

Version No:	1
Report Title	Volunteer Policy
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	07/03/17
Volunteer Training delivered	As per the 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:  <a href="http://www.healthwatchwestberks.org.uk">www.healthwatchwestberks.org.uk</a></p> <p>If required this policy can be supplied in different formats Tel: 01635 886 210 or email: <a href="mailto:contact@healthwatchwestberks.org.uk">contact@healthwatchwestberks.org.uk</a></p>	

## Responsibilities

### HWWB Board

Have overall responsibility for volunteers within HWWB and for ensuring the provision of adequate resources to support the volunteer programme

### HWWB CO

HWWB Board have delegated to the HWWB CO the responsibility for overseeing the development of supporting volunteer policies and associated action plans and ensuring these are implemented effectively

### HWWB Staff and Volunteers

Are required to read and implement the volunteer policies and procedures.

# Volunteer Policy

## 1. Introduction

Healthwatch West Berkshire (HWWB) recognises the significant and valuable role that volunteers play in supporting us to achieve our strategic and operational plans. This policy reflects our commitment to ensuring that volunteering is integrated into the heart of HWWB, is a constructive and rewarding experience for volunteers and that all volunteers are treated in an equal, fair and just manner. HWWB supports all volunteer policies and implementation.

## 2. Purpose of the volunteer policy

The purpose of the volunteer policy is to provide a framework of best practice that HWWB will follow when appointing, managing and supporting our volunteers.

Its aim is to give an overall cohesion to all the associated volunteer policies and procedures. The policy defines the role of volunteers within the organisation, how they can expect to be treated and where they can turn to if they feel that things are going wrong. It also helps ensure that paid staff and others fully understand why volunteers are involved, and what role they have within the organisation.

## 4. Definition of the volunteer relationship

Volunteers are individuals or groups who offer their time, experience, knowledge and skills without financial gain beyond reimbursement of expenses; helping HWWB to achieve its aims.

There is no contract of employment between HWWB and its volunteers and volunteers are not considered employees of HWWB.

## 4. Mutual Commitment

The volunteering relationship at HWWB is one built on mutual commitment.

### 4.1 Volunteer commitment

HWWB expects volunteers to:

- behave in a manner which reflects positively on the organisation and to promote the key organisational messages where possible.
- demonstrate commitment and reliability in relation to tasks they volunteer to carry out as set out in the volunteer role description
- carry out tasks which correspond to the aims and values of the organisation

- respect confidentiality
- follow HWWB policies, procedures and standards, including health and safety and equality and diversity, in relation to its staff, volunteers and the public
- attend training and support sessions as applicable to the volunteer role description
- notify HWWB if experiencing any problems or concerns
- provide feedback about their role, development, training needs

## 4.2 HWWB Commitment

- HWWB views its volunteers as a valuable resource and is committed to providing support and recognition of their input.
- volunteers are supported through the provision of resources necessary to complete their duties; induction and appropriate training and mentoring/support. Details of which are laid out in this and other volunteer policies
- volunteer contributions are recognised through opportunities to feedback to the development of volunteer management at HWWB, through written references (where appropriate) and invitations to volunteer events
- volunteers have the right to refuse any request made of them and are not bound by contract, but are obliged to volunteer in line with this and other volunteer policies

## 6. Volunteer recruitment and selection

HWWB are committed to ensuring that all stages of its volunteer recruitment and selection process are conducted fairly and effectively. The process is designed to ensure that:

- HWWB recruit volunteers who are suitable for the role they would like to undertake. Each of our volunteer roles has a full role description and person specification available that outline volunteers role within the organisation, duties, responsibilities, skill requirements, training, supervision, feedback and support.
- there is a clear and transparent application process with measures in place to ensure this is accessible by all applicants. For example assistance is available from HWWB staff or via production of materials in other accessible formats e.g. easy read.
- prior to appointment, volunteers are invited to engage in a two-way discussion of the proposed role including its requirements and expectations with a view to

assessing mutual suitability

Full details are given in HWWB Volunteers Recruitment and Selection Policy [available to read here:](#)

## 7. Disclosure of Criminal Record

- Due to the nature of our work at HWWB measures are in place to meet our legal responsibilities for the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. All authorised representatives, are subject to an enhanced disclosure and barring service (DBS) check as part of the recruitment process.
- HWWB complies fully with the code of practice provided by the DBS and undertakes to treat all volunteer applicants fairly in line with our commitment to equal opportunities and to comply with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Full details are given in HWWB DBS Policy [available to read here:](#)

and in HWWB Rehabilitation of Ex-Offenders Policy [available to read here:](#)

## 8. Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults

All authorised representatives will receive training in the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. All volunteers will be required to adhere to HWWB policies on safeguarding.

Full details are given in the HWWB safeguarding policies [available to read here:](#)

## 9. Equal Opportunities and Diversity

- HWWB is committed to promoting equal opportunities. Our volunteering opportunities are open to all regardless of age, race, disability, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, nationality, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity.
- We recognise the positive benefits a diverse volunteer pool can bring to the organisation and are committed to ensuring our recruitment and selection procedure reflects this.
- HWWB ensures that all the venues that we use are fully accessible and we may be able to provide extra support when required for expenses (please liaise with the Volunteer Lead about this prior to volunteering).

- We would ask where possible, for volunteers to bring their own carers and support workers if required. The carer or support worker would need to provide a recent criminal record disclosure certificate prior to attending a HWWB event in any capacity other than as an attendee in their own right.
- All HWWB volunteers must be aware of and abide by HWWB Equality and Diversity Policy

**Full details of the HWN Volunteers Equality and Diversity Policy can be accessed here:**

## 10. Induction and Training

All volunteers will receive a comprehensive induction and training that will ensure that they:

- feel comfortable and welcome
- receive a general orientation on the nature and purpose of the organisation
- task specific training to ensure they can carry out their work on behalf of HWWB effectively and efficiently.
- understand HWWB expectations of them

**Full details of the HWN Volunteers Induction and Training Policy can be accessed here:**

## 11. Confidentiality

- volunteers are bound by the same requirements in respect of confidentiality as paid staff
- volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all privileged information to which they are privy in the course of volunteering for HWWB and are required to sign a confidentiality agreement in respect of their volunteering role
- failure to maintain confidentiality may result in termination of the volunteers relationship with the organisation.

**HWN Volunteers - Confidentiality Agreement can be viewed here:**

## 12. Code of conduct

- all volunteers will be asked to sign the HWWB code of conduct agreement and to adhere to the Nolan principles of public life
- volunteers must read these closely before signature
- failure to adhere to these may result in termination of the volunteer’s role at HWWB

**The Code of Conduct and Nolan Principles can be viewed in full here:**

## 13. Volunteer Support

Our volunteer support team aim to ensure that the tasks our volunteers undertake are enjoyable as well as helping HWN to achieve its strategic objectives.

Staff supporting volunteers			
<b>Jo Karasinski</b>	Volunteer Lead	01635 760508	<a href="mailto:jo.karasinski@healthwatchwestberks.org.uk">jo.karasinski@healthwatchwestberks.org.uk</a>
<b>Andrew Sharp</b>	HWWB Chief Officer	01635 760506	<a href="mailto:Andrew.sharp@healthwatchwestberks.org.uk">Andrew.sharp@healthwatchwestberks.org.uk</a>
<b>Clea Knight</b>	Enter & View Lead	01635 760342	<a href="mailto:clea.knight@healthwatchwestberks.org.uk">clea.knight@healthwatchwestberks.org.uk</a>

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Volunteers can discuss any issues or problems that may arise with Jo, Andrew or Clea in their absence any of the Healthwatch West Berkshire Officers.

## 14. Communication

Feedback from HWWB Board, Champions and other meetings will be cascaded down to all volunteers involved within the organisation as required

Volunteers may also be exposed to media interest in the work of HWWB and asked to provide feedback or comments on or off the record. HWWB policy is that all media enquiries must be dealt with via the HWWB Chief Officer

**The full HWWB Media Policy can be viewed here:**

## 15. Volunteer Travel and Expenses

- It is HWWB policy that volunteers should not be out of pocket for their contributions, therefore we are happy to reimburse reasonable receipted travel and subsistence costs.
- HWWB asks volunteers to keep expenses to a reasonable and necessary level.
- If volunteers have any queries with regards to expenses, they should consult the Volunteer Lead prior to any commitment being made.

For full details and guidance of what constitutes reasonable expenses and the procedure for claiming them are given in HWWB Volunteers Travel and Expenses Policy which is available to read here:

## 16. Data protection/acceptable use of information and communications technology (ICT)

- HWWB complies fully with the Data Protection Act 1998 regarding the correct handling, storage, retention and disposal of information.
- personal or sensitive information is held in a lockable filing cabinet or in password protected files, Information on databases will be reviewed and updated regularly. Sensitive information will be shredded
- all volunteers are required to adhere to the HWWB policy for the acceptable use of ICT

The full HWWB policy on the acceptable use of ICT is available to read here:

## 17. Environment

HWWB recognise that our activities have an impact on the environment in terms of the use of raw materials, emissions to air and water and waste generation, and seek to minimise this as far as is reasonably practicable.

The full HWWB environmental policy is available to read here:

## 18. Health and Safety

- Volunteers have a responsibility to work in a manner that considers the health, safety and wellbeing of themselves and others.
- As part of their induction all volunteers receive an overview of health and safety advice directing volunteers to the full policies and the staff health and safety handbook for further information.

- If volunteering in HWWB offices, or on the premises where a HWWB event is being held, volunteers will be provided with details of the relevant health and safety risk assessment.
- If you have any questions about health and safety please speak to the Volunteer Lead in the first instance.

**HWWB suite of health and safety policies can accessed here:**

## 19. Insurance Cover

- All volunteers in the course of representing HWWB or working at HWWB offices are covered by the HWWB employee and public liability Insurance.
- HWWB aim to ensure that any events which volunteers are asked to attend on behalf of HWWB are safe and accessible. This is achieved through the prior completion of risk assessments at HWWB organised events and in some cases written confirmation of appropriate insurance cover at third party organised events.
- **Volunteers using their cars in connection with HWWB business** - we have been informed by our insurers that volunteers should inform their insurance company if they intend to use their car in connect with HWWB business.
- Volunteers should also ensure that their MOT, insurance and road tax are up to date and will be required to provide evidence of this on an annual basis.

**HWWB Insurance certificates can be viewed at the HWWB Offices and a copy of the HWWB Safe Driving Policy can be viewed here**

## 20. Resolving Problems

- HWWB value our volunteers highly and are committed to their welfare. In the rare event that we have problems with a volunteers performance or that a volunteer has a complaint or grievance about HWWB and/or its staff then we will seek to resolve it quickly and fairly.
- we believe that any concerns brought to light at an early stage can be dealt with in an informal manner between volunteer and the volunteer team. In the unlikely event that a dispute cannot be resolved in this manner, the CO can be involved.
- All volunteers have the opportunity to feedback to the Volunteer Team through evaluation forms or meetings, depending on the volunteer role.

Full details of the **HWWB Volunteers Problem Solving and Grievance Policy can be read here:**



## 21. Ending involvement with HWWB

- If at any time you want to stop volunteering for HWWB please let us know as soon as possible
- If there has been any misconduct by you during your time volunteering at HWWB as outlined in the Code of Conduct which you have been asked to sign at the start of your volunteer involvement then you will be asked to leave immediately

**The full details of HWWB Volunteer Exit Strategy can be read here:**

## 22. Review and Monitoring

- HWWB will review this policy on an annual basis, taking account of any changes within legislation, our organisation and other factors.
- HWWB will make this policy available when requested to do so to interested parties including members of the public and publish on our website [www.healthwatchwestberks.org.uk](http://www.healthwatchwestberks.org.uk)

## 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

<b>1 Name of policy/procedure being assessed:</b>	HWWB - Volunteers Policy
<b>2. Is this a new or existing policy/procedure?</b>	New
<b>3. What is the function of the policy/procedure?</b>	To outline HWWB Policy on volunteers and the volunteer relationship
<b>4. What is it trying to achieve and why?</b>	To signpost to, and provide an overview of, associated volunteer policies.
<b>5. Who is intended to benefit and how?</b>	Volunteers via a consistent and best practice approach HWWB staff with responsibility for volunteer management via clear guidance and procedures HWWB reputation as an organisation
<b>6. Is there any potential for differential impact (negative or positive) on any of the protected characteristics?</b>	No
<b>7. Is there any possibility of discriminating unlawfully, directly or indirectly, against people from any protected characteristic?</b>	No
<b>8. Could there be an effect on relations between certain groups?</b>	NO
<b>9. Does the policy explicitly involve or focus on a particular equalities group i.e. because they have particular needs?</b>	No
If the answers are no from 6-9 then there is no need to proceed to a full equality impact assessment and this form should be signed off as appropriate.	

If Yes then a full impact assessment must be completed.

Signed -

Signature: Jo Karasinski

Name: JO KARASINSKI

Position: Development Officer

Date: 15/02/16