

Code of Conduct Healthwatch Doncaster CIC Volunteers

Purpose

Healthwatch Doncaster CIC (HWD CIC) values its reputation as an open, fair and independent organisation operating as a social enterprise with a high standard of integrity and commitment to its aims and objectives. This reputation is dependent on the conduct of its Directors, Board members, staff and volunteers (herein after collectively called representatives) as they carry out their agreed duties and responsibilities.

Scope

This code of conduct applies to all voluntary representatives of Healthwatch Doncaster CIC. Volunteers (the collective phrase for members, volunteers, ambassadors representing HWD CIC) are required to sign the Code of Conduct at Appendix B. There is a separate policy for Board Directors.

Overview

The Healthwatch Doncaster CIC (HWD CIC) Volunteers Code of Conduct describes the behaviour, attitude and principles expected of Volunteers at Healthwatch Doncaster CIC.

This Code of Conduct forms part of the HWD CIC Volunteers Agreement between Healthwatch Doncaster CIC and each of its Volunteers.

HWD CIC Volunteers should aim to abide by this Code of Conduct at all times, and understand that breaches of this code will be taken seriously.

This code explains what it means in five sections:

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| 1. Principles: | The Nolan Principles of Public Life |
| 2. General Standards: | Inclusivity, diversity, courtesy and respect
Dealing with difficult people
Reliability and appropriateness |
| 3. Organisational Policies: | Core Policies, other policies and financial matters including training and development |
| 4. Relationships: | Healthwatch Doncaster CIC staff, HWD CIC Volunteers, HWD service users and ex-service users, the press, the media and the internet |
| 5. Declaration of Interests: | Outline of interests that that need to be declared |

1.0 Principles

Volunteers at Healthwatch Doncaster CIC should uphold the Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life that were developed in 1995 by the Committee for Standards in Public Life. These Nolan Principles apply to those people who are in Public Life, (including MPs, Councillors etc) and to those bodies carrying out Public Functions including statutory functions (functions required by statute or law).

Local Healthwatch organisations are 'bodies carrying out Public Functions' as they have statutory functions that their staff and volunteers need to carry out as described in the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

The Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life are:

- Selflessness** To act solely in terms of the public interest. Not to do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or friends.
- Integrity** Not to place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties/role.
- Objectivity** In carrying out public business, they should make choices, of them in the performance of their official duties/role.
- Accountability** To be accountable for the decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office/role.
- Openness** To be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions they take. They should give reasons for all their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
- Honesty** Have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties/role and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
- Leadership** To promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

2.0 General Standards

Volunteers at Healthwatch Doncaster CIC should aim to meet these standards of behaviour in carrying out their volunteer role.

Inclusivity, Diversity, Courtesy and Respect:

- Volunteers should treat everyone equally and with courtesy and respect at all times, and recognise that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity.
- Volunteers should recognise, value and support inclusivity and diversity in carrying out their volunteer role.
- Behaviour which discriminates against or demeans others is not acceptable in any circumstances.

- Discrimination against or demeaning others because of or on the grounds of a protected characteristic is now against the Law.

Dealing with Difficult People:

- From time to time Volunteers may have to deal with difficult people. In such circumstances they should maintain high standards of professionalism and fairness.
- Rudeness, offensiveness, threatening violent or abusive behaviour is not acceptable in any circumstance. If you are subject to unacceptable behaviour, please advise your supervisor.

Reliability and Appropriateness:

- Volunteers should aim to be reliable, punctual and able to demonstrate the Nolan Principles of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership as outlined above.
- Volunteers are expected to dress appropriately, safely and not in a way that could be taken to show disrespect for those they come into contact with while carrying out their role.
- Misuse of alcohol, drugs or any such substance whilst volunteers are carrying out their role will be taken seriously, (volunteers who are under the influence of drink, drugs and/or dangerous substances while carrying out their role could have impaired judgement and put their colleagues and members of the public at risk.)

3. Organisational Policies

Volunteers should follow Healthwatch Doncaster CIC policies and procedures at all times and ensure that their conduct does not endanger the confidentiality, health or safety of themselves, other volunteers, staff, visitors, service users and members of the public. The full suite of policies and procedures can be found in the [Healthwatch Doncaster CIC Company Handbook](#)

Financial Matters:

- Volunteers should ensure that current financial policies and procedures relating to their volunteer role are followed at all times.
- Volunteers should take reasonable measures to protect Healthwatch Doncaster's property and assets from theft, damage waste or misuse.
- Volunteers should note that they are only able to be reimbursed for agreed expenses ([out of pocket costs incurred whilst undertaking activities on behalf of Healthwatch Doncaster](#)).

Training and Development

- Volunteers are required to undertake the necessary training and development to carry out their role.
- Attendance at any statutory training will be a requirement of the volunteer, for example Adult Safeguarding
- From time to time HWD CIC may invite volunteers to attend training or information sessions on a given subject which may assist with volunteers understanding of the health and social care issues facing residents of Doncaster.

4. Relationships

Volunteers should be sensitive to how they conduct themselves when with other volunteers, paid staff or people using Healthwatch Doncaster services. Volunteers should also be aware of inappropriate contact with the media, and the risks of making statements about Healthwatch Doncaster in social media.

Relationships with Healthwatch Doncaster staff and volunteer team:

- Volunteers should be sensitive to individual personal boundaries
- They should maintain appropriate levels of confidentiality regarding existing and past volunteers and staff
- Volunteers should handle any conflict sensitively:
 - do not raise voices
 - challenge inappropriate or offensive behaviour
 - be open to constructive criticism
 - give feedback, including negative feedback, in a positive way
 - use existing formal procedures for any serious concerns relating to their volunteering relationship with Healthwatch Doncaster
- Volunteers should support an environment of mutual trust and not show any favouritism or preferential treatment

Relationships with Healthwatch Doncaster CIC service users and ex service users:

- Volunteers must never allow any personal relationships to conflict with their volunteer role, or with the best interests of a service user or ex-service user of Healthwatch Doncaster, many of whom are vulnerable.
- They must never allow themselves to be compromised by, or to take advantage of their relationship with a service user.
- Any volunteer who feels compromised in the course of their dealings with a service user or ex-service user must inform their supervisor without delay.
- Examples of relationships with service user or ex-service users that should be avoided are:

- sexual relationships between a volunteer and a service user
- personal loans to, or borrowing money from a service user
- receiving money without being authorised to do so
- asking the service user to carry out paid or unpaid private work or services
- purchasing from, or selling to the service user
- making gifts to, or accepting gifts from individuals
- conducting private correspondence, or giving out their home addresses or personal contact details.

Relationships with the Press, Media and Internet:

In relation to Healthwatch Doncaster volunteers :

- must not contact the press by letter, email, or posting information on media websites, blogs, Facebook or Twitter unless they have been specifically authorised to do so.
- must not make any comments or statements to the media or press unless they have been specifically authorised to do so. All requests of this nature must be referred to The Chief Operating Officer.
- should be aware that they remain accountable for their comments, opinion, thoughts and feelings communicated over the internet.
- must recognise that personal blogs, and Facebook and Twitter accounts are in the public domain and be careful not post comments, statements or information about Healthwatch Doncaster.

5. Declarations of Interest

Volunteers should make a written disclosure to Healthwatch Doncaster indicating any connections which they have with external organisations, contractors/suppliers and any employment. Such interests should be declared as and when they arise during the course of their volunteering with the organisation. Volunteers are responsible for updating the register of interests when changes occur.

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT AND CODE OF CONDUCT

Purpose

- Healthwatch Doncaster CIC (HWD CIC) values its reputation as an open, fair and independent organisation operating as a social enterprise with a high standard of integrity and commitment to its aims and objectives. This reputation is dependent on the conduct of its Directors, Board Members, staff and volunteers as they carry out their agreed duties and responsibilities.
- HWD CIC appreciates its volunteers giving their time and commitment to the organisation and wishes to make the volunteering experience as enjoyable and rewarding as possible.
- This agreement states what you can expect from us and what we expect from you in return.

Healthwatch Doncaster will do its best to:

- Respect your skills, dignity and wishes
- Provide access to a named person who will meet you regularly to discuss your volunteering activities, give support, share success, provide feedback and discuss problems.
- Provide a comprehensive induction programme to ensure that you feel valued and part of the team
- Provide a clear introduction to the organisation, its staff, policies and procedures
- Provide you with any training necessary to carry out your volunteer role
- Provide travel expenses to and from your volunteering opportunity upon production of receipts
- Apply the HWD CIC Equality and Diversity Policy in all aspects of work we carry out
- Carry out risk assessments of any placement to ensure your safety
- Try and resolve fairly any problems, grievances and difficulties you have whilst you are a volunteer with us

1.0 What Healthwatch Doncaster CIC can expect from you:

- To help Healthwatch Doncaster CIC fulfil its role in influencing change and improvement in health and social care services
- To treat others with dignity and respect
- To perform your volunteer role to the best of your ability
- To follow the agreed policies and procedures including equality and diversity, health and safety, safeguarding, confidentiality, conduct and behaviour
- To undertake any training specific to the volunteer role(s)
- To undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service check (of which the costs will be covered by Healthwatch Doncaster CIC) if appropriate to the volunteer role you are undertaking.
- To advise the Volunteer co-ordinator of any changes in circumstances which may impact on your volunteer role.

Healthwatch Doncaster CIC and I agree to do our best to meet the expectations stated in this HWD Volunteer Agreement and to follow the principles and intentions stated above. I acknowledge the content of this statement and have read the Code of Conduct.

.....
Signature of volunteer

Date

.....
Signature of Healthwatch Doncaster representative

Date

This Volunteer Agreement describes the arrangement between Healthwatch Doncaster and you. This agreement is in honour only and is not intended to be a legally binding contract of employment. Healthwatch Doncaster CIC wishes to assure you of our appreciation of you volunteering with us and will do the best we can to make your volunteer experience with us enjoyable and rewarding.