

Volunteers: Confidentiality Policy

Version Number	1
Date of Equality Impact Assessment	09/12/15
Date approved by HWWB Board	07/03/16
Author	Jo Karasinski
Date Implemented	07/03/16
Last revised	
Next revision due	07/03/18
Volunteer Training delivered	As per Volunteer training timetable
<p>The policy on the HWWB website is the only policy that is updated. Please note that it is the individual HWWB staff, board member or volunteer to ensure that they are reading the most current version of this policy. This can be done by checking the version number shown above against the version number of the policy filed here: www.healthwatchwestberks.org.uk</p> <p><u>If required this policy can be supplied in different formats</u> <u>Tel: 01635 886 210 or email:contact@healthwatchwestberks.org.uk</u></p>	

Responsibilities

1 HWWB Board

Have overall responsibility for volunteers within HWWB

2 HWWB Chief Officer (CO)

HWWB Board have delegated to the HWWB CO the responsibility for developing policies and procedures for volunteering at HWWB and to ensure these are implemented effectively.

3 HWWB Staff and volunteers

All HWWB staff and volunteers are required to read and implement and support all policies and procedures.

Volunteers: Confidentiality Policy

1. Introduction.

During the course of their role as Healthwatch West Berkshire volunteers, persons will most certainly have access to, or have sight of, documents and other information that is of a confidential nature. At all times information accessed during their period of volunteering must be dealt with by HWWB volunteers in a sensitive and confidential manner.

The information may be:

- confidential to the organisation of Healthwatch West Berkshire (HWWB), and which if disclosed could have detrimental effect on HWWB
- confidential to individual members of Healthwatch or persons with whom HWWB volunteers come into contact with
- other information to which HWWB has access to or comes to the knowledge of HWWB volunteers which needs to remain confidential

Irrespective of which of the above classifications the information applies to, the way that it is handled and dealt with is the same:

‘Under no circumstance should information to which volunteers have access to, or become aware of, as a result of their HWWB activities, be disclosed to persons outside the organisation, without properly seeking authority to do so. This authority should normally be granted by either the Chair or CO of the organisation in writing.’

2. Exceptions to disclosure.

There are, of course, exceptions when information outlined above, may and should be disclosed to persons outside HWWB:

- To safe guard the health and welfare of any person, irrespective of whom that person may be
- To prevent or detect a criminal offence
- To minimise loss or damage to the reputation of HWWB
- To minimise or prevent the loss of HWWB property or finances

Where there is a legal duty on the organisation to disclose information to a statutory authority, the person to whom the confidentiality is owed should

normally be informed that disclosure has been, or will be made. There are exceptions to this, when the informing of the aforementioned person, will in itself amount to a criminal offence or raise a safeguarding issue. Therefore guidance should always be sought if there are ANY doubt as to the correct course of action to be taken.

3. Safeguarding information

It is the responsibility of all HWWB volunteers, to ensure that they handle any information they receive in the course of their volunteer activity in a sensitive and safe way, to ensure the security of that information.

3.1 Computers, mobile phones etc.

Where HWWB volunteers have the use of laptop computers and mobile phones and other mobile devices, that are used for storing information etc. They should, at all times ensure that the information is kept safe and secure.

3.2 Documents

All documents relating to the work of HWWB should always be kept secure. Once the purpose for which the document has been prepared has ceased, paper copies should either be correctly and securely filed in the HWWB office, on a computer drive, or shredded.

4. Data Protection Act

Any information held by HWWB, should not be disclosed to a person or organisation outside of HWWB, without the proper authority of the Chair or CO of HWWB. Any unauthorised disclosure may make the volunteer, as well as HWWB, liable to prosecution under the Data Protection Act. **Please see Item 2 'Exceptions to disclosure 'above.**

5. Access to information

Information is confidential to the organisation and should only be passed to an external organisation with the permission of the source of that information. Sensitive information will only be made available to the person named on the file.

5.1 Personnel Files.

HWWB Volunteers have the right to see their personnel files by giving reasonable notice to HWWB's CO.

5.2 Copying files and other information

When copying documents, ensure that the contents of the document being copied cannot be seen by another person. Any misfed, misprinted or copies not required, should be shredded

5.3 Information from outside HWWB.

When information is received from organisations outside HWWB, and is deemed to be confidential, HWWB and its volunteers undertakes to respect that confidentiality.

6. Storing information

- General non-confidential information will be stored in filing cabinets or desk drawers, with open access to HWWB staff.
- Information regarding staff and volunteers, or a personal nature, will be kept by the CO, or a nominated person, and will be kept locked at all times.
- In the case of an emergency, such as requiring details of Emergency Contact for a person, access can be granted by a senior manager, other than the CO

7. Breaches of Confidentiality

Any HWWB volunteer accessing unauthorised files or breaching confidentiality may be deemed to have committed an act of gross misconduct and may be subject to disciplinary action and ultimately removal from all volunteering activities with HWWB.

Equality Impact Assessment Form

Screening determines whether the policy has any relevance for equality, i.e. is there any impact on one or more of the protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010. These are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief (including lack of belief)
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

1 Name of policy/procedure being assessed:	HWWB - Policies - Volunteers - Confidentiality
2. Is this a new or existing policy/procedure?	Existing
3. What is the function of the policy/procedure?	To guide board members and volunteers on the procedures HWWB has in place to ensure the confidentiality of their work, information and documents
4. What is it trying to achieve and why?	Ensure volunteers understand HWWB system for maintaining confidentiality at all times
5. Who is intended to benefit and how?	Volunteers - understand their role and their duty of confidentiality
6 Is there any potential for differential impact (negative or positive) on any of the protected characteristics?	No
7. Is there any possibility of discriminating unlawfully, directly or indirectly, against people from any protected characteristic?	No
8. Could there be an effect on relations between certain groups?	No
9. Does the policy explicitly involve or focus on a particular equalities group i.e. because they have particular needs?	No
Signed - Signature: Jo Karasinski Name: JO KARASINSKI Position: Development Officer Date:09/12/15	

