

# **Volunteer Policy**

## Contents

- 1. INTRODUCTION**
  - 1.1 About this policy
  - 1.2 Healthwatch Birmingham (HWB) Vision, Mission and Values
  - 1.3 Definition of volunteering
  - 1.4 Who can volunteer with HWB?
  - 1.5 Types of volunteering
  - 1.6 Volunteer Involvement within HWB
  - 1.7 Public Face of HWB
- 2. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**
  - 2.1 Safe recruitment
  - 2.2 Volunteer role outlines
  - 2.3 Risk assessment
  - 2.4 Accessibility
  - 2.5 Advertising roles
  - 2.6 Application form
  - 2.7 Initial Contact
  - 2.8 Volunteer information session
  - 2.9 Informal interview
  - 2.10 Deciding on suitability
  - 2.11 References
  - 2.12 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks
  - 2.13 Application timelines
- 3. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**
- 4. INDUCTION, SUPPORT AND TRAINING**
  - 4.1 Induction
  - 4.2 Values of volunteer support
  - 4.3 Aims of volunteer support
  - 4.4 Volunteer meetings
  - 4.5 Group supervisions
  - 4.6 One to one support and supervision
  - 4.7 Confidentiality
  - 4.8 Training and shadowing
- 5. VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION**
- 6. WHEN VOLUNTEER DECIDES TO STOP VOLUNTEERING**
- 7. VOLUNTEER EXPENSES**
  - 7.1 Principles
  - 7.2 What expenses can be claimed for
  - 7.3 Conditions
  - 7.4 Expenses Rates
  - 7.5 Procedure for claiming expenses
- 8. HEALTH AND SAFETY**
  - 8.1 Health and safety objectives
  - 8.2 Safeguarding
- 9. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION**
- 10. VOLUNTEER SOCIAL MEDIA USE**
- 11. PROBLEM SOLVING PROCEDURE**
  - 11.1 Volunteer making a complaint
  - 11.2 Complaint against a volunteer
  - 11.3 Asking a volunteer to stop volunteering
- 12. QUALITY AND REVIEW**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 About this policy

Healthwatch Birmingham (HWB) believes that volunteers are a valuable integral part of our work. Volunteers bring a richness to the organisation and enable HWB to achieve its aims and objectives. HWB aims to encourage volunteers' involvement in all aspects of its work, as a means of empowering and supporting the diverse communities of Birmingham.

The policy outlines how we work with volunteers and it is for both volunteers and staff. We want volunteers to be confident that we are committed to our volunteers and that all volunteers are treated equally and fairly. By having a clear volunteer policy in place we want to ensure consistency across all our work with volunteers. All Volunteers and Staff should be familiar with this policy.

### 1.2 HWB Vision, Mission and Values

#### Our Vision

Patients, public, carers and service users are at the heart of every change made in the name of service improvement in health and social care in the city of Birmingham.

#### Our Mission

To take a whole systems approach to discharging our statutory functions in such a way that we are effective in enabling patients, public, service users and carers to be at the heart of service improvement in health and social care in the city of Birmingham more today and in the future.

#### Our Strategic Objectives

Our mission is achieved through three high level outcomes:

1. Patient, public, service user and carer **experience** is demonstrably being used as a lever for continuous opportunistic and strategic service improvement by all CQC-registered organisations through their scrutiny, governance, quality improvement, strategic, commissioning, and providing functions. Patient, public, service user and carer **experience** is as equally an important driving force as cost in planned change.
2. Patient, public, service user and carer **involvement** is demonstrably informing all decisions made in the name of service improvement from identifying services in need of improvement.
3. Patient, public, service users and carers are demonstrably **engaged** in ensuring the needs of their communities will be better met by future services through their active participation in service design and redesign planning and development.

#### Values

We have an important remit which requires the whole team to develop and maintain a culture which will enable continually high performance. Our shared set of values unites us and aligns us to stay focused on our goal, and empowers us to make

effective decisions. We recruit against our values and develop them in our staff and volunteers.

A list of our values and what they mean to us can be found in *appendix 1* at the end of this document.

### **1.3 Definition of Volunteering**

*We define volunteering as any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than (or in addition to) close relatives. Central to this definition is the fact that volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual. This can include formal activity undertaken through public, private and voluntary organisations as well as informal community participation and social action. Everyone has the right to volunteer and volunteering can have significant benefits for individuals.*

*2017 NCVO (The National Council for Voluntary Organisations)*

HWB volunteers are individuals who have successfully undertaken the volunteer specific recruitment process and whose skills and experience can add value and support the work that the organisation undertakes. There is no contract in place and there is no mutual obligation for either the volunteer or the organisation. Volunteers do not receive reward for their contribution however out-of-pocket expenses are reimbursed. Volunteers receive ongoing training and support relevant to the identified role they have been recruited to undertake.

Volunteers can expect to undertake their identified role in an environment that is free from discrimination and for an organisation that promotes fairness and equality in the work that is undertaken, in the treatment of all staff and volunteers, and in the recruitment process for all roles.

### **1.4 Who can volunteer with HWB?**

We are committed to welcome volunteers from diverse range of backgrounds and aim to create volunteering opportunities that are accessible for people with different skills, knowledge, availability and ability. We particularly want to create opportunities for the most marginalised communities of Birmingham to volunteer with us. There are no restrictions for asylum seekers or people on benefits to volunteer. Most of our volunteering roles are for people aged 18+ and over but we may have opportunities for younger volunteers during the school holidays subject to appropriate risk assessments, insurance and support being in place. Most of our volunteering roles require a good level of English. If a volunteer's English level is not high enough we will try to signpost them to places where they can receive ESOL support.

### **1.5 Types of volunteering**

We have different types of volunteering opportunities to suit people with different interests and availability. We have regular volunteer roles, which are ongoing, as well as time bound volunteering roles, such as acting as the Volunteer Representative on the HWB Board of Trustees, or helping with a research project. We also provide other types of unpaid roles such as micro-volunteering, internships, student placements and work experiences when possible.

## 1.6 Volunteer Involvement within HWB

All volunteers will be given the opportunity to contribute to influencing strategic decisions made by HWB through an annual Volunteer Survey, volunteer meetings and through the Volunteer Board Representative on the HWB Board. The Volunteer Board Representative will be elected by volunteers on an annual basis following an election process. This election process will be overseen by the Volunteer and Community Officer (VCO) to ensure a fair democratic process has been applied.

The role of the Volunteer Board Representative is to act as a link between the volunteer team and the Board. The Volunteer Board Representative will be responsible for gathering views and concerns from the volunteer team and sharing these with the Board. This individual will be the voice of volunteers and will ensure that volunteer opinions are considered when making strategic decisions. The Volunteer Board Representative will also be responsible for keeping volunteers informed of topics discussed and decisions made at Board meetings.

### 1.6 Public Face of HWB

As representatives of HWB, volunteers, like staff, are responsible for presenting a professional image at all times.

HWB is committed to providing equality of opportunity to all persons when developing, co-ordinating and supporting volunteering. Although there is no statutory obligation under equality legislation we recognise a clear moral duty to promote fairness and equality in volunteering and value all individuals and their diverse and unique identity and backgrounds. Volunteers are required to treat others with dignity and respect and not discriminate against them. As a representative of HWB it is imperative that volunteers recognise the importance of these values and ensure that their behaviour is in accordance with HWB's code of conduct.

## 2. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

The following outlines the methods HWB will use for the recruitment and support of its volunteers.

### 2.1 Safe recruitment

HWB is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of children and vulnerable adults as well as the well-being and safety of our volunteers and staff. Volunteers working with HWB are likely to come into contact with children and vulnerable adults in the course of their work with us. It is important that volunteers are well equipped and vetted for these circumstances.

The principles of safe recruitment are:

- Writing a clear volunteer role outline
- Writing a risk assessment of the role
- Individual initial meeting with the volunteer
- 2 references that asks the referee to comment on suitability
- A DBS check - only if necessary. Please refer to <https://www.gov.uk/find-out-dbs-check> to find out if the volunteer role is eligible for a DBS check.
- Training and induction

## 2.2 Volunteer role outlines

All volunteers must have a clear Volunteer Role Outline before the role is being advertised. This must be signed off by a member of the Senior Management Team (SMT) prior to advertising the opportunity. All staff and volunteers are encouraged to contribute to the development of HWB Volunteer Role Outlines via surveys, team meetings, working groups, one-to-one supervisions or individual consultations with the VCO.

HWB will recruit volunteers to suitable roles that have been identified as adding value to the work that the organisation is able to undertake. These roles will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that the needs of both HWB and volunteers are being met. The roles will be designed to complement the core functions of the organisation and any additional projects or studies that relate to HWB's statutory functions. The type and availability of roles may differ depending on what specific strands of work HWB is undertaking.

HWB will create structured volunteer roles which outline the tasks involved and skills required. Volunteers will be able to undertake aspects of the role that they feel comfortable and confident in doing and have the opportunity to opt out of tasks when necessary.

This will ensure that both HWB and the volunteer know what is expected from each other. It will also allow potential volunteers to assess whether they feel they are suited to the role offered. Some roles may relate to a specific finite piece of work. Volunteers will have the opportunity to explore alternative roles if a volunteer opportunity ceases to be available.

Support will be provided in order to develop skills and confidence for volunteers who wish to expand upon the tasks within their role. Volunteers can choose to do more than one role with HWB.

When developing a Volunteer Role Outline, we must consider the following points:

- What will the volunteer be doing?
- Do the tasks offer learning and development opportunities to the volunteer?
- We are committed to increasing opportunities for people from our local community to volunteer - what will we need to think about to encourage this?
- What type of volunteering is it, how often do we need a volunteer and how long do we need someone to commit for?
- What are the risks to the volunteer, HWB, general public in this role? How will these risks be managed?
- Who will support the volunteer on their daily tasks and will they have enough capacity to do this?
- Who will be the named supervisor for the volunteer? Will they have enough capacity to do regular, formal and recorded supervisions?
- Will this person need volunteer supervisor training? If so, who will provide this?
- All volunteers need to complete HWB volunteer induction and training. Who will provide this?
- How will we reimburse out of pocket travel and lunch expenses? Do we have budget for this?

All Volunteer Role Outlines will be developed on a Volunteer Role Outline template.

### 2.3 Risk assessments

The risk assessment for each volunteer role is essential in minimising risk for the volunteer, HWB and the individuals we engage with. Risk assessment for each role must be in place before any volunteers can start in that role, and it needs to be signed off by a member of the Senior Management Team.

What to consider when writing a risk assessment for each volunteer role:

- How do we keep the volunteer physically and emotionally safe?
- How do we safeguard the individuals we engage with?
- How do we manage the reputation of HWB?

### 2.4 Accessibility

Any materials used in the recruitment of volunteers will be clear and easily readable. The emphasis will be on attracting potential volunteers to express an interest in the volunteer role and to encourage them to discuss their skills and suitability with HWB. HWB can provide alternative versions of main documents upon request. This should be made clear during the recruitment and training of volunteers.

### 2.5 Advertising roles

The volunteer roles should be advertised appropriately depending on the type of volunteer needed. All volunteer opportunities should be advertised on HWB website, social media, volunteer bulletin and stakeholder bulletin, as well as through other appropriate ways, such as via:

- Universities, colleges, student unions
- BVSC (Birmingham Voluntary Services Council)
- Community events
- Partner organisations
- Volunteering websites

The closing date for the opportunity should be highlighted on any adverts.

### 2.6 Initial contact

Once a potential volunteer has expressed an interest in our volunteering roles we will:

- Contact the volunteer within five working days from their initial email.
- Discuss the roles briefly.
- Email our volunteer roles profiles or post if person is not on email.
- Email our volunteer application form or post if person is not on email.
- Invite the person to a volunteer information session if applicable.
- Where an individual is unable to attend the information session they may need to wait until the next information session unless another is organised in between. This will depend on staff time being available to plan an additional volunteer information session.

## 2.7 Application Forms

The application form should be as simple as possible whilst still collecting the information required. Further information can be obtained face-to-face as part of the selection process where appropriate. Volunteer applicants will be offered help to support them fill in the application form if necessary.

## 2.8 Volunteer Information Session

Prospective volunteers can learn about volunteering with HWB, familiarise themselves with the building and meet some paid staff as well as some volunteers.

What we will cover in the volunteer information session:

- Introduction to the HWB (mission statement, values, aims & objectives, projects and services, staff members and existing volunteers).
- What we expect from our volunteers and what they can expect from us.
- Discussion of volunteer roles with staff & existing volunteers and the opportunity to pick up detailed information on roles.
- Participate in an informal interview with paid staff regarding the roles.

## 2.9 Volunteer Interviews

Volunteer recruitment is not a competitive process, so informal interviews should be done in a way that does not resemble job interviews. The word 'interview' can be intimidating to some, so prospective volunteers will be 'invited in for a chat' instead, and this is referred to as face-to-face in this document. A relaxed friendly approach will be used during the chat to enable both parties to get to know each other, learn more about the role and what is involved, and decide if they are right for each other. Any particular health needs or access requirements should also be discussed and recorded during the informal interview.

Before the prospective volunteer arrives, reception will be informed who to expect so that the individual's first impression is welcoming. A private area will be found to conduct the chat. It should be away from distractions or disruptions.

All informal interviews should be structured around pre-planned questions that are appropriate in determining whether or not the volunteer is suitable. The staff or volunteer conducting the informal interviews should write down notes to refer to later, but it is not necessary to score potential volunteers' answers.

## 2.10 Deciding on suitability

When deciding on a volunteer's suitability HWB must assess whether the volunteer showed evidence of having the essential skills required in their preferred volunteer role; does what they want to get out of volunteering match the opportunity; and do they have the required availability and commitment for the role?

- If the potential volunteer is deemed suitable we will invite them to the next volunteer induction day.
- If the potential volunteer is deemed unsuitable feedback will be provided and the reasons for the unsuitability will be given. Ideally, if possible, we will signpost the volunteer to alternative volunteering opportunities elsewhere.

## 2.11 References

Each volunteer will be asked to provide two referees when they submit the HWB Volunteer Application Form. The referees should ideally be someone who has known the volunteer either in a capacity as a volunteer, student or employee; or as an active member of another group. They should not be a family member and ideally they should have known the volunteer for longer than 6 months. In cases where volunteers struggle to find a professional referee we will accept references from long term family friends. If the reference highlights any issues this will be brought to Senior Manager's attention who will decide the best way forward depending on the severity of the issue highlighted.

If the person cannot supply references (e.g. an asylum seeker) then a risk assessment should be made as to whether the volunteer can be safely involved in the role.

Once the reference has come through and the volunteer has signed the DBS self-certification form (if applicable) they can begin the shadowing and task-specific training process.

## 2.12 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

All volunteers who begin in roles that require a DBS check will complete their DBS form online.

For step-by-step guidance on how to do DBS checks please refer to: <https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check/arranging-checks-as-an-employer>

Volunteers whose roles require a DBS check are not able to do solo volunteering until their DBS check has been cleared. Volunteers are responsible for notifying and presenting the DBS clearance form to the VCO once they receive it.

If DBS checks are conducted and convictions highlighted, a full risk assessment will be carried out by the VCO and referred to SMT for final approval.

## 2.13 Application Timeline

The volunteer should be contacted by HWB within one week of receipt of the application form to arrange a face-to-face meeting or discuss alternative volunteer opportunities.

The face-to-face meeting will be arranged for a mutually suitable time.

A decision will normally be made at the face-to-face meeting as to whether the volunteer and HWB wish to move forward with the volunteer placement. If it is not possible for the two parties to make a decision at the face-to-face meeting, then they should agree a deadline for the decision to be made.

Requests for references should be sent off immediately after the face-to-face meeting. The volunteer should be made aware that there can sometimes be a delay in references being returned but HWB will contact the volunteer after 2 weeks to give them an update.

Once the clearances have been done, HWB will contact the volunteer to arrange a start date.

If there is any delay in the process, HWB should ensure contact is made every two weeks to inform of developments and confirm to the volunteer that they are valued and not forgotten.

### **3. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

It is the belief of HWB that anyone who wants to offer their time as a volunteer should be able to do so without barrier or unfair treatment. HWB believes that no volunteer, or potential volunteer, should be discriminated against because of any Protected Characteristic.

HWB is committed to ensuring that all volunteers understand the importance of valuing diversity and equal opportunities, and that all volunteers understand their responsibilities to prevent discrimination and to meet the diverse needs of those that they come into contact with.

HWB will follow its Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy in relation to supporting and recruiting volunteers. Volunteers will be issued with a copy of HWB's Equal Opportunities and Diversity policy which applies to both staff and volunteers. Volunteers are expected to practice the principles set out in this policy.

### **4. INDUCTION, SUPPORT AND TRAINING**

We want to make volunteering a positive experience for both volunteers and HWB. We believe that the provision of induction, on-going support and training is essential to achieving this goal. The level of support and training each volunteer will receive will depend on their role and the frequency of their volunteering, however the following is what they can expect.

#### **4.1 Induction**

Before volunteers start volunteering, or at the beginning of their volunteering, they will be given an induction into HWB and their role. Ideally this is a group induction to allow new volunteers to get to know each other and do some group exercises together.

The induction should cover:

- HWB's work, history and aims
- Project specific information
- Current volunteer roles and brief outlines
- HWB Volunteer Policy
- Supervision and support procedures
- Training
- Volunteering guidelines (Safeguarding, Professional Boundaries, Confidentiality and Data Protection, Equality and Diversity)
- Volunteer Expenses
- Health and Safety

At the induction, the volunteers will be offered a Volunteer Handbook and a Personal Development Plan.

## 4.2 Values of volunteer support

The values underpinning our approach to volunteer support are:

- Support is a two-way process designed to provide volunteers with an opportunity to raise any concerns and discuss their personal training and development needs. It is therefore important for volunteers to be given the opportunity to initiate support and supervision sessions as and when required.
- Ongoing support should be a positive process that involves recognition and praise where it is due and constructive criticism when required.
- Support sessions should take place in a climate of shared learning and understanding.
- Support sessions assist both volunteers and HWB to protect your health and safety and that of your colleagues.
- Volunteers will be offered both group and individual support whilst volunteering with HWB.

## 4.3 Aim of volunteer support

The aim of volunteer support is to provide a forum for feedback and two-way communication that:

- Enables volunteers to make a positive contribution to HWB's strategic aims.
- Provides volunteers with support, advice and guidance
- Enables the quality of HWB's services to be monitored and improved
- Enables and encourages volunteers to develop personally

## 4.4 Volunteer meetings

Volunteer group meetings will be held three to four times a year and all volunteers are encouraged to attend these when possible. The meetings are arranged at different dates and times to allow volunteers with different availability to attend. These meetings will include information sharing and updates relating to HWB operations and volunteering. HWB staff will be invited to attend the meetings to give updates and to receive feedback when appropriate. Volunteers will have an opportunity to give and receive feedback about any relevant operational practices and procedures. All meetings are formally recorded, and minutes will be circulated to all volunteers.

## 4.5 Group supervisions

Volunteer group supervisions are held three to four times a year and will alternate with the Volunteer meetings.

These meetings are specifically designed to provide a safe space for volunteers to raise any practical and emotional problems they have encountered whilst carrying out their volunteer roles. The VCO will encourage peer support and work with individuals to provide additional one to one support when required.

## 4.6 One to one support and supervisions

Each volunteer will have a named supervisor who is a paid member of the staff team. This person alongside the VCO will be the volunteer's main point of contact for any issues or concerns relating to volunteering. If the named contact is unavailable then the volunteer can contact any paid member of the staff team.

All HWB staff members conducting volunteer supervisions will receive training in Volunteer Supervision and will be using the same supervision template to ensure consistency. All HWB staff members are expected to support the volunteers according to the Volunteer Agreement, and to respect and value volunteers alongside paid staff according to HWB's Equality and Diversity Policy.

Each volunteer will have the opportunity to receive regular one-to-one supervisions. The support sessions may take place either inside or outside HWB. If they take place inside HWB, volunteers should expect that they occur in a quiet room. Both volunteer and their supervisor should ensure that they are not interrupted particularly by telephone calls, including mobile phones.

The supervisions should be:

- Confidential; formal; recorded; time-bound & regular.

The supervisions should provide an opportunity for:

- Checking how the volunteer is finding their role and whether this is still matching their motivation, availability etc.;
- Checking if the volunteer understands their tasks;
- Discussing any particular issues or concerns relating to volunteer's self-care;
- Celebrating achievements;
- Giving and receiving feedback and raising any concerns;
- Sharing information and organisational updates; and
- Identifying development and training needs (use Personal Development Record)

The regularity of formal one-to-one sessions will depend on the regularity of the volunteer role, and the need for formal one to one supervisions. Below are some guidelines to help decide appropriate regularity of support:

*Volunteers who are volunteering regularly on a weekly basis:-*

As a general guide, the volunteer supervisions should be held every 8 weeks, however Volunteers are encouraged to raise urgent issues with their supervisors at the time and not wait until a planned session.

*Volunteers who volunteer less than twice a month:*

Volunteers are not automatically offered regular one to one sessions, however all volunteers are offered an opportunity to discuss any concerns or issues with a member of staff during their volunteering shift, and also encouraged to contact the VCO to book a one to one session when the volunteer would like to have a confidential session to discuss anything to do with their volunteering or personal development. Volunteers are encouraged to raise urgent issues with their supervisors at the time and not wait until a planned session.

## 4.7 Confidentiality

We will process, store and destroy any support notes held under this Policy in accordance with our Data Protection Policy. Volunteers will have access to copies of these support notes on request.

## 4.8 Training and shadowing

All new HWB volunteers must shadow their perspective volunteer role before taking on the role alone. When new volunteers feel settled, comfortable and confident they can begin the role independently. The volunteer's named supervisor will provide them with task-specific training to ensure that they are able to do their role efficiently.

When identifying suitable training opportunities for the volunteer, the supervisor must take into account the volunteer's personal development goals and what specific training is relevant for their role.

Different methods of volunteer training may include:

Shadowing; visiting partner organisations; attending external training courses relevant to their role; attending internal training courses relevant to their role; on-line training etc.

All internal training courses and sessions should be evaluated (including volunteer induction) and volunteer feedback should also be sought on any external training sessions volunteers have been asked to attend.

## 5. VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

Volunteers are at the heart of our organisation and giving their time for free. It is important that we thank all volunteers both informally and formally for their time and contribution to HWB. Different ways of recognising the contribution of our volunteers can include:

- Thanking each volunteer at the end of their volunteering session
- Acknowledging the volunteer contribution and the difference they have made (for example specific project, volunteer hours contributed, specific volunteer achievements etc.). This could be done informally in team meetings; verbally in supervisions; or in writing in newsletters, social media, website or by email.
- Providing training certificates for all training volunteers have completed.
- Organising volunteer events.
- All volunteers receive a thank you card during yearly volunteers' week in June. This is also a great time to organise other celebratory volunteer events.
- All volunteers can expect to receive a written reference from us for up to two years after they have left. We will write up a reference as soon as the volunteer leaves and attach it to their file so that it can be easily retrieved.
- Making the volunteers feel valued for example by providing birthday cards for volunteers and recognising different cultural/faith related events/celebrations/occasions that are important to our volunteers.

## 6. WHEN VOLUNTEER DECIDES TO STOP VOLUNTEERING

When a volunteer decides to leave, we should:

- Try to organise a final meeting with the volunteer before they leave to express our thanks, reflect on achievements and discuss any future contact.
- Inform the volunteer that they can expect to receive a written reference from us for up to two years after they have left. We will write up a reference as soon as the volunteer leaves and attach it to their file so that it can be easily retrieved.
- Encourage volunteers to complete an exit questionnaire.

## 7. EXPENSES

HWB values its volunteers and we want to ensure that there are no barriers to volunteer involvement. However, we have limited funds and therefore the principles set below are always subject to available funding. Volunteers must get agreement from the VCO, or other member of staff, before they pay for expenses that have not already been agreed.

### 7.1 Principles

- No-one should be prevented from volunteering because they cannot pay expenses in advance.
- A percentage of reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the course of a volunteer's role, will be reimbursed, including expenses for travel.
- All expenses must have a receipt.
- In order to claim expenses, an expenses form must be completed and handed into the VCO, or other member of staff.

### 7.2 What expenses can be claimed for

- Travel to and from the place of volunteering.
- Travel while volunteering, as part of the volunteer role.
- Meals taken whilst volunteering.
- Other reasonable volunteering expenses that have been agreed with Volunteer Coordinator in advance.

### 7.3 Conditions

- Volunteers should travel by the cheapest form of transport available (normally public transport). If this is inconvenient or inappropriate (for example in case of mobility issues or other special needs) alternative arrangements should be agreed in advance with the VCO. In these cases, depending on your circumstances, we may be able to pay for car mileage instead of public transport tickets.
- Taxi journeys are only offered for volunteers with disabilities, or in exceptional circumstances, and must always be agreed in advance by talking to the VCO.
- In cases where the taxi driver has been left waiting for over 5 minutes, we will be reviewing the taxi allowance with the individual volunteer.

- Meal expenses are only payable where volunteers have volunteered continuously over four hours, or when otherwise agreed by the VCO (for example for medical reasons, or other special circumstances).
- All expenses must have a receipt.

## 7.4 Expenses Rates

- Taxi transport to and from place of volunteering from volunteers home address
- Public transport to and from place of volunteering from volunteers home address: maximum £5.00\*
- Meals: maximum £5.00\*\* against receipt
- Cars and vans: 45p per mile
- Motorcycles: 20p per mile
- Bike: cycle allowance of 10p per mile
- Extra expenses: as agreed with the volunteer's supervisor.

*\* Note - transport costs are reimbursed to the actual value of the fare on the receipt, with maximum reimbursement being £5.00*

*\*\* Note - meals are reimbursed to the actual value of the meal on the receipt, with maximum reimbursement being £5.00*

## 7.5 Procedure for claiming expenses

Volunteers must fill in a volunteer's expenses form and attach their receipts. The VCO will be responsible for signing and to authorising payments for volunteer expenses. In the absence of the Volunteer Coordinator authorisation can be given by another member of staff. Where possible, expenses should be claimed after each volunteering session. Expenses will be paid out of volunteer petty cash.

## 8. HEALTH AND SAFETY

### 8.1 Duty of care

HWB takes the health and safety of employees and volunteers seriously. As an employer, we have certain legal obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and other health and safety legislation. We will aim, as a minimum, to comply with our responsibilities under all relevant health and safety legislations.

We recognise our duty of care to all our staff and volunteers. We aim to protect them from any risks to their health and safety as far as is reasonably practicable. We will achieve this by:

- Identifying and assessing the risks to which staff/volunteers are likely to be exposed;
- Avoiding risk, where reasonably practicable and desirable;
- Introducing measures to minimise residual risks;
- Adopting safe working practices;
- Providing the necessary information, equipment, instruction, training and supervision.

We will maintain systems to collect and record appropriate information on accidents, incidents and work-related ill-health. We will promote investigation of these occurrences and will take appropriate action.

All volunteers are insured through the HWB Public Liability and Personal Accident insurance.

As part of the Health and Safety Policy all volunteers will be required to sign in when coming onto HWB premises and sign out when leaving.

HWB undertakes annual building, Visual Display Unit and fire risk assessments which are recorded and available to all staff and volunteers. All other regulatory requirements are adhered to.

## **8.2 Safeguarding**

HWB is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of children and vulnerable adults as well as the well-being and safety of our volunteers and staff. Volunteers working with HWB are likely to come into contact with children and vulnerable adults in the course of their work with us, and will receive additional training so that they are well equipped to deal with any safeguarding concerns.

If volunteers have any concerns about their own or another person's safety and well-being they are expected to raise this with the VCO or their supervisor as soon as possible. He/she will make a record of volunteer's concerns and follow these up with SMT without any delay, and according to HWB Safeguarding Children's Policy and Procedures and HWB Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy.

## **9. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION**

### **9.1 Confidentiality**

Volunteers will not disclose any personal information received through the course of their work with HWB about people they work with. This includes staff members', volunteers' or service users' home addresses, other contact details or any other personal information. Exceptions to this are if it is suspected that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm (Children Act 1989) or in response to the Anti-Terrorism Act 2000.

At all times any concerns must be discussed first with the VCO or other member of staff, who will follow appropriate policy.

### **9.2 Data Protection**

HWB has the legal duty to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). That means that wherever we hold information about volunteers, we need to ensure that we comply with the Regulation and make sure that any information about volunteers is:

1. Fairly and lawfully processed
2. Processed for limited purposes
3. Adequate, relevant and not excessive
4. Accurate
5. Not kept for longer than is necessary

6. Processed in line with the individual's rights
7. Secure
8. Not transferred without adequate protection

If volunteers wish to obtain access to the information we hold about them they need to contact the VCO to request to view this. We should tell all volunteers that we will keep their contact details on a confidential file and they can ask to view this at any time. We should also reassure volunteers that their data is strictly confidential. All equal opportunity monitoring information should be anonymous.

## **10. VOLUNTEER SOCIAL MEDIA USE**

HWB uses social media in its work and recognises that those who are involved in its work may also use social media either as part of their role or in their private lives. Below are some common-sense guidelines and recommendations for volunteers to use social media responsibly and safely. These must be communicated to all volunteers during induction.

We want volunteers to help protect our reputation. Volunteers must not post unfavourable or offensive statements about:

- a) HWB;
- b) HWB's staff, our clients, volunteers or members past or present;
- c) other affiliates and stakeholders.

Volunteers are personally responsible for what they communicate in social media (as part of their role or on personal sites). We must remind volunteers that what they publish might be available to be read by the masses (including HWB), colleagues, volunteers, future employers and social acquaintances for a long time.

We must remind volunteers that they must respect confidentiality at all times and protect confidential information. Confidential information includes things such as unpublished details about our work, details of current projects, future projects, financial information or information held on our supporters, staff or volunteers. A publicity consent form must be obtained prior to posting images or text which may be used on social media. HWB does not permit tagging of vulnerable adults or anyone under the age of 18.

If we ask volunteers to use HWB social media as part of their volunteering role, further training should be provided.

## **11. PROBLEM SOLVING PROCEDURE**

While the involvement of volunteers is by and large a positive experience for everyone involved, it is important to bear in mind that sometimes things can go wrong. A volunteer may have a complaint about another volunteer, a member of staff or the organisation itself. Similarly, someone else may complain about a volunteer's work, attitude or conduct.

HWB believes that under these circumstances it is important that volunteers are treated fairly and are accorded the same support as a member of staff would receive.

We will endeavour to solve any problems encountered, quickly and will work with volunteers to achieve a positive outcome. All complaints will be treated in confidence.

### **11.1 Volunteer making a complaint**

If volunteers feel they have been unfairly treated they should take follow the following steps.

#### **Stage 1 - Oral Complaint**

In the first instance volunteers should make a complaint to the VCO or their supervisor. The VCO or the supervisors will discuss the problem with volunteers and try resolve the situation to everyone's satisfaction.

If the complaint is about the VCO, or the volunteer's supervisor then the volunteer should refer the matter to a member of SMT.

#### **Stage 2 - In Writing**

If the matter cannot be resolved in stage 1, then the volunteer should make a written complaint and give this to the VCO, or a member of SMT. This should be done within one month of the original complaint.

HWB will reply to the complaint within two weeks of receiving it.

#### **Stage 3 - The Right to Appeal**

If the problem has not been resolved the volunteer can appeal to HWB's CEO. There should be a reply within two weeks of receipt and this decision is final.

### **11.2 Complaint against a volunteer**

Complaints against a volunteer can be raised by a staff member, another volunteer or members of the public. We aim to work with our volunteers to foster good relationships between staff and volunteers, as well as between individual volunteers. Therefore, it is our hope that any problems may be resolved as they occur or in the regular support sessions. If this is not possible then the following system would be used.

#### **Stage 1 - Oral Discussion**

The VCO or volunteer's supervisor will discuss any problems with the volunteer and work to find out if there are any underlying problems or causes. This may be enough to develop a resolution.

The VCO or volunteer's supervisor will look at the motivation, training and support needs of the volunteer.

## Stage 2 - Written Warning

If the discussions have not been able to resolve the matter then the supervisor will issue a written statement that will detail the nature of the complaint and steps taken to resolve the situation.

The volunteer will then be able to state their case to a member of SMT. The volunteer can be accompanied by the person of their choice for support if this would make the volunteer feel more confident.

At this point further objectives may be set with a timescale for these to be actioned.

If the organisation decides to ask the volunteer to leave the role then the volunteer will have the right to appeal.

## Stage 3 - Right to Appeal

If the volunteer has been asked to stop volunteering then they have the right to appeal to HWB's CEO.

The volunteer will be able to have the person of their choice with them at any appeal meeting.

A final decision should be given to the volunteer within two weeks of the appeal being received. This decision is final.

The purpose of the process is to come to an agreement on the appropriate action to take. This may include 'no action'. The named staff member will make a written record of the discussion and action decided and will share this with the volunteer. Actions could include:

- re-assigning the volunteer to a role, possibly better suited to their skills and motivations which allow an enthusiastic volunteer to continue with the organisation and for HWB to continue to benefit from their knowledge and enthusiasm,
- re-training in line with the volunteers learning needs,
- taking a break from the volunteering role,
- referring the volunteer to BVSC where the volunteer can find an opportunity that fits their needs better,
- or the volunteer retires or is released of their duties.

### 11.3 Asking a volunteer to stop volunteering

HWB has the right to retract an offer of volunteering. A volunteer should only be released from their duties where there is no alternative and always with dignity.

HWB can stipulate that a volunteer no longer represents HWB or participates in HWB activity. This action would be taken under the following circumstances:

- Theft
- Assault
- Acts of Violence

- Malicious damage
- Deliberate falsification of documents
- Harassment or bullying
- Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Safeguarding
- Any other behaviour, incident or breach of policy deemed to cause risk to individuals or the organisation.

Any such decision would be made in writing.

## **12. QUALITY AND REVIEW**

HWB strives to operate to the highest level of professionalism. HWB will work to ensure that our volunteering policies and procedures are appropriate to the needs of HWB and its volunteers as well as reflective of best practice in volunteer management.

Although this will be an ongoing process a formal yearly check-up will be undertaken to ensure that volunteering policies and procedures are current and informed by an up to date understanding of best practice in volunteer management.

## Appendix 1 - Our Values

Values		What they mean to HWB
1	We are people-centred	<p>We take time to listen in order to really understand and develop new insight from another's view or experience, rather than listen for our chance to speak.</p> <p>If helping someone is within our competence we help them, rather than handing them over to another member of the team.</p> <p>We don't wait to be asked. If we see something needs doing, we do it, and we see it through.</p>
2	We are publicly-led	<p>We are taking continuous action to become a centre of excellence for patient, public, service user and carer involvement. Diversity of Patient, Public, Service user and Carer input and activity, is the golden thread running through our work from governance to focus, to delivery, to dissemination of our impact.</p>
3	We are evidence-based	<p>We use our Impact System to underpin and guide decisions relating to our investigative work.</p> <p>We wait until we have appropriate, relevant, credible evidence before we take decisions which guide our actions.</p>
4	We are impact-focussed	<p>We make decisions based on the strategic goals and mission of HWB rather than on intermediary targets. i.e., we take a 'bigger picture' systems approach to decision making based on contribution of our decision to the end goal.</p>
5	We are passionate about Patient and Public Involvement as a means of improving service and reducing inequality	<p>We can enthusiastically explain, with detailed, evidence based examples, why Patient and Public Involvement is a vital lever to service improvement and the difference it can and is making, and HWB's role and contribution.</p> <p>We understand the policy environment for Patient and Public Involvement in health and social care and where HWB fits.</p>
6	We are resolute	<p>We recognise the enormity of our goal and how easy it is to be distracted from it or to minimise it to make it easier to achieve, and we support each other to stick to the plan.</p>