

Volunteers - Problem Solving Policy

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Author	Jo Karasinski
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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 - Problem Solving Policy

1. Scope

Occasionally issues can arise when someone is volunteering. It is important to have procedures in place to help deal with any issues before they become bigger problems.

Volunteers, although valued by our organisation, are not employees and have no contractual obligation to the organisation. HWWB will try to resolve fairly any problems that people who volunteer with HWWB may experience. The aim is to offer the opportunity to discuss any issues and facilitate a solution. This may lead to agreements about changes in behaviour or expectations, which will be monitored and reviewed.

This document sets out how Healthwatch West Berkshire (HWWB) will address problems raised by HWWB volunteers.

2. Process

- Volunteers should raise any problems in a timely manner usually within 30 days of the incident occurring. This is in order to ensure organisational memory of the incident is not lost
- where possible the problem should be raised with the person concerned (see informal process at 2.1 below)
- all complaints will be treated confidentially, and should only be discussed amongst those who are directly involved in trying to resolve the issue
- full written records will be kept of the problem, interviews and meetings and will be kept in sealed files with the HWWB CO. Copies will be provided for the complainant within 10 working days after first being checked for factual accuracy and agreed by the HWWB CO
- where meetings are arranged they will be held confidentially and adequate time allowed
- complainants will be kept informed at every step of the procedure
- volunteers have the right to be accompanied by a colleague, friend or representative in any meetings that form part of the problem solving process

2.1 Informal resolution

If possible volunteers should in the first instance raise issues directly with the party concerned. However, if volunteers do not feel this is possible or this first approach has not resolved the concerns then the concerns should be raised with the Healthwatch Volunteer Lead (or if the matter involves the Healthwatch Volunteer Lead with HWWB CO).

The Volunteer Lead will talk through the issues and agree a course of action and timescales. If necessary a follow up meeting will be arranged. Notes will be taken of conversations, including the nature of the problem and any actions taken. Possible ways forward, if the difficulty relates to another Healthwatch volunteer might include setting up a meeting between both parties and the Healthwatch Volunteer Lead or for the Healthwatch Volunteer Lead to that person or written recommendations being copied to both parties.

Volunteers have the option of taking the matter to stage two of the problem solving procedure if they wish or if they are not satisfied with informal resolution. In certain circumstances where informal resolution is not appropriate the Healthwatch Volunteer Lead will refer the problem straight to stage 2.

Volunteers should try to address issues regarding the Healthwatch staff team with the person concerned if they feel able. However, if the volunteer does not want to do this, the process can start at stage 2.

2.2 Formal resolution

Those issues, which cannot be resolved informally, will move to stage two: the formal resolution stage of the process:

A meeting will be arranged between the volunteer, the Chair of HWWB Board and the HWWB CO

Written notes of the meeting will be taken of:

- issues raised
- areas of agreement/disagreement about the issues raised or any actions taken to resolve issues to date

If appropriate the Chair will also talk to/meet with any other parties involved in the problem with a view to facilitating a resolution to the issue. The volunteer will be informed about progress/the outcome within 2 weeks.

2.3 Appeal process

Volunteers who are not happy with the outcome from stages 1 and 2 can use the appeals process. For this a special meeting, comprising at least three members of the HWWB Board or independent persons nominated by the Chairperson, will be called to consider the problem. The volunteer will be asked to attend this meeting. This meeting will take place within 2 weeks of the volunteer notifying the HWWB that they wish to use the appeals process.

The decision of this group is to be considered final. This decision will be produced in writing within 2 weeks of the meeting.

3. Exit procedure

If an issue is identified that HWWB and volunteer cannot resolve in partnership it is important that both parties feel able to back away from the problem. In these circumstances the volunteer can choose, or will be asked to leave.

If a serious issue (for example theft, violence or a safeguarding concern) arises the volunteer will not be given time to change behaviour but be asked to leave immediately. This is because they are no longer supporting the aims and core values of the organisation.

Conducting the Volunteer's exit meeting

- the meeting will take place in a confidential setting
- the meeting will be followed up with a letter to re-iterate the decision for dismissal as well as outlining the reasons why.
- Staff and other volunteers of the outcome but no details given of the reasons for the dismissal.

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 - Problem Solving
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: 17/12/15	

