disability, gender, race/ cultural origin, sexuality, age, political affiliation or religion. Volunteers over the age of fifteen are accepted (subject to screening).

## Contacts for Volunteers

### **Volunteer Support and Expense**

Shafina Akter

Volunteer Expenses Administrator

Telephone: 020 8223 8922

Email: [shafina.akter@thinknetwork.org.uk](mailto:shafina.akter@thinknetwork.org.uk)

### **Volunteer Supervision/Management**

Shamsur Choudhury

Volunteer Manager/Supervisor

Telephone: 020 8223 8750

Email: [Shamsur.choudhury@thinknetwork.org.uk](mailto:Shamsur.choudhury@thinknetwork.org.uk)

### **Emergency Contact (Outreach/Research)**

Shamsur Choudhury

Telephone: 020 8223 8750 (9-5PM) Mobile: 0771 607 8840 (After 5pm)

### **THINK Details:**

Tower Hamlets Involvement Network

Room 12 Block 1, Mile End Hospital

Bancroft Road, London E1 4DG

**Telephone: 020 8223 8922**

**Email: [info@thinknetwork.org.uk](mailto:info@thinknetwork.org.uk)**

**Web: [www.thinknetwork.org.uk](http://www.thinknetwork.org.uk)**