



# **Volunteering Information**

## **What is Healthwatch?**

Healthwatch is a new independent organisation, set up in April 2013 as part of the Government's reforms to health and social care. Healthwatch is here to give people a stronger voice to influence and challenge decisions about health and social care, to help improve services for all of us.

Healthwatch operates on two levels: at a national level through Healthwatch England and through a network of 152 local organisations like Healthwatch Bradford and District.

Healthwatch Bradford and District gives people a powerful voice to have their say on health and social care throughout our district, and helps people get the best from their local services:

- Give people the information they need to make choices and get the most from local services;
- Listen to people's views about their experiences, and make sure these views are heard by those who run, plan, and regulate services;
- Encourage people to speak out about health and social care, especially those whose voices might not have been heard before;
- Get local people involved in how health and social care services are planned and provided, leading to improvements for all communities;
- Make recommendations which influence the way services are designed and delivered at both a local and national level.

You can find out more about our work at [www.healthwatchbradford.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchbradford.co.uk)

## **How is Healthwatch Bradford and District run?**

The local council is responsible for setting up Healthwatch in its area; Bradford Metropolitan District Council awarded the contract to Keighley and Ilkley Voluntary and Community Action (KIVCA) with a separate contract for Complaints Advocacy being delivered by Bradford & Airedale Mental Health Advocacy Group (BAMHAG) and Choice Advocacy.

Healthwatch Bradford and District has a staff team of seven people, who are based at Central Hall in Keighley but travel widely across the district. The strategic direction of our work is set by the Healthwatch Bradford and District Board which represents service users, carers, and communities from across our diverse district, and ensures that Healthwatch is accountable to the public.

## **Why does Healthwatch need volunteers?**

Healthwatch will make a bigger difference to local health and social care services if people talk to us, work with us, and take part.

Healthwatch Bradford and District is a small organisation with a big job to do and our volunteers play a vital role. Volunteers bring valuable skills and experience to the Healthwatch team, and support us in key areas of work.

## **How to become a volunteer**

Depending on the role you are interested in, we are likely to suggest that you first become a “**Healthwatcher**”. Our network of Healthwatchers act as our eyes and ears in the community, telling us their experiences of using health and social care services in the Bradford District. As a Healthwatcher you can feedback to us what’s going on in services in your local area, and help us gather views in order to improve those services.

If you enjoy the role of Healthwatching and feel like getting more seriously involved in the work of Healthwatch, then we have a range of roles available (detailed on the next pages). We can have a conversation with you and look at what skills, experiences and knowledge you have, then we will look at the kinds of volunteer roles which might suit you. We then ask you to complete an application form including references (a sample is at the back of this booklet). We will then check your references and if we are all happy then you will become a formal Healthwatch volunteer.



## **Benefits of volunteering for Healthwatch**

- Become more involved with your community
- Help to make local health and social care services better
- Meet new people and make friends
- Become part of a team
- Enhance career prospects
- Gain skills and experience
- Feel needed and valued
- Increase self-esteem and self-confidence

## **What we are looking for in a volunteer**

- Some knowledge and experience of health and social care services
- Ability to be reliable and punctual
- Able and willing to seek and receive support and guidance
- Willing to undertake training
- Able to attend regular volunteer briefings
- An interest in and commitment to supporting the work of Healthwatch Bradford and District



## **Our Volunteer Offer**

We are committed to offering a good quality volunteering experience.

We will offer a variety of volunteering opportunities that may require different time commitments. Opportunities will be determined by Healthwatch Bradford and District's current projects and priorities.

### **Well structured**

- Volunteers will have a written description of their role setting out what the volunteer needs to be able to do.
- Volunteers will be matched to the role that is right for them.
- Volunteers will be provided with information about Healthwatch Bradford and District and what is expected of them.

### **Inclusive**

We aim to recruit volunteers from all communities and with varied life experiences; we will:

- Provide flexible opportunities that consider individuals' diverse needs.
- Work with people to overcome barriers they may face to getting involved.

### **Rewarding**

We aim to make volunteering an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

- Rewards come from the satisfaction of making a genuine difference to peoples' lives and helping them have a genuine voice.
- We believe volunteers can also benefit from taking advantage of learning and development opportunities.
- We try to create a friendly welcoming environment where volunteers have opportunities to work with staff and other volunteers as part of a team.

### **Well Supported**

We will offer support that is appropriate to the volunteer role and the needs of the individual person:

- All volunteers have a named member of staff as their point of contact. The role of the named worker is to offer guidance, recommend learning opportunities assist volunteers in developing their skills and ensure their contribution is helping deliver Healthwatch Bradford and District priorities.
- Active volunteers will meet periodically with their named worker for support. Individual volunteers may receive different levels of support and supervision depending on their needs.

## Informed

We will keep volunteers informed of what is going on at Healthwatch.

- We will seek feedback from volunteers about their experience.
- We will provide regular feedback as part of our support identifying what volunteers are doing well and also where they may be able to improve their contribution. Where a volunteer is working in a particular setting we may also seek feedback from others on how the volunteer is doing. We will do this to help us improve how we support volunteers.

## Recognised

We value volunteers and will recognise the contributions they make and skills they develop; we will provide:

- Certificates for attending training run by Healthwatch Bradford and District.
- A certificate of volunteering at the end of their time volunteering with us detailing: their voluntary work, achievements and the number of hours they have volunteered with us.
- References for volunteers, providing they have volunteered with us for 25 hours or more.

## Reimbursed

We will ensure volunteers are not out of pocket for any work that has been agreed with them by their named worker and will reimburse expenses incurred in the course of volunteering, providing these have been agreed in advance.

## Opportunities for Learning and Personal Development

We will ensure all volunteers have an induction to help them understand and be able to carry out their role.

- We will aim to provide volunteers with on-going development opportunities (e.g. shadowing another volunteer, attending meetings or training courses).
- Development opportunities will be proportionate to a volunteer's role and commitment within Healthwatch Bradford and District.

## Opportunities for Further Development

Volunteering for Healthwatch Bradford and District will contribute to building skills and confidence, and contribute to pathways into employment where appropriate.

- We will help volunteers to progress to other volunteer roles within Healthwatch Bradford and District and partner organisations.

## Examples of volunteer roles

### ● Meeting representative

These roles involve attending specific meetings as a representative of Healthwatch, to feedback about the meetings to the Healthwatch team and ensure Healthwatch is involved in important decisions.

You will need to prepare for meetings by reading materials in advance, and provide notes after the meeting to keep the staff team informed. You will need good organising skills, confidence to speak up in meetings, and the ability to understand sometimes complex information in order to provide clear feedback to the Healthwatch team.

### ● Outreach volunteer

You will be in the frontline for Healthwatch, promoting and spreading the word about Healthwatch to people in your community and gathering views about their experiences of using Health and Social Care services. This role will suit a good organiser and people person.

You might represent Healthwatch at community events, promoting our work and encouraging people to share their views. You could organise a monthly drop-in session at a community venue, where people can share their views and concerns about their health and social care services.

You will be given training and support; it is also helpful if you have some knowledge of health and social care services, though this isn't essential.

### ● Publicity distribution

If you like being busy and out and about around the district, this could be right up your street. You will distribute our leaflets, posters and information to places like GP surgeries or pharmacies in your local area, or further afield if you're able. You can use your own vehicle, or if you prefer use public transport or go by foot. You will need to be organised and able to work with Healthwatch staff to plan distribution.

### ● Digital communications assistant

If you have skills and an interest in IT and digital media, this could be an exciting way to expand your abilities with the guidance of a communications professional. You will be helping with tasks such as updating the website, and posting on Twitter and Facebook with content provided by the Communications Manager. You will also help develop ideas for promoting Healthwatch Bradford through the use of digital media.

### ● Targeted communications assistant

Would you like to develop communication skills and use your knowledge of specific communities or audiences? We need volunteers to help us make sure that everyone in Bradford district hears about Healthwatch and about what Healthwatch can do for them. So we need volunteers who, for example, speak community languages, or have links to traveller communities, or use sign language. Your knowledge will help us to reach these sections of our community more effectively.

### ● Administration assistant

If you are well organised, attentive to detail and have some basic administration and IT knowledge, this could be an opportunity to expand your skills. The role will involve things like assisting the Healthwatch Administrator with preparation for events or meetings. More office-based tasks may include helping with data inputting, photocopying or filing.

### ● Care Quality Working Group member

You will be part of a team working to improve the quality of local NHS services. This role will suit someone who enjoys reading reports and thinking about the issues raised, then discussing these with the other group members. It may be helpful if you have some professional knowledge of the issues in the reports, but it is not essential. You will be supported in this role by the Healthwatch team.

**Role Descriptions with full details are available from the Healthwatch team; we'll talk you through the various options and help you find a role that matches your abilities and interests.**

There are also various options for volunteering outside of Healthwatch in the field of patient and public involvement in health and social care. NHS and social care organisations often approach us to recruit volunteers for specific tasks, for example:

- PLACE visits (Patient-Led Assessments of the Care Environment)  
We work with NHS Trusts to recruit people who want to get involved in carrying out these assessments of the care environment
- 15 Steps Quality Challenge - Healthwatch is working with the Bradford District Care Trust on involving members of the public in this project

We can also put you in touch with other voluntary and community organisations and partnerships working on improving health and social care where your interests fit well with their particular aims.