

VOLUNTEERING POLICY

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 Healthwatch City of London (HW CoL) aims to improve the quality of life and enhance the status and influence of people from City of London's diverse communities.
- 1.2 HW CoL is committed to involving volunteers from diverse backgrounds to enable HW CoL London to lengthen and strengthen its efforts on behalf of residents and workers in the City. Volunteers add value by increasing the organisation's understanding of patient and public needs and bringing a different perspective to that of professional paid staff.
- 1.3 The policy seeks to establish clear principles for HW CoL the involvement of volunteers so that the organisation can be clear about why and how it seeks to involve volunteers and so that staff and volunteers are able to work together effectively.

2. The Role of Volunteers

- 2.1 Volunteers working with HW CoL have chosen to give their time, skills and experience without payment beyond the reimbursement of out of pocket expenses as given in the volunteer expenses policy within the City. Their work is undertaken by choice and is unpaid.
- 2.3 It is not the intention of the organisation to enter into a formal employment contract with the volunteers. However, as a responsible organisation, HW CoL offers training, support and guidance to its volunteers where applicable to optimise their contribution and experience of voluntary work with the organisation.
- 2.4 The joint expectations of HW CoL London and its volunteers are contained in the volunteer agreement.
- 2.5 Volunteers offer a valuable resource by giving their time and dedication without pay. It is important to ensure that we protect volunteers by making sure that volunteers are well looked after and that they are fit to work. It is important that volunteers are treated with respect and dignity.

3. Recruitment & Selection

- 3.1 HW CoL seeks to recruit volunteers from diverse backgrounds in accordance with its diversity and equality policy. Potential volunteers are interviewed informally, asked to complete an application form and provide two referees. HW CoL is committed to the development of equal opportunities and believe that opportunities should be open to all regardless of social class, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, religion, colour, race or ethnic or national origin. Teamwork promotes mutual interests, harmony, respect, co-operation and understanding between volunteers from diverse backgrounds.
- 3.2 Volunteer roles and tasks will be clearly defined so that staff and volunteers, including the HW CoL Board trustees, are sure of their respective roles. A written description will be issued to each volunteer describing the activities they will be undertaking with the organisation.
- 3.3 Volunteers should normally be over 18. If an applicant is under 18, the application should be discussed by with HW CoL to ensure that sufficient guidance and support are in place.

4. Support for Volunteers

- 4.1 Volunteers will be supported in their role. An induction to the organisation and the role will be provided, with an initial review session for volunteers to assess the early progress of their placements and to discuss any issues that may arise.
- 4.3 All volunteers will be offered appropriate training, support and guidance to enable them to undertake their volunteering roles.
- 4.4 HW CoL carries insurance cover which extends to the activities of volunteers.
- 4.5 HW CoL will reimburse reasonable out-of-pocket expenses. Clear information will be provided on what can be claimed and how to make a claim.
- 4.6 To ensure HW CoL complies with both the law and good practice, volunteers will be given information on legislation and other policies which may affect them e.g. Health & Safety, Confidentiality and Diversity and Equality.

5. General Expectations

Volunteers should:

- 5.1 Have the right to be made welcome and to feel involved and valued.
- 5.2 Be expected at all times to promote a spirit of co-operation with other volunteers and staff. They are expected to acquaint themselves with and work

in accordance with all appropriate policies, guidelines and procedures. These will be covered as part of the induction procedure.

- 5.3 Undertake only those tasks and responsibilities as arranged and agreed.
- 5.4 Respect confidentiality at all times.
- 5.5 Take responsibility for providing feedback and information to staff members.
- 5.6 Report all accidents, serious incidents or damage to equipment immediately to a member of staff.

6. Resolving Issues

- 6.1 HW CoL aims to create an environment where people feel able to express their views and discuss issues. Should any issues occur which cannot be resolved by informal discussion, there are internal complaints and disciplinary processes for use by and with volunteers. These would only apply as a last resort.

7. Involving Volunteers

- 7.1 Volunteers will receive information to keep them up to date with developments within HW CoL. Feedback from volunteers on their experience of working with HW CoL will be welcomed and any comments or views to contribute to future planning will be sought.

9. Review

This policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.

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