

Healthwatch North Tyneside policies and procedures

Volunteer Policy

October 2022

1. Introduction

Volunteers are people who give freely of their time, skills and enthusiasm, without payment, in order to contribute to the community. Healthwatch North Tyneside values volunteers as a key part of our organisation and we recognise the different but equally valuable contributions volunteers make in complementing the work of paid staff.

We will work to fairly recruit, select, train, support and protect our volunteers. We will work to achieve quality standards in volunteering and support best practice in all of our volunteering activities. We will involve volunteers in the reviewing of our strategies and priorities and in our policies and procedures where appropriate.

We commit to providing a dedicated staff member and board member lead to support volunteers, ensure policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and monitor the diversity of volunteers so we can be reflective of the community.

We will maintain a list of 'active volunteers'. They will:

- take forward a number of projects aimed at examining aspects of health and social care in North Tyneside and make proposals to improve services.
- be involved in promoting Healthwatch North Tyneside, gathering feedback and giving information about local health and social care services.
- and/or be involved in administration/office duties.

This policy is intended to apply to all 'active volunteers'. It does not create any form of contract between Healthwatch North Tyneside volunteers and the organisation, Healthwatch North Tyneside.

2. Volunteer Roles

Volunteer role profiles will define what tasks volunteers will have the opportunity to participate in, alongside the skills, values, experience and availability required to carry out each role. All role profiles will be reviewed annually and agreed by the Board to ensure that they accurately reflect the role of the volunteers, based on feedback from the volunteers and the needs of the organisation. All reasonable efforts will be taken to adapt roles to take into account the needs, abilities and interests of individual volunteers. Our current volunteering roles are listed below. For role profiles see Annex 1.

- Research and engagement volunteer
- Administration and office volunteer

3. Recruitment and Selection

All volunteering roles with Healthwatch North Tyneside will be advertised widely within North Tyneside. We want to invite interest from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities, reflecting the diversity of the local community. The recruitment and selection procedure is transparent, fair, accessible and in line with our Equality and Diversity policy. Volunteers will be selected against a role profile and specification of skills and experience relevant to their proposed role. The following approach will be taken:

- a. Volunteers will complete an application form so we can assess whether they meet the skills expected. This will be reviewed by two members of the Healthwatch team to assess whether we should meet the applicant.
- b. An informal interview with the applicant will be undertaken by two members of the Healthwatch team. This will allow both parties to gain a clear understanding of each other and assess the skills and experience that the volunteer can bring, together with the support they will need to contribute to the work of Healthwatch North Tyneside.
- c. Feedback will be available to all applicants.
- d. For successful applications, two independent references will be requested.
- e. An enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check will be undertaken where appropriate to the role. These checks are carried out for the following reasons:
 - To take account of Healthwatch North Tyneside's responsibility to the public.
 - To give assurance to Healthwatch North Tyneside service users.
 - To reassure the organisation's and service providers we work with.
- f. Volunteers will complete a volunteer agreement - see section 8.

4. Training, Support and Leaving

All volunteers will be allocated a designated key link person within the staff team to ensure they are trained and regularly supported in their volunteering experience.

Comprehensive induction training will be given to all successful applicants, which will include an introduction to the staff team, an explanation of the purpose of Healthwatch North Tyneside, and our values and vision. Training will also be arranged covering the areas below and reviewed in line with our organisation's training policy:

- Health and Safety
- Equality, Diversity and Cultural Awareness
- Safeguarding
- Dementia Friends
- Other training relevant to their role.

All volunteers are expected to comply with Healthwatch North Tyneside policies and procedures and will be required to sign up to the Healthwatch North Tyneside confidentiality agreement as part of agreeing to become a volunteer.

We will invest in our volunteers to support their personal development and will offer:

- One-to-one meetings to discuss: how things are going, training requirements, any concerns or difficulties which volunteers may encounter, mutually agree goals for development and expectations/performance and on-going support, at a minimum of every six months.
- An annual review to discuss activities, progress over the year and talk about future opportunities and agree actions.
- Quarterly volunteer meetings - to provide updates on current and future activities, peer support between volunteers, discuss issues and agree actions.
- Be involved in developing project activities and research approaches including considering future priorities.
- Open invite to Board meetings.
- Annual celebration event - to recognise and thank volunteers for their contribution and recognise the impact we have made.

Upon request volunteers who have committed 30 hours of time to Healthwatch North Tyneside will be given a reference.

At any time, a volunteer can choose to leave the organisation without giving notice. Similarly, Healthwatch North Tyneside can end the volunteer role at their discretion, without giving notice. On leaving the organisation all volunteers will be given the opportunity to give feedback on their experience of volunteering with Healthwatch North Tyneside to the Director or link Board member.

5. Safeguarding

We value and encourage the involvement of people who may be vulnerable, both in our own work and in the work of other organisations. Through our Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and Children Policies, we are committed to promoting the wellbeing of adults and children at risk, and protecting their health, safety and general welfare while in the company or care of Healthwatch North Tyneside staff or volunteers. All volunteers will be trained to recognise safeguarding issues and will be expected to follow our policies and procedures.

6. Expenses

We will reimburse reasonable expenses incurred whilst a volunteer is participating in Healthwatch North Tyneside activities. We will discuss expenses with volunteers as part of the induction as well as part of the planning for each volunteering activity. The following expenses can be claimed:

- Mileage will be paid at current HMRC rates. We will pay mileage or public transport for journeys within Tyne and Wear but if longer distance journeys are undertaken we will normally pay the standard class rail and bus fares. We will only normally cover travel costs up to 15 miles per day unless agreed by the Director.
- Train fares are normally booked through Healthwatch North Tyneside who will find the best fare available. Healthwatch North Tyneside will seek agreement of the

person travelling if bookings are restricted to particular trains. Healthwatch North Tyneside expects people to take advantage of travel cards if applicable.

- Bus and Metro fares when travel passes are not available.
- Taxi - by prior arrangement only.
- Overnight hotels and evening meals, or 'Gifts' to friends who have you as a guest (limit £10).

Volunteers will complete an expenses claim form and other than in exceptional circumstances, receipts must be submitted in respect of all claims for reimbursement. We will normally pay expenses though BACs transfer into a volunteer's nominated bank account within 10 days of a claim being submitted. Expenses should be claimed within two months of being incurred.

In exceptional circumstances, up to £10 can be released to a volunteer in advance of an expenditure occurring for travel and subsistence costs if there is a financial barrier to their involvement. Receipts must be submitted within 10 days of the expenditure occurring, and any balance re-paid.

7. Equality and Diversity

Healthwatch North Tyneside strives to ensure that we are compliant with our Equality and Diversity Policy and relevant legislation, in order to ensure that no one is disadvantaged by the way Healthwatch North Tyneside discharges its duties.

All Healthwatch North Tyneside volunteers are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect in accordance with the Healthwatch North Tyneside Equality and Diversity Policy.

Healthwatch North Tyneside is committed to ensuring that:

- We recruit, develop and support a diverse volunteering base that reflects the diversity of the people of North Tyneside and will monitor and evaluate this as ongoing best practice.
- All volunteers are treated with respect and without discrimination and with sensitivity towards the nine protected characteristics as outlined in the 2010 Equality Act.
- Any unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation are challenged and eliminated when encountered.
- All volunteers can join a trade union.
- All volunteers have the right to complain and will have knowledge of the Healthwatch North Tyneside complaints procedure.
- Healthwatch North Tyneside values people's individuality and respects differences.

8. Volunteer Agreements

We recognise volunteering as a two-way process with benefits to both parties and that the expectations of both parties should be given fair consideration. So that both parties are clear about expectations, we will enter into a volunteer agreement with each volunteer- see Annex 2.

9. Insurance

All volunteers are covered by the organisation's insurance policy whilst they are undertaking voluntary activity for or on behalf of Healthwatch North Tyneside. Volunteers are covered by the same level of insurance as the paid staff for the role they undertake.

Volunteers who use their own car for Healthwatch North Tyneside activity should be aware that it is their responsibility to ensure they are adequately insured for the tasks they partake in and complete the information required in Annex 3. Healthwatch North Tyneside may consider covering the cost of any additional premium incurred due to volunteering.

10. Health and Safety

Healthwatch North Tyneside is committed to protecting the safety of staff, volunteers and the general public in its activities and daily business. The Health and Safety at Work Act requires each employee to "take reasonable care for the health and safety of himself (or herself) and of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions" and cooperate with management to carry out their responsibilities under the Act.

Healthwatch North Tyneside, therefore, asks its volunteers to:

- Be aware of the Healthwatch North Tyneside Health and Safety policy and implement it as far as possible. This will be covered during the induction training. A copy will be given to each volunteer, who will be asked to sign to confirm that they understand the policy.
- To undertake Health and Safety training in line with our policies.
- Take reasonable care to avoid injury to themselves or to others in their volunteering activities.
- Report and record all incidents or near misses that have led, or may lead, to injury and complete a risk assessment at any event they may be attending.
- Be aware of where the fire assembly point is during each activity undertaken.

Healthwatch North Tyneside commit to undertaking regular risk assessments in line with Health and Safety Executive standards and as outlined in Healthwatch North Tyneside Health and Safety Policy.

11. Problem resolution

Wherever possible, problems will be resolved through informal means and volunteers are encouraged to raise any concerns they may have with their named key link person or the Healthwatch North Tyneside Director. Volunteers should also use support and supervision sessions to discuss any concerns they may have and possible solutions.

The procedure set out below should only be used as a last resort. Further information on Healthwatch North Tyneside Grievance policy and procedure and other relevant policies, such as the Anti-bullying and Harassment policy, can be found on the Healthwatch North

Tyneside website. Although formal, it provides a fair and balanced framework to deal with concerns if this has not already been resolved. It should be noted that at each stage of the procedure, discussions should be encouraged in order to resolve the matter informally at any point.

1. The volunteer should approach the named key person with their complaint in writing. If the complaint is against the named key person, then the volunteer should approach the Healthwatch North Tyneside Director.
2. If the complaint is not resolved at this stage, a further meeting should be arranged with the lead Healthwatch North Tyneside board member.
3. If no solution is reached within a period of 21 days, then either party has the right to take the complaint to a meeting held with the Healthwatch North Tyneside Chair.
4. The decision made by the Healthwatch North Tyneside Chair shall be final and binding. All parties concerned shall be informed of the decision.
5. The volunteer has the right to be accompanied at each stage of the process by a person of their choice.
6. The proceedings will be recorded at each stage. All information discussed will be kept confidential.

It is our aim to ensure high standards of conduct and performance in all aspects of our work. We recognise that complaints can be made against volunteers and acknowledge that this can be a sensitive process. Respect will be shown for the feelings of both parties.

Where problems around a volunteer's activity or conduct are of a serious nature, the following procedure will be followed:

1. An official complaint will be dealt with by a named key person who will interview both parties, record the facts and reach a decision.
2. Should a complaint be unfounded, the named key person will inform both parties of the decision and provide the volunteer with the necessary support.
3. Where a complaint against the volunteer is upheld, the named key person will discuss possible solutions with the volunteer. This may include further training and support or the reassignment of the volunteer to a new role.
4. Where a complaint is upheld and is of a serious nature, the volunteer will be asked to leave Healthwatch North Tyneside immediately. Examples may include sexual offences, physical assault, dishonesty, theft, racist activity, a serious breach of Healthwatch North Tyneside policies and procedures and falsification of records. This list is not exhaustive.
5. Where appropriate, the volunteer will be given information about other organisations that could offer support or alternative volunteering opportunities.

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Volunteer Role Description

	Healthwatch Research and Engagement Volunteer
Purpose of the role: 	To help improve local health and social care services by: • Promoting and raising awareness of Healthwatch North Tyneside activities and purpose. • Gathering feedback on people's experience of health and social care. • Feeding back observations, experiences, views and issues to the staff team.
What you might be doing: 	• Promoting Healthwatch North Tyneside at community venues and different events and reporting back to the staff team. • Going into services to observe and listen to people's views and experiences. • Talking to different groups of people within the community to find out about the services that they use. • Providing information on local services and, where appropriate signposting to these organisations. • Informing people about how they can make a complaint/feedback about a service or individual and who will help them to do this. • Attending briefings and volunteer meetings. • Working with the team to identify what's working and what needs improving. • Taking notes. • Contributing to reports.
What's in it for you 	• You will receive a full induction to give you the necessary knowledge and skills to perform your volunteer role. This will include training in equality and diversity, health and safety, dementia and safeguarding. • We will provide you with a reference after 30 hours of volunteering with us, together with certificates for any training you do with us. • Having new experiences and meeting new people. • The satisfaction of knowing that you are giving back to your community. • Learning new things and having fun. • Developing your confidence. • Feeling valued and being part of a team. • Enhancing your curriculum vitae (CV).

Where:	At a variety of venues and events across North Tyneside.
When:	Flexible. Volunteering with Healthwatch will fit around your other commitments.
Time commitment:	We normally expect volunteers to contribute about 4 hours a month, but some periods are busier depending on the activities you get involved in.
You will need to be:	- Confident talking with people. - Good at listening to people. - Organised. - Able to write basic notes. - Professional and have a commitment to confidentiality, safeguarding and Healthwatch North Tyneside values. - Able to work as part of a team. - Willing to participate in one-to-one and group support sessions.
Knowledge needed:	- No previous knowledge is needed though you must be committed to the induction and ongoing training. - Knowledge of health and social care services is an advantage.
Attitudes and values:	- Commitment and enthusiasm. - Interest in helping people to have their voices heard. - Be non-judgmental, respectful, polite and sensitive when speaking and listening to people. - Be committed to equal opportunities.
Additional information:	- You need to agree to follow the Healthwatch North Tyneside Policies and Procedures. - The volunteer role is dependent on a satisfactory DBS check. This does not mean that having a criminal record will automatically prevent you from volunteering with us.

Date Agreed: December 2020

Last updated: October 2022

Volunteer Role Description

	Administration and Office Volunteer
Purpose of the role:	- To support Healthwatch North Tyneside in delivering the operational plan. - To support Healthwatch North Tyneside in the production of high-quality Healthwatch reports.
What you might be doing:	- Inputting data collected by staff and volunteers. - Checking reports for grammar, spelling and understanding. - General office admin tasks.
Where:	Healthwatch office, The Spirit of North Tyneside Wing, 16 The Forum, Wallsend, NE28 8JR.
When:	Flexible opportunities depending upon volunteer availability and the needs of the team.
What you need to be able to do:	- Work by yourself and as part of a team. - Have basic computer skills. - Be organised and have the ability to meet deadlines. - Have the ability to act professionally and maintain confidentiality.
Experience and knowledge:	All volunteers will have a full induction to give them the necessary skills and knowledge to fulfil certain aspects of this role e.g. Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity.
Attitudes and Values:	- Be non-judgemental, respectful, polite and sensitive when speaking to people. - Committed to equal opportunities.
What's in it for you	- You will receive induction training and regular support sessions to help you develop the skills you will need to perform your role. - We will provide you with a reference after 30 hours of volunteering with us, together with certificates for any training you do with us. - Having new experiences and meeting new people.

	•The satisfaction of knowing that you are helping your community. •Learning new things and having fun. •Developing your confidence. •Feeling valued and being part of a team. •Enhancing your curriculum vitae (CV).
Additional Information	• Volunteers must agree to follow the Healthwatch North Tyneside Code of Conduct.

Date Agreed: December 2020

Last updated: October 2022

Volunteer Agreement

At Healthwatch North Tyneside, we appreciate our volunteers giving their time and commitment to volunteer with us. We want to make your volunteer experience as enjoyable and rewarding as possible. This agreement shows what you can expect from us and what we expect from you in return.

We will:

- Respect your skills, dignity and wishes.
- Provide you with a named contact person, their contact details and availability.
- Provide you with meaningful and appropriate volunteering opportunities.
- Provide you with an induction and training necessary to carry out your role.
- Provide you with the information and resources needed to undertake your volunteering.
- Give you continuing support and feedback.
- Keep you regularly updated on developments at Healthwatch North Tyneside.
- Give you the opportunity to meet with other volunteers and the Healthwatch North Tyneside team to share your experiences and influence our work.
- Consult you about any changes which would affect your volunteering work with us.
- Provide travel and other 'out of pocket' expenses upon production of a receipt.
- Provide you with access to relevant Healthwatch North Tyneside policies and procedures.
- Provide insurance cover for you whilst undertaking Healthwatch activities with us.
- Where appropriate, carry out risk assessments to ensure your safety.
- Try to resolve fairly any problems, grievances or difficulties you may have whilst you are a volunteer with us.

As a volunteer, we expect that you will:

- Treat the public, other volunteers, Healthwatch staff and our partner organisations with dignity and respect at all times.
- Promote the interests of Healthwatch North Tyneside in your conduct.
- Let your insurers know if your volunteering work with Healthwatch North Tyneside involves you using your own car.
- Attend introductory training and further training as needed.
- Commit enough time to deliver the role effectively.
- Attend volunteer meetings and support sessions.

- Let us know of any concerns or worries you may have.
- Keep a record of your expenses and submit them within two months of them being incurred.
- Inform Healthwatch North Tyneside if you are unable to fulfil any commitments. If you do not respond to contact from us over a six-week period, we will consider your volunteering relationship to have lapsed.
- Keep a record of your volunteering activities and report the information you have gathered.
- Deliver activities for Healthwatch North Tyneside in line with your role profile and agreed approaches.
- Read, understand and follow Healthwatch North Tyneside's Health and Safety and confidentiality policies and comply with Healthwatch North Tyneside policies and procedures at all times. **By signing this agreement, you confirm that you have read and understood these policies before carrying out any volunteering activities for Healthwatch North Tyneside.**
- Where needed for your role, agree to a check being carried out with the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS).
- Let us know if your contact details change.
- Understand and follow the confidentiality statement below:

During the course of your activities, you may have access to information of a confidential nature. This could relate to members of the public, the Healthwatch Board, Staff or volunteers or one of our partner organisations.

When someone shares any confidential information with Healthwatch North Tyneside, they need to know that we will not pass this on to anyone outside our organisation without their permission unless there is a risk of harm to themselves or others. All staff and volunteers will follow our confidentiality policy at all times.

Agreement:

This agreement is an expression of expectations and is not intended to be a legally binding contract. As such it may be cancelled at any time.

.....
Signed, name and date - The volunteer

.....
Signed, name and date - for Healthwatch North Tyneside

Vehicle agreement form

When using a private motor vehicle on Healthwatch North Tyneside activities

Please read carefully before signing.

Personal details	
Full name	
Role	

Agreement

- I have read, understand and agree to abide by the requirements below. I am aware that it is my responsibility to inform Healthwatch North Tyneside if I suffer from any medical condition which may impair my ability to drive safely.
- I am responsible for immediately informing my key link person of any driving convictions (including penalty points) or period of disqualification.

Signed _____

Name _____ Date _____

Requirements

1. It is your responsibility to ensure that the insurance on your vehicle covers voluntary work with Healthwatch and that mileage is claimed. If you use your own private vehicles for the purposes of Healthwatch, you are responsible for ensuring the vehicle has a valid MOT certificate, is properly maintained and is roadworthy.
2. You are required to comply fully with the law, which prohibits the use of hand-held mobile phones, eating and drinking while driving.
3. In the event of any accident, Health Watch North Tyneside must be informed, as soon as reasonably practicable. If you are involved in an accident or incident whilst driving for Healthwatch purposes, you should deal with any claims that arise from this directly with your own insurer.