

Healthwatch Hillingdon

Volunteers Code of Conduct Policy

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1. SCOPE

- 1.1 This code applies to all Healthwatch Hillingdon (HWH) volunteers. It sets out what is expected of volunteers and what their responsibilities will be participating as a volunteer of HWH

2. POLICY

- 2.1 Adherence to the Code of Conduct is a condition of participation as a volunteer at Healthwatch Hillingdon (HWH). Breaches of the code could lead to action being brought under the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure (HWH001).

- 2.2 HWH expects its volunteers to:

- Comply with the relevant legislation including equal opportunities, discrimination, human rights, data protection and freedom of information;
- Value diversity by treating all people with respect and acting in a way that does not discriminate against or exclude anyone;
- Consider and adhere to the Nolan Principles of Public Life (Appendix 1);
- Act and conduct themselves in a reasonable and responsible way to any staff or volunteers or members of the public they work with or meet as a HWH member/participant;
- Never disclose confidential and sensitive information unless there is a legal duty to do so - for example in the interests of patient safety, advice and training can be given in this regard;
- Always act in an open and public way;
- Not accept gifts or hospitality which could be seen as trying to influence the decisions, independence or activities of the HWH;
- Inform HWH of any conflict of interest, or anything that might be seen by other people as a conflict of interest, as soon as it arises and keep the Register of Interests up to date;
- Inform HWH of any changes to employment or personal circumstance that could affect participation in a HWH activity.

- 2.3 Volunteers working at HWH will be required to:

- Participate in induction training and other opportunities to develop an understanding of HWH work;

- Declare any conflict of interest, or anything that might be seen by other people as a conflict of interest, as soon as it arises and keep the Register of Interests up to date;
- Prepare for meetings and events and send apologies when you cannot attend or will be late;
- Listen to and respect the views and experiences of other HWH volunteers, and support others to contribute to the HWH's work;
- Only carry out work in line with action plans agreed by the HWH board and working groups;
- Observe and sign the HWH Volunteer Agreement before speaking, writing or attending meetings on behalf of HWH;
- Adhere to the rules for board members, chairs of working groups and HWH representatives on committees and public bodies;
- Accept collective responsibility and not work against the majority view of the HWH board, approved HWH policies and procedures, CEO or a working group (if a member) once a formal decision has been democratically taken.

3. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check

3.1 Where appropriate to the role, volunteers will be required to submit to a DBS check:

- Non-disclosure of an offence prior to submission will cause automatic disqualification from the HWH unless it is demonstrated that an error has occurred (not unknown).
- Declaration of an offence prior to a DBS check will not necessarily exclude a member from becoming a volunteer and taking part in, or being a member of working groups, boards etc.
- The CEO will consider the individual circumstances and the nature of any offence and their decision will be ratified by the full HWH board.
- Volunteers with a declaration may be excluded from certain HWH activities.

4. General

4.1 Within the resources available, HWH will seek to provide volunteers with:

- ✓ Appropriate materials and training to carry out HWH activities.
- ✓ Re-imburement of expenses as specified in the Volunteer Expenses and Benefits policy (HWH014)
- ✓ An introduction to the HWH for new volunteers
- ✓ Information on HWH activities, annual reports and regular meetings

- ✓ An appropriate level of insurance when taking part in HWH activities which are carried out in line with HWH policies and regulations

Appendix 1

The Nolan Principles of Public Life

Volunteers should have regard to the 10 Principles of Public Life which define the standards of conduct which volunteers are expected to uphold. The principles do not create a statutory obligation for volunteers but you should be aware that a failure to act in accordance with these general principles may also amount to a breach of the HWH Volunteer Agreement.

Selflessness

Volunteers should serve on the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.

Honesty & Integrity

Volunteers should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned, should not behave improperly, and should on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour.

Objectivity

Volunteers should make decisions on merit, including when making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits.

Accountability

Volunteers should be accountable to the public for their actions and the manner in which they carry out their responsibilities, and should co-operate fully and honestly with any scrutiny appropriate to their particular office.

Openness

Volunteers should be as open as possible about their actions and those of their authority, and should be prepared to give reasons for those actions.

Personal Judgement

Volunteers may take account of the views of others, including their political groups, but should reach their own conclusions on the issues before them and act in accordance with those conclusions.

Respect for Others

Volunteers should promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and by treating people with respect, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. They should respect the impartiality and integrity of the authority's statutory officers and its other employees.

Duty to Uphold the Law

Volunteers should uphold the law and, on all occasions, act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in them.

Stewardship

Volunteers should do whatever they are able to do to ensure that their authorities use their resources prudently, and in accordance with the law.

Leadership

Volunteers should promote and support these principles by leadership, and by example, and should act in a way that secures or preserves public confidence.