



## Equality, Diversity and Culture Policy

### Policy Statement

Healthwatch West Berkshire (HWWB) 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 employees and 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 have a right to equal opportunities in roles. The organisation aims to ensure that no one receives less favourable 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 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 employees 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 employees & 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 employees and 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 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 a regular 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 endeavours to reflect the diversity of our community 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 employees/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 employees and 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.

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 employees and 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 -

<http://www.healthwatchwestberks.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/HWWB-Recruitment-and-Selection-Policies-Volunteers1.pdf>

## **5.0 Training**

Training decisions will be based on merit and requirements by HWWB to enable them to competently carry out their role. No employee or 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.

5.1 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.

## **8.0 Equality, Diversity and Culture Training & Development**

8.1 HWWB acknowledges that responsibility for the successful implementation of Equality, Diversity and Culture in its organisation and service delivery lies with Board members, employees 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.

8.2 We will provide Equality, Diversity and Culture training to board and employees 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 engagement with HWWB.
- Understand their rights and responsibilities in law; and
- Create a working environment free from discrimination and harassment

## **9.0 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 24 months. If any employee, or 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.

## **10.0 Queries**

Employees should address any enquiries relating to this policy to their Manager and Volunteers 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.



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<b><u>If required this policy can be supplied in different formats</u></b> Tel: 01635 886 210 or email: <a href="mailto:contact@healthwatchwestberks.org.uk">contact@healthwatchwestberks.org.uk</a>	