

# INVESTING IN VOLUNTEERS FINAL REPORT

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**Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough**

21 April 2020

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## ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

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IIV HOST ORGANISATION:	NCVO
ASSESSOR:	Becky Nixon
NAME OF LEAD ASSESSOR:	Dane Gould
1ST ASSESSMENT/RENEWAL:	1st Assessment
ASSESSMENT OUTCOME:	Met
CONDITIONS IF ANY:	
DATE CONDITIONS MET:	
FINAL ASSESSMENT DECISION:	

## ORGANISATION SUMMARY

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Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is an independent champion for people who use health and social care services. They make sure that those running services put people at the heart of care and contribute to this by understanding the needs, experiences and concerns of people who use health and social care services and to speak out on their behalf.

Although Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Healthwatch Peterborough present as two separate bodies, they have a joint board and staff team. As an independent local organisation they are part of the Healthwatch England network, set up under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. They were originally two different organisations, but merged around three years ago; Peterborough was a very small organisation and there was duplication in the health bodies that both areas covered. Volunteering had been quite different in each of the areas, so work needed to be done to align volunteering roles and cultures.

There are two main volunteer roles. Community listeners engage with people in the local community to collect information and stories about their experience to feed back to decision makers and service providers, and promote the work of Healthwatch. There are also enter and view volunteers (sometimes called authorised representatives) who undertake visits to health and social care services to find out the experiences of people who use services, family, carers and workers.

There are currently 16 staff covering various functions, including engagement with the public, signposting for members of the public to health services, supporting strategic liaison with health services and other partners. Management of volunteers is undertaken by a volunteer manager, who is managed by the communities programme manager, and day to day support is also undertaken by two engagement staff in the same team.

There is a board of directors with a wide variety of health and social care and professional experience. It meets in public every two months, and volunteers have attended these meetings. One member of the board is also a community listener volunteer.

## SAMPLING

### SAMPLING RATIONALE:

There were 30 active community listener volunteers at the time of sampling, eight of whom are also authorised representatives. A list of names was provided by Healthwatch and the selection made by the assessor. Volunteers represent those who have been involved with Healthwatch since it started in 2013 as well as those recruited this year. Interviewees covered Peterborough and Cambridgeshire, and a range of ages, ethnicities, and men and women were selected. Two "access champion" volunteers were interviewed, these are young volunteers with disabilities recruited through a local college.

A list of all staff was provided, the chief executive, the communities programme manager who manages the volunteer manager were interviewed as senior management. As well as the volunteer manager, a projects officer who works alongside volunteers was interviewed, plus the communications officer and a partnerships officer who have limited connection with volunteers.

The chair of the board was interviewed.

All volunteers and the trustee were interviewed by telephone, with the staff interviewed by a mix of telephone and online video conferencing.

NUMBER OF SITES, BRANCHES, LOCATIONS:	2
NUMBER INCLUDED IN INTERVIEW SAMPLE:	2

NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS:	30
NUMBER INTERVIEWED:	13
NUMBER AS % OF TOTAL:	43%

NUMBER OF VOLUNTEER ROLES:	2
NUMBER OF ROLES SAMPLED BY INTERVIEW:	2
NUMBER AS % OF TOTAL:	100%

NUMBER OF STAFF:	16
NUMBER INTERVIEWED:	6
WERE TRUSTEES INTERVIEWED?	Yes

### WRITTEN EVIDENCE:

Provided before the assessment were: volunteer policy, volunteer handbook,

community listener role description

Reviewed at the assessment: revised volunteer policy, volunteer induction checklists, safeguarding training slides, report on volunteer feedback exercise.

## SUMMARY OF PRACTICE

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### INDICATOR 1

There is an expressed commitment to the involvement of volunteers, and recognition throughout the organisation that volunteering is a two-way process which benefits volunteers and the organisation.

There is a volunteer policy that has recently been reviewed and will be going to the next board meeting for sign off. This is due to be reviewed again in two years. The volunteer manager said, 'The existing policy was sent out to volunteers, asking for feedback via a global email'. A volunteer confirmed, 'The volunteer handbook has been updated, I saw a draft'. As well as review of the volunteering policy, volunteering is reviewed through the strategic planning process, which has just taken place.

Organisational policies and procedures are summarised in the volunteers handbook, which is issued at recruitment stage, with copies also available on request. The equality and diversity policy is included as an appendix to the handbook, and there is a checklist to ensure that volunteers are aware of the key policies. There is a problem solving procedure that describes some of the problems that volunteers or the organisation may experience to help people to identify what is a problem, before setting out how these will be dealt with.

People could describe how volunteers are crucial to Healthwatch in its role in hearing the voices of different parts of the community. The chair explained that, 'The mission of Healthwatch is to help more people have a great experience of care. We need people who have got their ear to the ground or who are good at talking to people. The reach into communities gives us credibility'. The chief executive said, 'We couldn't do what we do without them, their diversity brings so much, having the access champions has been great'. Other staff commented, 'They have their own set of skills for talking to "real" people, they have the right tone and understanding,' 'They bring a lot of skills and knowledge and contacts'. A staff member identified that what volunteers bring is promoted through, 'Volunteer stories for annual report, social media'. Volunteers said, 'They wouldn't be able to function without us,' 'There's quite a bit on Twitter and Facebook about what volunteers do'.

### INDICATOR 2

The organisation commits appropriate resources to working with all volunteers, such as money, management, staff time and materials.

Managing volunteers is included in job descriptions and these are used in recruitment for roles. The volunteer manager identified that, 'I managed volunteers in previous jobs,' and had undertaken training in the role, including attending a volunteer managers' group locally and attending diversity training. The chief executive identified her role in ensuring that volunteers are well-managed, 'The volunteer manager has been wonderful, she has a systematic approach, I get regular feedback'.

Volunteering is discussed in staff meetings, one staff member said, 'We have very regular team meetings covering volunteers and check in with each other'. The volunteer manager and the engagement staff are in the same team, which enables frequent conversation on volunteer issues.

Healthwatch has a five-year strategy that identifies increasing the representation of volunteers across different geographical areas and highlights the role of volunteers in collecting the views of local people to help health and care services to better meet needs. The chief executive identified that, 'Volunteers were involved at the beginning of the strategy through the stakeholder engagement we commissioned and reviewing the draft strategy'.

There is a budget drawn up for volunteer costs, including expenses and training. A couple of members of staff indicated that this is not usually completely spent so is ample to meet needs. Volunteers talked about having resources for the consultations that they undertake, such as publicity materials, clipboards, and forms to complete.

### INDICATOR 3

The organisation is open to involving volunteers who reflect the diversity of the local community and actively seeks to do this in accordance with its stated aims.

To be welcoming to people from a wide range of backgrounds, the volunteer policy mentions specific situations that volunteers may be in, for example young volunteers, disabled volunteers, volunteers on benefits, volunteers from overseas, or those with minor or spent convictions. It identifies some of the issues they may face and how the organisation will support them and signposts to other resources that may help.

Staff identified that, 'Equality and diversity is covered in induction, and some more in-house training is on the cards,' possibly with Healthwatch staff being trained to deliver equality and diversity training, as a member of staff identified that, 'Occasionally issues crop up'. Undertaking further equality and diversity training as already identified, which may help to ensure that everyone in the organisation is aware of issues around equality and diversity and help to improve volunteers' knowledge and skills when performing their roles engaging with diverse communities. A volunteer mentioned that equalities had been covered in their induction, 'They make sure you are up to scratch on equalities'.

Images of the organisation show a range of people involved; these are often photos from their own events.

The volunteer manager identified that there has been, 'Robust recruitment through the engagement team, our website, Do-It, and community magazines'. There has been work done recently to increase the diversity of volunteers. The chief executive said, 'We did a diversity audit last autumn including volunteers. We've targeted Peterborough and Fenland as there is high deprivation there and less of a voice'. There have also been new leaflets in different languages. Volunteer recruitment is linked in with the organisation's engagement work, the volunteer manager said, 'We went to areas where we know different communities live, to community centres and groups and did talks and had stands'. Having an engagement officer with good links

into communities was mentioned by a couple of people as being key to this success. As a result, volunteering in the target communities has increased.

Healthwatch also supports "access champions", young volunteers with learning disabilities engaged through a local college, one said, 'They approached us to hear from people with disabilities. They do really, really well'.

Involving more young people was identified by a couple of staff as a future priority for development. Healthwatch could undertake outreach as identified to involve more young people in relation to volunteer diversity, so that in turn more young people's voices can be heard about health services.

Volunteers expressed that there was a wide variety of people involved, 'There was diversity amongst the volunteers from different backgrounds and with different experiences'. Some volunteers talked specifically about their situations and how they had been welcomed, 'I enjoy it, I experience mental health issues so it gives me a good reason to get out of the house, and we can relate to the people we talk to,' and, 'They approached us to hear from people with disabilities'.

#### **INDICATOR 4**

The organisation develops appropriate roles for volunteers in line with its aims and objectives, which are of value to the volunteers.

A role description was seen that sets out the purpose of the role, the main tasks, skills and experience needed, when and where the role is carried out, and what support will be given. There is also a pro forma role description at the end of the volunteer policy that can be used for new roles.

There are two roles at present, community listener and enter and view volunteer. Within the community listener role there is a variety of tasks in different areas of work, locations, and using different vehicles, e.g. giving presentations, helping to fill in pro forma surveys, or holding more general conversations at events. One volunteer was interested 'To focus on mental health, it's my passion'. Others mentioned linking Healthwatch in with groups that they were already involved in.

Some volunteers said that they would like there to be more roles, 'I would like to do more than I do,' 'Healthwatch doesn't have enough volunteering opportunities, though I understand why that is, they need to have enough staff input'. One volunteer mentioned being involved in more structured engagement, 'It's a while since they did a big survey, I like more focussed projects to engage with'. A more structured project had just started with the Clinical Commissioning Group, but was currently put on hold due to coronavirus. Another volunteer mentioned wanting to be involved in the signposting. There had been a gap in undertaking enter and view visits for a while, these are intelligence-led so it can be variable how often these happen, and dealing with the merger had meant that there had not been as many as there might previously have been, although volunteers said that they had picked up again more recently.

The volunteer manager has already identified that volunteers are interested in doing more and said, 'As the volunteer team develops, we would like to look at where interests and skills are and how we can benefit'. Healthwatch could identify what skills volunteers bring and consider whether there are other activities they may be

able to undertake. This may help to increase volunteer motivation as well as bring greater capacity into Healthwatch.

## INDICATOR 5

The organisation is committed to ensuring that, as far as possible, volunteers are protected from physical, financial and emotional harm arising from volunteering.

Risk assessments for events and safeguarding are mentioned in the volunteer handbook, and are discussed with volunteers at induction. Volunteers were able to describe how they minimise risks, for example an enter and view volunteer said, 'You don't go into a person's room, you talk to them at the door and you make sure there are always two of you'. Community Listener volunteers said, 'You shouldn't argue with people if you don't agree with them,' 'If you get stuck you get a member of staff to take over,' 'Make sure there are no obvious trips, if you see anything dodgy report it to someone'.

There is employers liability insurance for volunteers, and this is mentioned in the volunteer handbook.

Volunteers confirmed that they are able to claim expenses, 'You are given expenses when you do an event to cover transport and meals for the day,' 'They pay for your travel so that you are not out of pocket'. One of the younger volunteers said that transport is arranged for them. Expenses is mentioned in the volunteer handbook, which sets out what expenses are covered and where appropriate how much.

Volunteers' details are kept confidentially, and volunteers are asked to sign an agreement about their data. There is a separate GDPR policy, and volunteer records are kept for up to six months after the person has volunteered and then securely destroyed. A volunteer confirmed that data protection has been covered with them, 'During training we are taught to respect people's privacy and data'.

## INDICATOR 6

The organisation is committed to using fair, efficient and consistent recruitment procedures for all potential volunteers.

Volunteers found the application process 'easy' and 'quick'. The volunteer manager said, 'People fill in a simple application form, we vet them and then chat to all applicants over the phone. Then with face-to-face interviews there are always two people and it's a two-way process'. Volunteers confirmed they had an opportunity to talk through their motivation for volunteering, 'One of the questions they asked was my reason to get involved,' 'I was asked about myself and my interests and what I knew about Healthwatch'. One volunteer said, 'They were so nice, I was so nervous but it was more of a chat, they told me about the organisation and volunteers and what I would be doing'. Volunteers are able to find out more about volunteering through these interviews, and some have already attended a Healthwatch public event to see what Healthwatch does.

Information is recorded consistently for all volunteers using standard questions and fields on the database. The volunteer manager identified that volunteers are rarely turned down, 'We've rejected a small number and signposted to alternative

opportunities'.

The volunteer policy identifies that Healthwatch welcomes applications from people with minor or spent convictions and promotes this as part of the application process. Two references are always taken, and volunteers confirmed that they had been asked for these. The volunteer policy identifies that any issues that are returned through vetting processes will be decided upon by the chief executive and communities programme manager taking into account the severity of conviction and length of time since it occurred, although nothing significant has come back so far.

## INDICATOR 7

Clear procedures are put into action for introducing new volunteers to their role, the organisation, its work, policies, practices and relevant personnel.

Volunteers undertake a general induction to the organisation and role using a standard volunteer induction checklist, seen at assessment, to ensure that volunteers have been inducted consistently. This includes ensuring that they have copies of policies and procedures and have filled in relevant forms, as well as providing information about the organisation and the role. The volunteer manager confirmed, 'Inductions are done face-to-face with a check list. Same to every volunteer. They sign an agreement and receive a handbook, policies, safe-guarding information and understand the role'. Volunteers said, 'They give you teaching and support to carry out roles,' and, 'I learned on the job, they have a friendly and open approach'.

There is also a checklist for the volunteer engagement training, which goes into more detail about the practicalities of the role, including what materials are used to provide and collect information, the way that volunteers should engage with members of the public, and listening skills. This session also collects information from the volunteer about where they can travel to, and identifies specific engagement activities they would like to carry out.

There are various ways that the boundaries of the role are set and communicated. For enter and view volunteers one volunteer said, 'There are a set of questions we answer'. Another volunteer identified, 'We get a background briefing about what we are doing'. There are generally staff around who support volunteers to stay within the boundaries of the role, one volunteer felt, 'I always feel secure with the person who is paid staff'.

There is a separate problem solving process for volunteers, although none of the volunteers asked said that they had needed to use it, they knew it was in the paperwork given. A member of staff identified that there had been a situation with a volunteer that they had needed to ask to leave after following the process.

## INDICATOR 8

The organisation takes account of the varying support and supervision needs of volunteers.

Support is available from staff during enter and view visits or community listening events, including briefings and debriefings before and after activities, as well as the

support at volunteer meetings that are held across the geographical area. Volunteers praised the support that they received from staff, one said, 'The volunteer manager is very good, I cannot fault her,' and another said that the engagement officer, 'Is excellent at engaging, he's always there, he's cheerful, he keeps us updated, and is very friendly'. Other comments from volunteers included, 'I've had a really positive experience. They are very keen, they want to get it right,' 'They are always there to listen to you,' 'All the staff are lovely and supportive and I am always made to feel welcome,' 'They've done a great job, they're great people to get on with, all of them'.

Many volunteers commented that they appreciated being contacted whilst the organisation was not undertaking any face-to-face work because of coronavirus, 'During the pandemic I received a welfare call; you're still included'.

Volunteers are able to be flexible about the activities that they take part in, being able to choose when the list of activities is sent out, and are able to set their own boundaries, for example, one said, 'I only go within a certain region'.

Volunteers are asked for their feedback at volunteer meetings and through day-to-day contact. Volunteers confirmed that they were asked for their thoughts, 'They get new ideas from volunteers at meetings, it is really good'. In January 2020, at all the volunteer meetings across the area, volunteers were asked for their feedback on specific questions, with 97% of responses indicating that Healthwatch was good, very good or excellent in relation to questions about, for example, communication, training and support. Actions have been identified as a result, this includes greater feedback to volunteers about what has happened following their involvement; this has been actioned and volunteers confirmed, 'We get emails constantly about the work and what's happened as a result,' and, 'We have a debrief after and then get a report'.

There is regular communication with volunteers, they said, 'We get a volunteers email and newsletter with information about what's going on throughout the organisation,' 'You get information about events, whatever is happening. They send you updated information and ask your views'.

## INDICATOR 9

The whole organisation is aware of the need to give volunteers recognition.

Volunteers expressed that they felt appreciated by the organisation, 'They thank us and send emails after visits,' 'They write and say thank you and send a card at Christmas,' 'I went to one of the volunteer meetings in St Ives, they had cakes, the chair was there and they gave out awards'. The chief executive said, 'We've sent out letter of thanks and certificates in volunteers' week'. Another staff member said, 'We give them a public thank you on the website, social media, and our newsletter to flag up what they do for us'.

The work of volunteers feeds into health and social care services improvements, and this includes having their findings fed into policy making at a national level. A staff member identified, 'Recently Addenbrookes in Cambridge has been a test site for accident and emergency services, we wouldn't have reached as many people without volunteers, so they are feeding into national discussions'. The chair said that they had also, 'Involved volunteers in feedback around NHS 10-year plan'.

Volunteers said, 'We know we are making a difference'. In relation to decision making within Healthwatch, volunteers feed in through the volunteer meetings and day-to-day, one said 'I do think they listen, I feel very positive about how they liaise with us'. The chair also identified volunteers, 'Massive presence at the AGM,' as another way that they are involved.

Training is available for volunteers with opportunities sent out by email. Safeguarding training slides were seen at assessment. Volunteers said, 'We are updated annually on any changes, data protection, child protection,' and another said, 'They are very good at communicating with us, making sure we are up to scratch and have confidence, they do not assume you have got skills'. Volunteers described development for specific projects, 'I've been to two workshops for the Clinical Commissioning Group about how money can be spent better in the health services'. Another volunteer said that there are, 'Speakers who come to the meetings'.

There is a comprehensive section in the volunteer policy that talks about the reasons why some volunteers may leave, and how to end the relationship positively, whatever the situation. References are offered for volunteers who want them, and the volunteer manager identified that volunteers do provide feedback when they are leaving, mostly via telephone.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

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### Summary of suggestions for development

3.2 Healthwatch could undertake further equality and diversity training as already identified, which may help to ensure that everyone in the organisation is aware of issues around equality and diversity and help to improve volunteers' knowledge and skills when performing their roles engaging with diverse communities

3.5 Healthwatch could undertake outreach as identified to involve more young people in relation to volunteer diversity, so that in turn more young people's voices can be heard about health services.

4.3 Healthwatch could identify what skills volunteers bring and consider whether there are other activities they may be able to undertake. This may help to increase volunteer motivation as well as bring greater capacity into Healthwatch.

## CONDITIONS (IF APPLICABLE)

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Summary of how conditions were met:

**OR**

Summary of why organisation has not met the standard: