

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

1. The Policy

- 1.1 Healthwatch Brighton and Hove recognises that the population it serves is a diverse one. It also takes seriously its obligation to reach and include a diversity of people, and to ensure its credibility within a diversity of communities. In addition, the Equality Act 2010 requires it not to discriminate against, harass or victimise actual or prospective employees or users of its services on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. For actual and prospective employees, marriage and civil partnership is also a protected characteristic. The Act also imposes a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled actual and prospective employees and users of its services where appropriate. Healthwatch Brighton and Hove extends all of this protection to its volunteers, representatives, and members of its Governing Body.
- 1.2 Healthwatch Brighton and Hove is therefore committed to policy, procedure and practice that recognises and respects the identity, rights, abilities and needs of each individual, and actively opposes all forms of unfair discrimination.

2. Procedures

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove will ensure that procedures are in place to provide instructions and guidance on how this Policy should be put into practice when:

- advertising for paid staff, volunteers, representatives and members of the Governing Body;
- selecting paid staff, volunteers, representatives and members of the Governing Body;
- managing staff and volunteers with disabilities;
- advertising its services; and
- providing its services for people with disabilities.

3. Training

Staff, volunteers, representatives and members of the Governing Body will receive training, guidance and support in diversity and equal opportunities as appropriate.

In particular, people involved in the recruitment of staff and the line management of staff and volunteers will be trained in non-discriminatory practice.

4. Accessibility of Policy

All staff, volunteers, representatives and members of the Governing Body will be given a copy of this Policy during their induction period. Members of the public will be given a copy on request.

5. Monitoring

In order to ensure broad compliance with this Policy, Healthwatch Brighton and Hove will collect, collate and analyse statistics relating to diversity for all applicants for voluntary and paid work and all users of its services where appropriate and practicable.

6. Complaints and non-compliance

- 6.1 Employees who believe that they have been discriminated against, harassed or victimised should use the *Community Works Grievance Policy and Procedure*. Similarly aggrieved members of the public should use the *Healthwatch Brighton and Hove Complaints Procedure*. These Procedures do not replace or detract from the right of employees and users of our services to pursue complaints in law under the Equality Act 2010.
- 6.2 Volunteers who believe that they have been discriminated against, harassed or victimised should use the *Healthwatch Brighton and Hove Volunteer Grievance Procedure*.
- 6.3 Any act that contravenes this Policy or its attendant procedures is a disciplinary matter, and will be dealt with using the *Community Works Disciplinary Policy* or the *Healthwatch Brighton and Hove Procedure for the Management of Volunteer Conduct and Capability*.
- 6.4 Employees and volunteers should also be made aware that individuals who contravene the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 may be held personally liable should legal action be taken by an aggrieved party.