

VOLUNTEER POLICY

1. Volunteering

1.1 The policy

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove is an organisation intended to be led by and for local people. To ensure public involvement, ownership and leadership, to enable it to reach a diversity of people, and to ensure its credibility within a diversity of communities, it will seek to involve volunteers at all levels in the organisation and in all areas of its work. All staff will assist in the creation of meaningful and productive roles for volunteers, and in the recruitment of volunteers from a wide range of communities. This policy sets standards to ensure that volunteers are appropriately recruited, inducted, trained, deployed and managed.

1.2 Definition of a volunteer

A volunteer is anyone who performs an agreed role for Healthwatch Brighton and Hove for no financial reward. A volunteer must be officially appointed by Healthwatch Brighton and Hove prior to undertaking the role.

1.3 Volunteers from other volunteering programmes

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove may also accept as volunteers those participating in student community service or work placements, employee volunteering programmes, and other volunteer referral programmes. In each case, however, an agreement must be in effect with the organisation or programme from which these volunteers originate identifying responsibility for their management and care. Notwithstanding this, they will be entitled to all the provisions of this policy and its attendant procedures.

1.4 Volunteer rights and responsibilities

Volunteers have the right to be given meaningful work, to be treated as equal co-workers, to receive effective supervision, to have full involvement and participation in the organisation, and to be given recognition for work done. Healthwatch Brighton and Hove asks volunteers to agree to perform their duties to the best of their abilities and to remain loyal to its values, goals, policies and procedures. These rights and responsibilities are more fully set out in the Healthwatch Brighton and Hove *Volunteer Agreement*.

1.5 Scope of volunteer involvement

Volunteers will not be used to displace any paid employees from their position.

2. Maintenance of Records

Records will be maintained for each volunteer, including start and finish dates, positions held, supervision records, and awards received. The Volunteer Coordinator will be responsible for the maintenance of these records which will be afforded the same confidentiality as staff personnel records. Volunteers will be given an anonymous and confidential *Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form* to complete on application, and on appointment. These forms will be used to monitor the accessibility of our volunteer recruitment process. Volunteer records will be destroyed one year after the volunteer has finished work, except for any references or testimonials written by Healthwatch Brighton and Hove staff.

3. Confidentiality

In accordance with the Healthwatch Brighton and Hove *Confidentiality Policy*, volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed whilst serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves a single member of staff, volunteer, or member of the public, or the overall business of Healthwatch Brighton and Hove or any other organisation or committee. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in the use of Healthwatch Brighton and Hove's *Procedure for the Management of Volunteer Conduct and Capability*.

4. Volunteer Recruitment and Selection

4.1 Role descriptions

There will be a role description for each volunteer role. All role descriptions will include a description of the purpose and duties of the role, an indication of the time commitment required, a person specification, a description of the benefits of volunteering for Healthwatch Brighton and Hove, and an indication of the support and supervision provided.

4.2 Equal Opportunities

All volunteers will be recruited with due regard to the Healthwatch Brighton and Hove *Equality and Diversity Policy*, and bearing in mind the intent of broadening and expanding volunteer involvement in the community. The sole qualification for volunteer recruitment will be the suitability to fulfil the role on behalf of Healthwatch Brighton and Hove.

4.3 Volunteer roles

Individuals will only be appointed to a specified role with an accompanying role description. No volunteer will be assigned to a "make work" position and no role will be given to a person who does not meet the person specification requirements. Where volunteers have additional support needs, role descriptions may be altered to accommodate them.

4.4 Recruitment of volunteers under 18

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove may appoint volunteers under the age of 18, but due regard will be given to their age and experience when determining the role offered and the level of support provided.

4.5 Recruitment procedure

All applicants will be recruited following the Healthwatch Brighton and Hove *Volunteer Recruitment Procedure*.

4.6 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and references

As appropriate for the protection of adults at risk and children, volunteers may be asked to submit to a DBS criminal record check. Volunteers who do not agree to this will not be appointed. The Healthwatch Brighton and Hove *Criminal Records Policy and Guidelines on Considering Criminal Convictions when Recruiting Volunteers* will be used to inform procedure at all times.

References will be sought for all successful applicants, and all references will be in place before a volunteer commences their role.

4.7 Re-assignment

Volunteers who are at any time re-assigned to a new role will be interviewed for that role and will receive all appropriate induction and training for that role, and be subject to any screening procedure necessary, before they begin work.

5. Volunteer Training, Development and Management

5.1 Induction

All volunteers will receive a general induction into Healthwatch Brighton and Hove, and an induction into their specific role. An induction programme and accompanying checklist will be created for each new volunteer. The programme will be overseen by the Volunteer Co-ordinator, who will be responsible for ensuring that the checklist is signed off.

5.2 Training

As part of the induction programme, each volunteer will undertake general induction training. Training specific to the volunteer's role may also be provided within the induction programme.

Both general and role-specific training may also be offered to, or required of, volunteers from time to time. In addition volunteers will be encouraged and enabled to undertake external training as appropriate to their role and development needs.

5.3 Supervision

Each volunteer will be assigned a supervisor who will also be her/his line manager. One to one supervision will be a compulsory requirement of each volunteer role, and will be undertaken in accordance with the Healthwatch Brighton and Hove *Volunteer Supervision Guidelines*.

A volunteer may be a supervisor of other volunteers, provided that the supervising volunteer is under the direct supervision of a paid member of staff.

All supervisors, both paid staff and volunteers, must have undertaken formal training in supervision skills prior to supervising volunteers.

5.4 Communication

Volunteers are entitled to all necessary information pertinent to the performance of their duties. Accordingly, volunteers should be included in, and have access to, all appropriate information, e-mails, materials, and meetings relevant to their work. Therefore, volunteers should be included on all relevant distribution lists. Primary responsibility for ensuring that the volunteer receives such information will rest with the Volunteer Co-ordinator.

6. Volunteer conduct and capability

6.1 General conduct

Volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the Brighton and Hove Healthwatch *Code of Conduct* and *Volunteer Agreement*.

6.2 Volunteer grievances

Volunteers who have a grievance or complaint about Healthwatch Brighton and Hove or any of its staff or volunteers should use the Healthwatch Brighton and Hove *Grievance Procedure for Volunteers*.

6.3 Complaints about volunteers

Members of staff who wish to complain about a volunteer's conduct should use the Community Works *Grievance Policy and Procedure*. Individuals external to Community Works should use the Healthwatch Brighton and Hove *Complaints Procedure*.

6.4 Dealing with problems

Volunteers who do not adhere to the Healthwatch Brighton and Hove *Volunteer Code of Conduct* or *Volunteer Agreement*, or who fail satisfactorily to perform the duties of their role may be subject to the *Procedure for the Management of Volunteer Conduct and Capability*, and may as a result be required to end their

involvement as a volunteer with Healthwatch Brighton and Hove. Volunteer conduct will be judged against the criteria in the *Volunteer Code of Conduct*.

6.5 Resignation

Volunteers may resign from their volunteer role with Healthwatch Brighton and Hove at any time and for any reason.

6.6 Exit interview

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove is committed to providing the best possible experience for volunteers. Exit interviews, where possible and appropriate, will be conducted with volunteers who are ending their voluntary involvement with Healthwatch Brighton and Hove. Where an interview is not possible, but an approach is appropriate, an exit interview form will be sent to the volunteer. The results will be used to inform the further development of volunteer management.

7. Reimbursement of Expenses

Volunteers are entitled to reimbursement of all out-of-pocket expenses incurred while undertaking work for Healthwatch Brighton and Hove in accordance with the Healthwatch Brighton and Hove *Volunteer Expenses Policy*.

8. Risk Management

All volunteer roles will be assessed for risk using the Healthwatch Brighton and Hove *Volunteer Role Risk Assessment Procedure*, and all identified risks will be addressed and removed or minimised before a volunteer commences their role.

All volunteers will be trained in working to the Healthwatch Brighton and Hove *Lone Working Policy* as part of their induction.

9. Access to Healthwatch Brighton and Hove Property and Materials

As appropriate, volunteers will have access to the Healthwatch Brighton and Hove property and materials necessary to fulfil their duties, and will receive training in the operation of any equipment. Property and materials should be used only when required for the volunteer task.

10. Insurance

The Community Works public liability insurance covers all volunteers engaged in the work of Healthwatch Brighton and Hove. Volunteers will be encouraged to consult their own insurance companies regarding their motor vehicle insurance if they use their own vehicle in furtherance of their voluntary work.