

# Healthwatch Hillingdon

## Managing Volunteers Policy & Procedure

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## 1. POLICY AND SCOPE

- 1.1 The following policy and procedure is a statement of Healthwatch Hillingdon's (HWH) hopes for and intentions towards volunteers and is not contractually binding on any party either way. HWH reserves the right to change the policy at any time.
- 1.2 This policy applies to all volunteers working at HWH.
- 1.3 This volunteer policy aims to establish a framework of good practice for volunteering activities, which can only be accomplished by having effective volunteer management.
- 1.4 The act of volunteering has rewards for both parties involved in the process. The volunteers have many different and varied reasons for joining HWH in its activities. HWH also receives the benefit of the volunteer services, in relation to expertise and experience.
- 1.5 Volunteers are viewed as a valuable resource to the organisation and shall be given meaningful work, which offers them a degree of challenge and potential for developing new skills. Volunteers shall have effective supervision and be recognised for work done. To this end the organisation accepts and encourages the involvement of volunteers at a project and administrative level. It should be noted that volunteering is not free, as it requires a resource commitment by HWH. Each volunteer will have a Line Manager or mentor, an outline of tasks and will receive regular supervision and appraisals/progress reviews.
- 1.6 To effectively manage volunteering, it is important that the following issues are successfully addressed. This will ensure that the relationship between HWH and its volunteers remains vital and healthy.
- 1.7 HWH will endeavour to encourage volunteers to join from a diverse range of backgrounds (including people with 'protected characteristics') and will proactively recognise the different needs of different volunteers and wherever possible making resources available to encourage those who might otherwise find the commitments to volunteering difficult i.e. those on benefits, carers, those with disabilities.
- 1.8 The organisation will endeavour to understand the potential effect of its policies and practices on volunteers, particularly those from 'protected' characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 section 149.

## 2. PROCEDURE

### 2.1 Minimum age of volunteers

Minimum age of volunteers for HWH is eighteen years of age.

### 2.2 Recruitment and selection:

#### a) Selection

People may wish to volunteer on a long-term basis or on a shorter term basis (minimum commitment of 3 months would be ideal however HWH is aware that circumstances may vary).

In recruiting volunteers, all employees are requested to follow equal opportunities best practice to include:

- Advertising the volunteering opportunity as widely as possible.
- Applicants completing a HWH volunteer application form including equal opportunities monitoring form (APPENDIX E)
- Applicants being provided with an outline of tasks and risk assessment interviews to match the right applicant with the right volunteering opportunity for their skills and experience where possible, offering opportunities for disabled volunteers.

Throughout the selection process, HWH is trying to find out as much about the potential volunteer as is relevant to the organisation and the task. They must also give the volunteer as much information about the task and organisation as possible. During the interview there should be an opportunity to discuss the type of work and commitment they are prepared to make with anticipated limitations. Those conducting the interview should refer to Appendix D Who Can Volunteer for HWH (Implications).

It may be necessary to carry out a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check where there is to be individual contact with young people/children and vulnerable groups. Speculative voluntary enquiries should be passed onto the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). They will then be informed of the appropriate volunteer selection process and any current vacancies. If no position is available, and the person agrees, the information will be kept on record in order that they are contacted in the future if any vacancies arise.

## b) References

HWH accepts that for some volunteers limiting references to previous employers may create a barrier to them accessing the volunteering opportunity. Therefore, HWH will also accept references from someone the volunteer has personally known for least 24 months that is not a family member.

## c) Registration

This will involve the volunteer signing the HWH Volunteer Agreement (HWH011a - APPENDIX A), which sets out guidelines to the volunteer, and includes the Nolan Principles of Public Life. The volunteer will also be required to complete a confidential Volunteer Application Form (HWH011b - APPENDIX B) to provide HWH with their personal details. In addition, a copy of the HWH Health and Safety Policy and Procedures (HWH015) and the HWH Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Policy (HWH002) will be supplied to the volunteer to read and acceptance of the policies must be recorded.

The volunteer has three 'taster sessions' after which time if they wish to continue with the volunteering opportunity a full induction will be carried out.

## 2.3 Induction

This is a flexible process to meet varying requirements of all volunteers, but must cover a number of required essentials (where appropriate):

- Health and Safety
- Equality, Diversity and Human Rights
- Workstation risk assessment
- Fire training and personal safety
- Discipline
- Responsibilities
- Facilities
- Working conditions
- Breaks & refreshments
- Staff meetings

- Use of office equipment
- Smoking/alcohol
- Dress code
- Disabled parking

The induction should be carried out by the CEO, who may delegate to the relevant Line Manager with designated responsibility for the volunteer. For more detail refer to the Volunteer Induction Form (APPENDIX C).

#### 2.4 Insurance

Volunteers are covered by public liability insurance whilst performing tasks for HWH. This insurance does not cover personal possessions. Volunteers are advised to make their own arrangements and take normal precautions with their own belongings. HWH accept no responsibility for the loss of or damage to personal possessions.

#### 2.5 Use of email and internet

The volunteer will be issued with relevant passwords to gain access to the relevant parts of the IT network and email etc that they are allowed to as part of their duties. Before this is done they will be informed of the internet and e-mail usage Policy Number HWH 023.

#### 2.6 Expenses

Volunteers will receive reimbursement for any pre-agreed expenses from HWH incurred whilst performing their tasks in line with HWH's travel and subsistence rates. These must be agreed by HWH before the expenses are incurred and receipts kept for reimbursements (see HWH Volunteers Expenses and Benefits Policy - HWH014).

#### 2.7 Volunteers and Government benefits

HWH hopes its volunteers will come from a variety of backgrounds including those in receipt of benefits. For volunteers in such a situation HWH will be sensitive to other possible requirements linked to the receipt of benefits.

As an organisation HWH do not have a duty to inform the benefits office who is volunteering and this is the responsibility of the individual volunteer.

#### 2.8 Working with confidential information

At times the volunteer may need to have access to confidential information and the volunteer will keep secret all confidential information entrusted to them by HWH. HWH considers the following to be confidential information:

- Names and addresses of HWH's clients, staff, partners or stakeholders.
- Details of any transactions undertaken on behalf of HWH's clients during your employment.
- Any financial or other sensitive information relating to the affairs of HWH or its clients, staff, partners or stakeholders and any systems and procedures developed by HWH.

## 2.9 Copyright

Any intellectual property rights for any documents or work created as part of their volunteer role with Healthwatch Hillingdon will remain the property of HWH.

## 2.10 Training and development

Wherever possible, and in order to help the volunteer carry out their role, HWH will provide training. The type and form of training will vary with the task requirements, such as on the job training or external courses.

## 2.11 Reviews and expectations

Regular periodic reviews of the tasks undertaken will be carried out by the Mentor with the volunteer; this will determine the future requirements of the activities and the volunteer. Supervision must also be conducted on a regular basis.

HWH intends to make every effort to meet the expectations and fulfil its obligations and identify ways of maintaining and developing the motivation of current and potential volunteers. Volunteers will have the right to question the work and its suitability allocated to them.

In the event that a volunteer's performance is below standard, the following possibilities may be considered:

- Re-assignment - transfer the volunteer to a different role, which is more suited to their capabilities if such a position exists.
- Re-training - if the problem is a lack of knowledge, HWH might aim to work towards providing the knowledge, perhaps by using a different training approach.

- Refer them elsewhere - if it were felt that HWH is the wrong kind of organisation for that volunteer, we would endeavour to help find a more suitable volunteering opportunity within another organisation.

## 2.12 Standards

All volunteers are representatives of HWH and therefore should conduct themselves in an appropriate manner. The standard of their work reflects on HWH and therefore it is essential that the end product, with the support, assistance and training where deemed necessary, should aim to be of as high a standard as possible. All volunteers must abide by HWH's Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Policy (HWH002) and must not discriminate against or treat less favourably other members of staff, volunteers or members of the public on grounds of gender, race or national origins, age marital status, religious belief or sexual orientation. Working whilst intoxicated or under the influence of drugs or alcohol is not acceptable and will be considered as a serious misconduct which may result in the summary termination of this agreement

## 2.13 Grievance Policy and Procedure

If a situation arises which cannot be resolved between the volunteer and the Line Manager or member of staff, then the CEO should resolve the issues taking into consideration the volunteer and the member of staff's points of view. All complaints of discrimination, abuse, harassment, etc will be treated seriously and investigated with all possible speed, confidentiality and sensitivity. For further details reference HWH Grievance Policy and Procedure (HWH003).

## 2.14 HWH references for Volunteers

HWH will provide all volunteers leaving HWH for other voluntary work or paid work with a reference, which will outline the nature of their voluntary work for HWH, length of time with HWH, and any training received in the course of their volunteering for HWH.

## 2.15 Opportunities for paid employment

For the purposes of posts advertised within HWH i.e. recruitment is taking place internally, the volunteer should be considered to be an external candidate for equal opportunities purposes.

## 2.16 Records held by HWH on volunteers

HWH will hold the following information on a volunteer for the duration of the volunteering period and for 6 months afterwards, unless the volunteer explicitly requests such information is not held at the end of the

volunteering period, or the volunteer explicitly requests that the information is held for a longer period to enable references to be sought from HWH.

- Volunteer name, address, and telephone contact nos.
- Name and number of two people to contact in case of emergency

Any information held for equal opportunities purposes will be held in an anonymous way that cannot be linked to the individual volunteer. Any information obtained as a result of a check will be kept separate from other volunteer information in accordance with HWH checking procedure and Data Protection Act.

#### 2.17 Use of Volunteer's in publicity material.

HWH will always seek permission from the individual volunteer to use their name and/or image on any publicity material. This permission will only be sought once for the duration of the volunteer agreement. However, a volunteer may withdraw their consent to use their name and/or image on any publicity material at any time by informing the Chief Executive Officer.

**APPENDIX A - reference document HWH011a Volunteer Agreement**

**APPENDIX B - reference document HWH011b Volunteer Application Form**

## APPENDIX C

### VOLUNTEER INDUCTION FORM

The induction should be carried out by the CEO, who may delegate to the relevant Line Manager with designated responsibility for the volunteer. This induction list acts as a checklist for the CEO or Line Manager to ensure all the relevant topics are covered (see below) and should be worked through, with each element explained in detail, during the volunteer’s first day at HWH.

The CEO or Line Manager will sign each element below, once completed. Once all appropriate elements have been signed off, both the volunteer and the CEO or Line Manager will sign the form as a record of completion.

Items to cover	Volunteer initials	CEO/Line Manager	Date
<b>HR</b>			
References Received & Personal Details Form & Signed Volunteer Agreement			
Managing of Volunteers Policy & Procedure (HWH011)			
Driving Licence/authorised Driver Declaration			
Sickness/Absence			
Training			
Volunteer meetings/supervision			
Exit interview/references			
<b>HEALTH &amp; SAFETY</b>			
Health and Safety Policy			

Accident Reporting			
Fire Procedure & Fire Points			
First Aid Procedure			
Insurance - Employers Liability Insurance & Public Liability Insurance			
Office Security			
Work Station Risk Assessment			
<b>FINANCE</b>			
Expenses (Volunteers Expenses and Benefits Policy - HWH014)			
<b>COMPUTERS</b>			
Password, Internet Policy, Filing, Email & Intranet			

## APPENDIX D

### WHO CAN VOLUNTEER FOR HEALTHWATCH HILLINGDON?

The arrangements set out in this Appendix reflect current provisions which may be subject to change by new legislation or based on updated advice/guidance from the relevant government departments.

Currently, the Home Office has allowed a concession to permit people from outside the European Economic Area to volunteer if they meet the following criteria:

- The activity is purely voluntary and of any kind within the charitable organisation or entering into does not involve taking up a salaried post or permanent position any arrangement that is likely to constitute a contract of employment; and
- The activity is either for a charitable organisation listed in Home Office guidance or a registered charity whose work meets the criteria set out in this instruction;
- and The activity is unpaid, or is not likely to be subject to payment of the National Minimum Wage (see not below) and directed towards a worthy cause; and
- It is closely related to the aims of the organisation;
- It is fieldwork involving direct assistance to those the charitable organisation has been established to help; and
- The passenger intends to leave the United Kingdom at the end of their stay.

#### People coming to this country in order to volunteer

People from countries for which a visa is needed to travel to the UK must obtain one before travelling.

People who have arranged their voluntary work before travelling to the UK and who do not need a visa but would like peace of mind can seek entry clearance before travelling. This takes the form of a certificate placed in

their passport. This is not a requirement and does not guarantee entry into UK, but may make passage through immigration control easier. Application for entry clearance is made to the British Embassy or High Commission.

### **3 Students**

Since mid- 1999 students from outside the European Economic Area no longer need permission to take part-time or holiday work, including volunteering.

Some restrictions remain in place, including a limit of 20 hours per week during term time, unless the college agrees otherwise.

### **4 Refugees**

People, who have refugee status or who have exceptional leave to remain, and family members, are allowed to do any type of work including voluntary work.

### **5 Asylum Seekers**

Many people seeking asylum want to use their skills and contribute something to the society in which they wish to live. Recent changes to asylum rules have made this easier.

Since April 2000, asylum seekers (people in the process of applying for refugee status) and family members are allowed to volunteer. This includes those who are waiting outcome of an appeal to refuse them asylum.

New Home Office guidance confirms that the Government ‘does not expect asylum-seekers to be left out of pocket because of their volunteering’ and that they can be reimbursed normal volunteer expenses. It states that care should be taken to ensure that activity undertaken by an asylum seeker is genuinely voluntary, and does not amount to either employment or job substitution.

#### **Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, section 8**

This Act makes it a criminal offence to employ a person who does not have the right to work in the UK.

### **6 Volunteers on JSA (Job Seekers Allowance)**

There are no maximum hours that someone claiming JSA can volunteer for. However, the individual must be actively seeking work and be available for work. Therefore, while there is no stated limit to the number of hours a

person can volunteer, it would be in the claimant's best interest to not let their volunteering activity prevent them from actively seeking employment. To be available for work, a claimant must be available to attend a job interview, or start a job, at 48 hour's notice. This period of notice will increase to one week in the near future.

## **7 Volunteers who are carers**

Given the number of carers in the community this means there are many skilled people with valuable life experiences who may want to volunteer but cannot. Under all definitions of 'reasonable out-of-pocket expenses' care costs are included. This is explained in more detail in HWH's "Volunteers Expenses and Benefits Policy - HWH014". It is absolutely fine to reimburse receipted care costs and this will not have minimum wage implications and no effect on volunteer's benefits.

## Healthwatch Hillingdon Equalities Monitoring Information Form

Healthwatch Hillingdon is committed to promoting equality and eliminating unlawful discrimination - please help us achieve this by completing this form, which will be detached from any identifying data and will be used solely for monitoring purposes.

<b>Age</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Under 18 <input type="checkbox"/> 18-35 <input type="checkbox"/> 36-50 <input type="checkbox"/> 51-65 <input type="checkbox"/> Over 60 <input type="checkbox"/> Undisclosed
<b>Gender</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Transgender <input type="checkbox"/> Undisclosed

<b>Marital status</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed <input type="checkbox"/> Undisclosed
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I would describe my ethnic origin :		
<b>Asian or Asian British</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi <input type="checkbox"/> Indian <input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/> Any other Asian background  <b>Black or Black British</b> <input type="checkbox"/> African <input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/> Any other Black background	<b>Mixed</b> <input type="checkbox"/> White and Asian <input type="checkbox"/> White and Black African <input type="checkbox"/> White and Black Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/> Under 18  <b>White</b> <input type="checkbox"/> British <input type="checkbox"/> Irish <input type="checkbox"/> Any other White background	<b>Other ethnic group</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese <input type="checkbox"/> Any other ethnic group  <input type="checkbox"/> Undisclosed

Please select the option which best describes your sexuality:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Lesbian <input type="checkbox"/> Gay	<input type="checkbox"/> Heterosexual <input type="checkbox"/> Bisexual	<input type="checkbox"/> Trans-sexual <input type="checkbox"/> Undisclosed

Please indicate your religion or belief:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Atheism	<input type="checkbox"/> Hinduism	<input type="checkbox"/> Judaism	<input type="checkbox"/> Undisclosed
<input type="checkbox"/> Buddhism	<input type="checkbox"/> Islam	<input type="checkbox"/> Sikhism	
<input type="checkbox"/> Christianity	<input type="checkbox"/> Jainism	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Undisclosed
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Thank you for completing this form.