



Research Volunteer Handbook



Working with you to improve health & social care

Updated 20th March 2014

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with us!

We want your volunteering experience with us to be a good one! We hope that this handbook will help you understand and feel supported in your volunteering role. If you would like any more information, please talk to the member of staff that supports you.

At Healthwatch Cambridgeshire, we rely on volunteers to help us undertake our work. We aim to involve a diverse range of volunteers from across the county who are reflective of the local community.

Volunteers like you bring a variety of skills and a fresh perspective, offering time and passion to our work.

Your knowledge of your local community will help us build stronger links with the people who live, work or receive health or social care services in Cambridgeshire.

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About us

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire works with people to improve health & social care services. We are a local, independent organisation, and our aim is to make sure people have a say in important decisions about local NHS, social care and public health services.

We are committed to listening to and working for all people in Cambridgeshire. We will:

- ✓ Help people have their say on local health & social care services by linking them to the organisations buying and providing care
- ✓ Find out about people's experiences with local health & social care services and share that information, highlighting excellent care and helping to improve care where it is needed.
- ✓ Work with people and organisations to understand people's care needs, to make it as easy as possible to get the right service.

We are part of a national network through Healthwatch England and have direct links with regulatory bodies, such as the Care Quality Commission and Monitor.

Our objectives

- ✓ promote and support the involvement of local people in the commissioning, the provision and scrutiny of local care services;
- ✓ enable local people to monitor the standard of local care services;
- ✓ obtain the views of local people regarding their needs for, and experiences of, local care services and importantly to make these views known;
- ✓ provide advice and information about access to local care services;
- ✓ formulate views on the standard of provision and whether the local care services could and ought to be improved;
- ✓ provide Healthwatch England with the intelligence and insight it needs to enable it to perform effectively.

These objectives are taken directly from the obligations of local Healthwatch as set out in the Regulations subsequent to the Health & Social Care Act 2012.

About you

What you can get from volunteering with us:

Volunteering is a two way process. Volunteers give us their time to help, and in return should benefit themselves. Volunteering for us could:

- ✓ Help you challenge yourself and learn new skills.
- ✓ Be a stepping stone into employment or training opportunities. We will support you on this journey by providing references to those who have completed a volunteering project or volunteered for three months or more.
- ✓ Provide you with an opportunity to meet new people and be involved with something personally rewarding.

Young Volunteers

We want to involve children & young people as volunteers in our work. Our Children & Young People's Ambassador is working to make sure that young people can have a role in Healthwatch Cambridgeshire. Please speak to our Children & Young People's Ambassador if you are a child or young person who wants to volunteer for us.

We have a children's safeguarding policy that we follow, to make sure that we can keep you safe whilst you are volunteering with us.

If you are under 16 years old, we will need permission from your parent or guardian before you can volunteer for us.

Disabled Volunteers

If you need any extra support or adjustments to make your volunteering role accessible and haven't already discussed this with us, then speak to the person who supports you about what we can do to help.

Volunteers on benefits

Most benefits are not affected by your volunteering activities; however, there are certain organisations that you will need to tell about your volunteering. We can give you a copy of the Department of Work & Pensions guide “volunteering while getting benefits” , which tells you everything that you need to know about volunteering and benefits.

Volunteers from overseas

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire welcomes volunteers from overseas who have the legal right to volunteer as part of their immigration status in the UK. We recommend that you check your right to volunteer with the UK Border Agency, in order not to jeopardise your immigration status. <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

Your volunteering role

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire recruits volunteers to individual volunteer roles. There is a copy of your role description in the back of this handbook in Appendix 1.

Please talk to the person who supports you about any ideas that you have for developing your volunteering role. We will always tell you about new volunteering opportunities that we are developing. For individual staff contact details, please see Appendix 2.

As part of your volunteering role, we ask you to help us:

- ✓ **Spread the word about Healthwatch Cambridgeshire**

We focus on doing what matters most to the people who use health and social care services in Cambridgeshire. The more people that know about us and share their story, the more powerful we are.

- ✓ **Find out what people think**

You can help us to build up evidence about what it is like to use care services in Cambridgeshire by listening to people's stories. We can use this information to help us build a picture of what care looks like locally, identify the gaps, challenge poor practice and shine a light on good practice.

- ✓ **Tell us what matters to you**

You can tell us what's important to you. Your experience of care services will help us to ensure we are saying the right things on behalf of Cambridgeshire residents.

How we will work together

You are giving us your time, experience and commitment. In return, we want you to enjoy your volunteering and get the most out of the experience.

We will support you in the following ways:

- ✓ We will introduce you to how Healthwatch Cambridgeshire works.
- ✓ We will make sure you know what your role is and what tasks that might include.
- ✓ We will make sure that you know who is responsible for supporting you and who you can talk to should you have any difficulties.
- ✓ We will provide training to help you carry out your role.
- ✓ We will support you during your time with us through regular meetings and volunteer events depending on your role.
- ✓ We will offer you an annual volunteer review meeting, depending on the length of your role.
- ✓ We will provide a safe working environment and make sure that you are insured for your volunteering activities
- ✓ We will treat you with respect and not do anything that could discriminate against you.
- ✓ We will keep you informed of possible changes in the way we work and consult you where appropriate.
- ✓ We will listen to your views, ideas and opinions and take them into account when planning our future.
- ✓ We will make sure you are not out of pocket as a result of your volunteering.

As a volunteer we ask that you:

- ✓ Carry out your role to the best of your ability and follow all relevant policies, procedures and guidance. If there is something that you don't understand, please ask the staff member that supports you for more information.
- ✓ Treat everyone that you come into contact with during your volunteering with respect and not discriminate against anyone.
- ✓ Always speak positively about Healthwatch and be welcoming to all sections of the community.
- ✓ Present a positive and professional image of yourself, our organisation and its work.
- ✓ Undertake any training we ask you to do for your role.
- ✓ Report back to us regularly on your volunteering activities.
- ✓ Meet regularly with the staff member that supports you so that you can talk about your volunteering role.
- ✓ Provide as much notice as possible if you cannot meet your agreed volunteering commitments or if you wish to stop volunteering.
- ✓ Not do activities for Healthwatch Cambridgeshire which are outside of your agreed volunteering role.
- ✓ Refer any media or press enquiries to the Healthwatch office.

Supporting each other

Our aim is to support you while you are supporting us and to make your volunteering experience a productive, positive and rewarding one.

Induction

When you start volunteering with us we will provide you with an induction. This will introduce you to the organisation and the world of Healthwatch by giving you information on:

- ✓ Healthwatch England and the Local Healthwatch network
- ✓ How local health & social care works is commissioned and provided
- ✓ How to volunteer safely & effectively
- ✓ Keeping in touch regularly

Induction sessions are usually face-to-face, happen either on an individual basis or in a group and take place across the county as appropriate to your needs.

As well as receiving a general induction to the organisation, you will also receive training to help you in your volunteer role. This may include:

- ✓ Safeguarding vulnerable adults
- ✓ Safeguarding children
- ✓ Diversity training
- ✓ Listening skills
- ✓ Report writing

You may decide that the role is not for you or we might suggest that your skills would be better suited to a different role. Whatever happens, we will always make sure that we talk to you about it.

Support

You will have a named person to provide you with the support you need for your volunteering role. This may be through regular individual support meetings, or via the telephone, email, or group sessions, depending on your volunteer role.

These meetings are important because they give you a chance to reflect on your volunteering. We want you to tell us what is going well and about any extra training or support that you might need. We can also discuss future opportunities with you, share the difference you are making and provide updates on what is happening in the organisation.

You may need more one to one meetings when you start volunteering, but then fewer when you are more experienced.

Please talk to your support person about anything you're not sure about. You can ask for a meeting with them as often as you feel you need.

In addition to your support time, we can provide you with an annual development review meeting, just to check that we are all getting the most out of the time you are giving.

Ongoing training

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire is committed to providing you with the training that you need to do your role effectively. This may be through:

- ✓ One to one or peer support meetings
- ✓ Training events held by us or an external organisation
- ✓ Online training
- ✓ 'Shadowing' other volunteers to learn about your role
- ✓ Sharing resources such as books and websites
- ✓ Identifying what you want to achieve at your regular support meetings

“Thank You!”

However you are involved in our work, you are making a difference and we think it is important to recognise the contribution that you are making.

We do this in different ways - from awards and certificates, to saying thank you for a job well done - but we are always looking for new ways to celebrate what you do and show the impact you are having.

If you need a reference

Please ask us if you would like a reference for paid work, a course or another voluntary position. The reference will be objective and factual and not contain personal statements. That means we will say:

- ✓ What your role was and what that involved
- ✓ When you volunteered and for how long
- ✓ Whether we would take you on as a volunteer again

Dealing with problems

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire aims to make volunteering a positive experience for volunteers and the organisation, but recognises that sometimes, for all sorts of reasons, problems can occur on either side of the volunteering relationship.

We have a clear and fair problem solving process for volunteers to help resolve any issues at the earliest opportunity. Please see Appendix 3

Claiming out of pocket expenses

We will reimburse you for any reasonable out of pocket expenses that you incur as a result of your volunteering. What you claim needs to be agreed in advance with the person who is supporting you.

You can re-claim out of pocket expenses by completing a simple volunteer expenses claim form (see Appendix 4). We can provide you with further copies in hard copy or we can email an excel spreadsheet version to you.

- ✓ Please submit your claims regularly.
- ✓ Please keep the receipts for all items that you are claiming for; we can only reimburse you for the actual amount that you have spent as a result of your volunteering.
- ✓ Please keep a record of your mileage for all of your volunteering journeys.
- ✓ Please use the most cost effective method of travelling to and from / or parking at any volunteering activities.

If you use your own car to carry out your volunteering, you must inform your insurance company. If you don't and you have an accident, you may not be able to make a claim. We can provide you with a letter template that you can send to your insurance company.

Your insurance company should not charge you any extra to use your car during your volunteering. If they do try to charge you more money, you can ask us to talk to your insurance company on your behalf.

If you use your own car or van for travel relating to your volunteering, we need to know that it is taxed, insured and has a valid MOT (if appropriate). This is part of our health and safety responsibility to you and other volunteers.

Mileage rates will be paid at a rate approved by the Board and reviewed annually:

- ✓ Car: you can claim 45p per mile on the first 10,000 miles
- ✓ Motor cycles: you can claim 24p per mile
- ✓ Cycle: you can claim 20p per mile

Passenger miles: you can claim 5p per mile for carrying fellow volunteers in a car or van on journeys that are volunteering journeys.

Car parking: we will refund parking costs for any volunteering activities.

Public transport: we will refund the cost of bus tickets or standard rail travel. Journeys should be booked in advance if possible, so the cheapest standard ticket is available.

Refreshments: if you are attending an event of between 3 and 4 hours and no refreshments are available, then you can claim up to £2 for refreshments. If you are volunteering for more than 4 hours, you can claim a meal allowance of up to £6. If you are volunteering for more than 8 hours, you claim a further meal allowance of up to £6.

Caring costs: if you need to arrange care for child or an adult in order to volunteer, please speak to the person who supports you. In some circumstances we may be able to refund essential care costs, so you can volunteer.

Policies & procedures

During your time with us you will need to be aware of a few key policies and procedures that will help to support your volunteering. In this part of the handbook we have summarised some of the main things you need to know about.

If you have any questions about any of the policies and procedures, then please speak to the person who supports you. All of our policies are published on our website and we are happy to provide you with a hard copy of any of our policies.

Equality & Diversity

We are committed to making sure that volunteering is open to all. We have an equality & diversity policy which we expect everyone in the organisation to follow, at all times. See Appendix 5.

Health & Safety

It is important that when you are volunteering you are safe. We will do everything that we can to make sure that we look after your health, safety and wellbeing when you are volunteering.

We all have a part to play in making sure that our environments are as safe as possible. You can do this by:

- ✓ Understanding all the health and safety issues in your area of volunteering.
- ✓ Making sure you follow any health & safety guidance that we give you.
- ✓ Reporting all accidents, incidents, dangerous occurrences and near misses to the staff member that supports you. If it is an emergency then contact the emergency services immediately.
- ✓ Not undertaking tasks or activities for which you have not received training such as Enter & View.

We will provide you with more information about health & safety and things you need to think about at your induction.

Lone working

If you are going to be working on your own, you need to let the person who is supporting you know where you are going. Keep in touch with your support person and let them know when you are back safely.

Whistleblowing

If you point out something that the organisation has done wrong and which could damage the reputation of Healthwatch Cambridgeshire or harm someone, then you can do something called whistleblowing.

Our whistleblowing policy means that you can highlight the error or bad practice and not be branded a troublemaker. The policy also tells you about the support you can expect to receive.

Protecting children and safeguarding adults

In your role you may be working with people (including children) who are considered vulnerable in the eyes of the law.

We have a duty to protect anyone who is considered vulnerable. This is known as safeguarding.

If you find out that someone you are working with in the course of your volunteering is being harmed, neglected, bullied or taken advantage of, you must report that immediately to the staff member that supports you. Even if you are not sure and only suspect something is wrong, you must report that immediately. We have policies in place to guide our response to situations like these. Appendix 6 - safeguarding

Disclosure and Barring Service Checks

Some volunteer roles mean you will have direct contact with vulnerable groups, including children. If this is the kind of role that you are doing then we will ask you to agree to a Disclosure and Barring Service Check or a DBS check.

These checks will reveal any cautions or convictions that you have and whether you are allowed to work with vulnerable groups.

If you are barred from working with vulnerable groups, it is against the law for us to let you volunteer with vulnerable groups and for you to try to do so.

If you have criminal convictions, you may still be able to volunteer with us. We will make decisions on an individual case basis.

Confidentiality

The relationship between our organisation, staff, volunteers, service users and their families and carers is built on trust. We can only keep this trust if everyone is sure that confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

When you completed an application form to volunteer, you signed a confidentiality declaration. This means that any confidential information that is shared with you or anything of a confidential nature that you see during your volunteering, should remain private, unless you have specific consent to share that information.

The only exception to this is if you see or learn something which causes you concern. If you are worried about something, even if it is only a suspicion, then you must immediately talk to the member of staff that supports you.

Personal details

By law (Data Protection Act, 1998), we have to have a person's permission to collect, store and use their personal information. When you complete an application form to volunteer, you sign an agreement that gives us permission to collect, store and use your personal details for Healthwatch Cambridgeshire's business.

We will keep this information whilst you are volunteering for us, and for 6 months after you finish volunteering for us, in case we are asked for references. After this time, the information will be securely destroyed.

In some roles, you may have access to people's personal information. It is important that you know what you can and can't do with that information. If you are not certain about this please talk to the member of staff supporting you.

Insurance

We have insurance protection that covers you once you are a registered volunteer.

Keeping in touch

We want to keep you up to date with what's going on. We also want to hear your experiences, opinions and views. Here is how we will do that:

- ✓ You can join our Consultation Network, which will connect you with organisations that would like to know about your experiences and opinions of health and care in Cambridgeshire.
- ✓ We will hold regular training and social activities for our volunteers.
- ✓ We update our website regularly with local news and events:
www.healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk
- ✓ You can like us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Healthwatch-Cambridgeshire/374515232680475> or follow us on Twitter
www.twitter.com/@HW_Cambs

Appendices

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2 Staff contact details

3 Problem solving

4 Volunteer expenses claim form

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Your Volunteer Role Description -Research Volunteer

The purpose of this volunteer role is to help us research information about local health and social care services in Cambridgeshire.

- ✓ You can help us plan what information we need to find and where we can look for it.
- ✓ You can help us with projects looking at local health and care services and where you can find them
- ✓ You can help us research different groups in the community so we can tell them about Healthwatch.

We want to make sure that people across the county have the same access to health & care services.

Main tasks

You will work with us to research specific information about local health and social care services.

- ✓ You will plan with us what you are going to research and how you are going to find this out.
- ✓
- ✓ You may be using the internet, local organisations, local libraries, local newsletters and other sources.
- ✓
- ✓ You will tell us what you have found out about local health or care services as part of your research.

What support will we give you?

We will offer you an induction training session that will include:

- ✓ an introduction to Healthwatch
- ✓ our policies and procedures such as health & safety, safeguarding, etc

We will provide you with basic research skills training.

You will have ongoing support from a member of staff.

Pre-agreed out of pocket expenses will be paid.

Staff Contact details

Sandie Smith Chief Executive	01480 420628 Sandie.smith@healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk
Angela Grief Office Manager	01480 420628 - general enquiries number. angela.grief@healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk
Angie Ridley Co-ordinator	Mob: 07415 216303 angie.ridley@healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk
Heather Davison Co-ordinator	Mob: 07961 276138 heather.davison@healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk
Elizabeth Locke Co-ordinator	Mob: 07961 275724 elizabeth.locke@healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk
Kate Hales Co-ordinator	Mob: 07956 751362-work kate.hales@healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk
Julie McNeill Information Officer	01480 420633 Mob: 07956 753891-work julie.mcneill@healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk
Rita Nunes Children & Young People's Ambassador	Mob: 07539 295865 ana-rita.nunes@healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk

Problem solving

- 1.1. Healthwatch Cambridgeshire aims to make volunteering a positive experience for volunteers and the organisation, but recognises that sometimes, for all sorts of reasons, problems can occur.
- 1.2. Healthwatch Cambridgeshire will have a clear and fair problem solving process for volunteers to help resolve any issues at the earliest opportunity. This process is only for dealing with concerns around the volunteering relationship; for other concerns or complaints please refer to the Complaints Policy.
- 1.3. Healthwatch Cambridgeshire will make reasonable adjustments within the organisations resources to ensure that volunteers can engage fully in the problem solving process.
- 1.4. Volunteers may bring a support person or advocate to any meeting that forms part of the problem solving process.
- 1.5. Healthwatch Cambridgeshire recognises that problems can occur on either side of the volunteering relationship.
 - 1.5.1. Problems a volunteer could experience with what Healthwatch Cambridgeshire is doing, could include:
 - feeling they are not being given adequate training and support to undertaken their volunteering role
 - feeling they have been asked to do tasks that they don't want to do
 - feeling they are not being treated fairly by Healthwatch Cambridgeshire staff or other volunteers(This list is not exhaustive)
 - 1.5.2. Problems Healthwatch Cambridgeshire could experience with a volunteer could include:
 - not doing the tasks Healthwatch Cambridgeshire has asked them to do, or taking on tasks outside their agreed volunteer role.
 - not following Healthwatch Cambridgeshire's policies and guidelines

- behaving in a way that falls outside the volunteers' code of conduct
 - being unreliable and not telling us why
 - misuse or theft of Healthwatch Cambridgeshire's resources
- (This list is not exhaustive)

1.6. Dealing with Volunteers' concerns

- 1.6.1. **Informal:** Healthwatch Cambridgeshire will work with volunteers to resolve any concerns that the volunteer has informally through ongoing support as detailed in section 9.3. Healthwatch Cambridgeshire will encourage volunteers to resolve any issues through this informal process in the first instance.
- 1.6.2. If the volunteer's concern is not resolved to their satisfaction through this informal process, or their concern is with the person who provides their one to one support, they can notify the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) via email, letter or a telephone conversation.
- 1.6.3. **Formal:** The CEO or their nominated representative should acknowledge the concern in writing (or in the volunteer's preferred method of communication) within 3 working days.
- 1.6.4. The CEO or their nominated representative will offer the volunteer a meeting to listen to their concerns and attempt to resolve them within 15 working days of the meeting. Exceptionally further time will be needed; where possible this will be agreed with the volunteer.
- 1.6.5. If the volunteer wishes, the concerns can be discussed via telephone, letter or email instead of a meeting, but this may extend the period of time for resolution of the issues beyond the 15 working days.
- 1.6.6. **Appeal:** If the volunteer does not agree with the outcome of the formal stage, they may raise their concern with the Board of Directors.

- 1.6.7. The Board of Directors will acknowledged this appeal within 5 working days by the volunteer's preferred method of communication and offer an appeal meeting to listen to the volunteer's concerns and review the outcome of the decision, to ensure that the organisation's policies & procedures have been followed correctly.
- 1.6.8. The Board of Directors will notify the volunteer of their response within 10 working days of this meeting. Exceptionally further time will be needed; this will be agreed with the volunteer in advance where possible.
- 1.6.9. The Board's decision is final.

1.7. Dealing with Healthwatch Cambridgeshire's concerns

- 1.7.1. **Informal:** Healthwatch Cambridgeshire will work with volunteers to resolve any concerns informally through ongoing support as detailed in section 9.3.
- 1.7.2. Healthwatch Cambridgeshire will tell volunteers about any problems regarding their volunteering at the earliest opportunity.
- 1.7.3. Healthwatch Cambridgeshire will agree with the volunteer how it can support them to move forward in their volunteering role. If appropriate volunteers will be offered additional training, extra learning time or agree a change in their volunteering role.
- 1.7.4. If the above process does not resolve the problem, Healthwatch Cambridgeshire will offer the volunteer a formal meeting to discuss this.
- 1.7.5. There are some occasions where Healthwatch Cambridgeshire will not be able to offer any support or the opportunity for volunteers to change their behaviour or practice; while not a complete list, this may include:
 - Threats, abuse or attacks on any staff, volunteers or customers.
 - Breaking Healthwatch Cambridgeshire policies on safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults.

- Breaking confidentiality.
 - Criminal acts against Healthwatch Cambridgeshire, such as theft.
- 1.7.6. **Formal:** The CEO or their nominated representative will offer the volunteer a meeting to talk through the organisations concerns with the volunteer. They will explain what the issues are and outline their impact. The CEO will explore with the volunteer if there are any other opportunities to resolve the concerns and notify the volunteer of their decision within 15 working days.
- 1.7.7. If Healthwatch Cambridgeshire is unable to agree a resolution with the volunteer, the CEO may ask the volunteer to stop volunteering for the organisation.
- 1.7.8. Healthwatch Cambridgeshire will signpost volunteers to the Volunteer Centre's for other opportunities, if the organisation is unable to continue supporting an individual as a volunteer.
- 1.7.9. **Appeal:** If the volunteer does not agree with the outcome of the formal stage, they may raise their concern with the Board of Directors.
- 1.7.10. The Board of Directors will acknowledged this appeal within 5 working days by the volunteer's preferred method of communication and offer an appeal meeting to listen to the volunteer's concerns and review the outcome of the decision, to ensure that the organisation's policies & procedures have been followed correctly.
- 1.7.11. The Board of Directors will notify the volunteer of their response within 10 working days of this meeting. Exceptionally further time will be needed; this will be agreed with the volunteer in advance where possible.
- 1.7.12. The Board's decision is final.

Volunteer Expenses Claim form

Please print, sign, attach receipts and send to the Healthwatch Cambridgeshire office.

Claims must be submitted within 4 months of expenditure.

Name _____ Position _____

*Receipts must be submitted with each claim.

Date	Reason for expenditure*	Amount				Expenditure Category
		£ -				
		£ -				
		£ -				
		£ -				
		£ -				
	Total expenses	£ -				

Mileage Claim Type (please indicate)

Car

£

Rate per mile

0.45

£ 0.05

Cycle

£

0.20

Date	Journey (from - to)	No of miles	Passenger miles	Name of passenger	Total £
					£ -
					£ -
					£ -
					£ -
					£ -
					£ -
					£ -
	Total mileage	0			
	Total amount of expenses plus mileage				£ -

Declaration: I confirm that the above expenses have been incurred undertaking Healthwatch Cambridgeshire business. If I am claiming mileage, I confirm that I hold a valid driving licence and the car is taxed, has a current MOT (if required) and is insured for Healthwatch activity; I may be asked to provide documentary evidence of this by Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and agree to do so.

Your signature:

Date:

Authorised by:

Date:

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire Equality & Diversity Policy

Purpose of this document

This policy aims to outline Healthwatch Cambridgeshire's commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity and equal treatment for all staff, volunteers and board members in terms of employment and access to services and to provide guidance on anti-discriminatory practice. This policy is non-contractual. This policy will be reviewed on an on-going basis and amended in line with new developments in Equality and Diversity best practice.

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire's commitment to anti-discriminatory practice relates to any type of discrimination, as set out in the glossary at the end of this document.

Scope

The policy applies to employees directly employed by Healthwatch Cambridgeshire (HWC), to workers employed via agencies, contractors in terms of employment, directors, volunteers, service users and the general public in terms of service provision. The policy applies specifically to discrimination and equality of opportunity in respect of 'protected characteristics' as defined in the Equalities Act 2010

- (a) Age
- (b) Disability
- (c) Race
- (d) Sex
- (e) Religion or cultural beliefs
- (f) Gender reassignment
- (g) Marital status and civil partnership
- (h) Sexual orientation
- (i) Pregnancy and maternity

The policy applies across the range of employment policies and practice, including those relating to Discipline, Grievance, Code of Conduct and Complaints.

Responsibilities

HWC values its staff and volunteers and expects them to be treated in a respectful manner. Accordingly, everyone has a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for providing advice and guidance on equality and diversity issues, and to ensure the Policy document is kept up to date.

Aims

HWC is committed to valuing diversity and working with equality as a core value, HWC aims to:

- Promote equality of opportunity
- Celebrate and value diversity
- Eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination

HWC will provide equality of opportunity and equal treatment as an integral part of good practice. The organisation is committed to a working environment in which the contribution and needs of everyone are fully valued and recognised. We will support our staff, volunteers and clients in not tolerating any inappropriate, violent or abusive behaviour from colleagues, other organisations or clients.

General purpose

HWC's practices will ensure that staff, volunteers, service users and the general public will not be discriminated against on any grounds including age, disability, race, sex, religion or cultural beliefs, gender reassignment, marital status and civil partnership, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity.

Employment Practices

HWC aims to promote equality and diversity as an employer and to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that cannot be shown to be justifiable in the context of the policy. Selection, recruitment, training, promotion and employment practices will be subject to regular review to ensure that they comply with the Diversity and Equalities Policy. All training opportunities will be published widely to all appropriate employees and not in such a way so as to exclude particular groups. HWC regards discrimination, abuse, harassment, victimisation or bullying of staff, volunteers, clients or others in the course of work as disciplinary offences that could be regarded as gross misconduct.

HWC as a Service Provider

In developing its services and support and publicity materials, HWC will seek to ensure that access is equitable for all. This will include, wherever practicable, making specific access arrangements for clients with disabilities or learning difficulties, or any other protected characteristic which may apply, such as religion and belief. HWC will attempt to ensure that none of its policies discriminate directly or indirectly against any group or individual.

Our aims

HWC fully supports the principle of equality and diversity. We aim to encourage, value and manage diversity and we recognise that talent and potential are distributed across the population. Not only are there moral and social reasons for promoting equality of opportunity, it is in the best interest of this organisation to recruit and develop the best people for our jobs from as wide and diverse a pool of talent as possible.

HWC recognises that certain groups and individuals in society are oppressed and disadvantaged due to discrimination directed against them. In all its work HWC will work to remove any barriers, bias or discrimination that prevents individuals or groups from realising their potential and contributing fully to our organisation's performance and to develop an organisational culture that positively values diversity. When listening to communities and individuals HWC will make every effort to understand the context in which people live their lives. Where understanding is more difficult HWC staff and volunteers will be supported in respectfully seeking information.

Those people experiencing discrimination may experience particular issues when accessing health and social care services. When working with partner organisations HWC will be aware of discriminatory practice and how this may manifest itself. Staff and volunteers will be supported in bringing any issues to the attention of partner organisations. Whenever practical and possible HWC will support public sector organisations in undertaking Equality Impact Assessment.

Discrimination operates through commonly held assumptions and prejudices, which are reinforced by laws, rules and customs. This makes discrimination appear normal and inevitable. Discrimination works by stereotyping people into different roles, by treating some people worse than others, or simply by ignoring them.

All forms of discrimination are unacceptable, regardless of whether there was any intention to discriminate or not. Staff and volunteers have a duty to co-operate with HWC to ensure that this policy is effective in ensuring equal opportunities and in preventing discrimination. Employees and volunteers should draw the attention of their line manager to suspected discriminatory acts or practices or cases of bullying or harassment.

HWC recognises that the promotion of equal opportunities requires more than passive opposition to discrimination; we are therefore committed to taking positive action towards equality of opportunity, recognising that the limited resources and the operational needs of the organisation may impose justifiable restrictions upon our ability to take such action.

Complaints

HWC will treat seriously any complaints of unlawful discrimination on any of the stated grounds made by employees, volunteers, clients or third parties and will take action where appropriate.

All complaints made by external parties will be investigated in accordance with HWC's Complaints Procedure and the complainant will be informed of the outcome.

In the event of an investigation concerning a complaint against an employee, HWC's Grievance Policy and Procedures will be followed and any action necessary dealt with under HWC's Disciplinary Procedure.

Complaints will be reviewed annually by the Board.

This policy should be read in conjunction with all HWC policies, but particularly, Code of Conduct, Complaints Policy, Grievance Procedure, Disciplinary Procedure

Approved by Healthwatch Cambridgeshire Board of Directors

Date: 13 November 2013

For Review

Date: November 2014

Responsible Officer

Chief Executive Officer of Healthwatch Cambridgeshire

Safeguarding contact information

If you believe that someone is in immediate danger, call **999**.

If, when you are volunteering for Healthwatch, you have any suspicion that someone is being neglected, mistreated, or harmed in any way, please speak to the Healthwatch Staff member supporting you as soon as possible.

Safeguarding Children

If you suspect that a child is being abused in any way, call 0345 045 5203 between 8am-6pm, Monday to Friday.

Outside office hours, call 01733 234724 to reach the emergency duty team.

Email: ReferralCentre.Children@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

If you suspect that a vulnerable adult is being abused in any way, call 0345 045 5202 between 8am-6pm Monday to Friday and 9am-1pm Saturday.

Outside of office hours, call 01733 234 724 to reach the emergency duty team.

Email: referral.centre-adults@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Minicom: - 01480 376743 or text 07765 898732

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire Safeguarding Contacts

Safeguarding Adults Champion: Sandie Smith

Safeguarding Adults Champion: Angie Ridley

Safeguarding Children Lead: Sandie Smith

Safeguarding Children Champion: Elizabeth Locke

Volunteer learning & development log

Name of Volunteer:	
Start date:	

About our organisation	Date Covered	Signed by Volunteer	Signed by Volunteer Manager
What is Healthwatch Cambridgeshire			
Who works for HWC			
HWC leaflets, marketing and website			
Contact details for key people			

Volunteer Policy	Date Covered	Signed by Volunteer	Signed by Volunteer Manager
Overview of role/where person's role fits in			
Volunteer Policy			
Equality & Diversity Policy			

Volunteer Policy	Date Covered	Signed by Volunteer	Signed by Volunteer Manager
Support & Supervision			
Expenses Policy & Claim form			
Problem Solving Process			
Confidentiality and Data Protection			
Health & Safety			
Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults			
Immediate support person and the person to whom the you should refer to in the absence of your supervisor			

Nolan principles of conduct underpinning public life

Selflessness

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or other friends.

Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership: Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.