

Volunteer Policy

Find out more about volunteering with us



Policy Statement

This document is for Healthwatch Middlesbrough and Healthwatch Redcar and Cleveland. Under the banner of Healthwatch South Tees (HWST) to tell you about the volunteering roles available.

HWST is committed to Equality & Diversity (see Equality & Diversity Policy) and to offer equality of opportunity to volunteers from different communities. All volunteers will be recruited through a fair and equal process.

Role descriptions are available for all volunteer roles. Acceptance as a volunteer will be subject to receipt of two satisfactory references from suitable referees.

Should the role require a DBS check a positive outcome is required. The requirement / decision for a DBS check will be done by the Project Lead based on the volunteer role.

Under exceptional circumstances the Project Lead may grant exemptions from DBS checks for volunteers who have learning difficulties and who are unable to supply the necessary DBS application documentation. These cases will be individually reviewed.

Below, are our principles relating to a range of areas that underpin volunteer involvement in our activities.

Induction and Training

Healthwatch South Tees will provide necessary training to enable the volunteer to perform a specific role and all volunteers will complete an induction within six weeks of commencing their volunteer role.

In addition, Healthwatch South Tees provides Policy Induction training for all volunteers including as a minimum, policy training in:

- Equality & Diversity
- Confidentiality
- Health & Safety
- Information about Healthwatch England and the Healthwatch Network

A certificate will be required from each volunteer upon completion of the above training modules and a signed Volunteer Agreement. In addition to this, a Volunteer Handbook will be provided as part of a new volunteer's induction training, which includes information relevant to their role.

Expenses

We will pay all volunteers agreed out of pocket expenses on presentation of valid receipts and claims forms. The authorised claim along with receipts should be sent to finance and will be paid within 14 days. Please note that 14 days applies to authorised and signed forms, any missing information or signatures will be sent back to the volunteer supporter and not be processed until corrected.

Support

Each volunteer will receive support from our Volunteer and Engagement Officer (VEO), who will regularly discuss their volunteering, successes, any issues and identified training needs. The VEO will explain the standards we expect, encourage and support volunteers to achieve and maintain them.

During each year, the volunteer will be asked to complete a volunteer evaluation and six-month review. This can be sent out electronically or a paper copy provided dependent upon your preference. These evaluations will only be viewed by the VEO, and anonymised information will be used to inform our annual report, monitoring as well as evaluate how we work with volunteers and what improvements are required.

Equipment

HWST will provide the necessary equipment, tools, and materials to enable volunteers to carry out their tasks which will have all received the required safety checks.

Insurance

All registered volunteers are covered by our Personal Accident Insurance and will be made aware of how to record accidents and incidents during their induction.

Health & Safety

HWST has a duty of care to avoid exposing volunteers to health and safety risks to. HWST has a Health & Safety Policy and procedures in place to protect all staff and volunteers. Relevant health & safety training will be completed during your induction.

Comments & Complaints

HWST has a Comments & Complaints procedure that we will introduce volunteers to during induction. This ensures that local people we engage with are able to provide comments and/or concerns regarding our support, staff members as well as volunteers. It also highlights what steps will be taken to respond to any feedback received and the length of time this will take.

Confidentiality

HWST operates to a Confidentiality Policy, which incorporates the Data Protection Act. Volunteers must respect this and are provided with policy induction training to ensure they are aware of how this applies to them.

Should confidentiality issues arise, it is the responsibility of the VEO to decide on a course of action, with support from the Project Lead.

Volunteer Hours

HWST will recognise and monitor the contribution, in terms of hours and impact, that volunteers make to the organisation and record this in relevant monitoring records and reports. Volunteers must complete monthly timesheets detailing the number of hours support provided to us.

Responsibilities

The Volunteer is responsible to ensure they adhere to the sections within all of the inducted policy areas.

The VEO is responsible for ensuring that information to support volunteers is accurate, timely and up to date.

Communication

HWST will ensure that:

- All volunteers are aware of this policy during induction;
- Generic training will include reference to this policy;
- This policy is easily accessible by all members of the organisation;
- Volunteers are informed when a particular activity aligns with this policy;
- Volunteers are empowered to actively contribute and provide feedback; and
- Volunteers are notified of all changes to this policy in a timely manner.