

Volunteers - Equality, Diversity & Culture Policy

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| Version Number | 1 |
| Date of Equality Impact Assessment | 15/02/16 |
| 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.healthwatchwestbersk.org.uk</p> <p><u>If required this policy can be supplied in different formats</u> Tel: 01635 886 210 or email: contact@healthwatchwestberks.org.uk</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 the volunteer policies and procedures.

Volunteers - Equality, Diversity & Culture Policy

Policy Statement

Healthwatch West Berkshire is fully committed to the elimination of unlawful and unfair discrimination and values the differences that a diverse workforce brings to the organisation.

HWWB will not discriminate because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. It will not discriminate because of any other irrelevant factor and will build a culture that values meritocracy, openness, fairness and transparency.

All employees and volunteers are responsible for the promotion and advancement of this policy. Behaviour, actions or words that transgress the policy will not be tolerated and will be dealt with in line with the Company's disciplinary policy.

This policy is founded on the principles of law, fairness and best practice.

Equal Opportunities and Healthwatch West Berkshire

- HWWB recognises that for an equal opportunities policy to be effective it must encompass all areas of its activities.
- HWWB aims to recruit volunteers throughout the organisation that reflect the composition of the communities it serves.
- HWWB will act to ensure that all activities attract people from all sectors of the community and that such activities do not discriminate against members of disadvantaged groups.
- HWWB aims to ensure that harassment and discrimination on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation are not experienced by individuals and groups when working or receiving services or in offices, or attending functions organised by HWWB.
- All volunteer applicants have a right to equal opportunities in volunteering job roles. The organisation aims to ensure that no volunteer applicant receives less favorable treatment or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable on the grounds of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

- HWWB is committed to a programme of action to make this policy effective in volunteer recruitment, promotion, training and in all spheres of its operation.
- Selection criteria and procedures will be reviewed to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and trained on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities. All volunteers will be given equal opportunity and, where appropriate, special training, to progress within the organisation and to enhance their career prospects.
- The responsibility for ensuring that the terms of the Equality, Diversity & Culture Policy are adhered to and implemented rests with the organisation. However, delegated responsibility is given to the Chief Officer of HWWB who, with the support of the SEAP Management Team & HWWB staff & board, will ensure the implementation of the policy.

While the main responsibility for eliminating discrimination and providing equal opportunity rests with HWWB, individual employees and volunteers at all levels have responsibilities too. They must not discriminate or knowingly aid HWWB to do so.

This policy will apply to all active volunteers of HWWB. They will receive a copy of this statement and will ensure that it is promoted and incorporated in all aspects of their work and activities with, and on behalf of, the organisation.

In keeping with HWWB's commitment to the promotion of equal opportunities, HWWB will make this policy statement known to all volunteer job applicants.

Communication of this policy

A key element in implementing an effective Equality, Diversity and Culture policy is the communication of attitudes, priorities, rules and procedures to ensure there is a common understanding of the issues, and that information is fed back where there are issues that need to be addressed or suggestions on how to improve.

All volunteers are required to read the HWWB Equality, Diversity and Culture Policy as part of their induction and to participate in Equality, Diversity and Culture training, refreshing when appropriate. HWWB CO has the responsibility to ensure volunteers are fully aware and updated about changes in policies and procedures.

This policy document describes the general approach HWWB is taking to put its commitment to equal opportunities and diversity into practice. It will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis and reflects the long-term commitment of HWWB to continuous improvement in this area.

The Chief Officer of HWWB holds overall responsibility for the Equality, Diversity & Culture Policy and its effective implementation.

1.0 Governance

- 1.1 We ensure that HWWB Board members understand their role in terms of governance of HWWB, the legal requirements and accountability.
- 1.2 To ensure that the Board reflects the diversity of our membership we will actively encourage nominations from groups representing minority and marginalised interests.

2.0 Personnel

- 2.1 HWWB is committed to equal opportunities recruitment and to the development of all volunteers. We work within employment legislation and best practice guidelines, with regard to employees and volunteers.
- 2.2 We ensure that recruitment information is made widely available and positively encourage applications from all sections of the community we serve.
- 2.3 In order to fully implement the policy all volunteers need to be aware of their responsibility to integrate Equality, Diversity and Culture in their day to day activities when acting on behalf of HWWB. Volunteers must be aware of and responsible for Equality, Diversity and Culture in their behaviour with co-workers, and general public.

3.0 Premises

- 3.1 HWWB is committed to making the premises we operate from as accessible as possible. We will ensure that our office is open and appropriately staffed at times which suit the community and people we serve.
- 3.2 Our meeting space and facilities are fully accessible for people with disabilities and are made available to a wide range of groups.
- 3.3 Written procedures are provided to volunteers within HWWB's Policies this acts as guidance to ensure all employees & volunteers are treated appropriately with due respect under the Equality Act 2010.

4.0 Recruitment & Selection Procedure

[Please see HWWB Recruitment & Selection policy](#)

5.0 Training

Training decisions will be based on merit and requirements by HWWB to enable them to competently carry out their role. No volunteer should be given more or less training based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, however in some situations, under-represented groups may be provided with extra training to enable the employee to develop to their full potential..

- 7.1 When training courses are being developed, consideration will be given to all employee needs, including dietary requirements, location, timing and accessibility (with particular reference to disabled volunteers).

6.0 Discipline

- 6.1 HWWB will seek to provide a supportive environment for those who make claims of discrimination or harassment. Acts of discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, victimisation or abuse will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence.

Please see HWWB Discrimination, Harassment & Dignity Policy

- The complaints and disciplinary procedures will be used to effectively monitor all incidents.

7.0 Anti Harassment, Bullying and Victimisation

HWWB has zero tolerance of harassment, bullying and victimisation. HWWB therefore makes every effort to provide a working environment free of these behaviours..

Cultural Capability:

HWWB will regularly review and where needed refine its ethos, values, policies and processes to ensure it pursues best practice in relation to equality, diversity and culture.

13.0 Equality, Diversity and Culture Training & Development

- 13.1 HWWB acknowledges that responsibility for the successful implementation of Equality, Diversity and Culture in its organisation and service delivery lies with Board members, staff and volunteers. The organisation therefore, will provide training to promote enhanced awareness of unfair discrimination or potential discriminatory practice, attitudes and behaviour so that they can be identified and eliminated.
- 13.2 We will provide Equality, Diversity and Culture training to board and staff and those likely to be involved in recruitment or other decision making activities, where these issues are likely to arise. We will also provide training to all volunteers to help them:
- Understand Equality, Diversity and Culture issues that may arise during the course of their volunteering engagement with HWWB.
 - Understand their rights and responsibilities in law; and
 - Create a working environment free from discrimination and harassment

15.0 Review

It is the intention of HWWB that policies and procedures remain current and ‘fit for purpose’ to reflect changes in legislative, organisational, operational and management arrangements. The Equality, Diversity and Culture policy will be reviewed every 12 months. If any volunteer has any concerns about this policy, or wishes to provide feedback on the process, this can be addressed either through the HWWB Volunteer lead or Chief Officer.

16.0 Queries

Employees should address any enquiries relating to this policy to their volunteer Lead. In the event that the Volunteer lead is unable to resolve a query, a response should be sought from the Chief Officer.

Appendix 1

[See SEAP Equality, Diversity & Culture Policy](#)

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

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| 1 Name of policy/procedure being assessed: | HWWB - Policies - Volunteers - Equality, Diversity & Culture Policy |
| 2. Is this a new or existing policy/procedure? | New |
| 3. What is the function of the policy/procedure? | To guide board members and volunteers on the procedures HWWB has in place to deal with problems Volunteers identify in respect to their voluntary work at HWWB |
| 4. What is it trying to achieve and why? | Ensure volunteers understand HWWB approach to problem solving in respect of volunteers |
| 5. Who is intended to benefit and how? | Volunteers - understand the measures HWWB has put into place in respect of the procedures for problem solving |
| 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: 15/02/16 | |

