

Volunteer Handbook

Version 7, December 2025



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organisation (as defined in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act
2007, as amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2012)
Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to
hello@connectedtogether.co.uk

Support and contact details

Volunteers for Connected Together CIC (CTCIC), including Healthwatch West Northamptonshire (HWW) and Healthwatch Rutland (HWR) are supported by a volunteer lead. The volunteer lead's role is to:

- Find, select, and engage volunteers
- Source and deliver volunteer training
- Support and monitor volunteers and their involvement
- Ensure all legislative regulations concerning volunteers are adhered to
- Maintain links and communicate with all volunteers
- Maintain volunteer records
- Report regularly on volunteering matters to the relevant boards and commissioners

Contact details

Address: Connected Together CIC
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Moulton Park Industrial Estate
Northampton
NN3 6AQ

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Moulton Park Business Centre
Red House Road
Moulton Park Industrial Estate
Northampton
NN3 6AQ

Healthwatch Rutland
The King Centre
Main Road
Barleythorpe
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Rutland
LE15 7WD

Phone number: 0300 002 0010 (Northamptonshire)
07399 584572 (Rutland)

Text message: 07951 419331

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hello@connectedtogether.co.uk

Websites: www.connectedtogether.co.uk
[Home | Healthwatch West Northamptonshire](#)
www.healthwatchrutland.co.uk

Welcome

Dear Volunteer

Thank you for becoming part of the Connected Together volunteer community. We are delighted to welcome you as a consumer champion for health and social care. We want to use our influence to improve health and social care services for local people, to make sure that the views of local people are **really** listened to in decision-making. Healthwatch West Northamptonshire (HWW) and Healthwatch Rutland (HWR) were established to be that voice.

Volunteers are right at the heart of our organisation. We want to grow our volunteer community to ensure more people get involved and also to ensure our volunteers reflect the diversity of the local population.

There are many different roles for people to get involved and these are described in more detail within this Handbook.

Welcome: your contribution to our work will be extremely valuable, and I look forward to meeting you soon.

Yours faithfully



Kate Holt
CEO, Connected Together



How to use this handbook

This handbook has been produced to help to introduce you to the work of Connected Together CIC (CTCIC) and the organisations it manages, including Healthwatch West Northamptonshire (HWW) and Healthwatch Rutland (HWR). We want to ensure your volunteering experience with us is an enjoyable and rewarding one. The aim of the handbook is to act as a handy reference and information tool so please take time to read it. It is a lengthy document but one that we believe will be useful in different ways throughout your volunteering time with us.

Section One

- This section provides background to how the Healthwatch network was established. The organisational structure of Connected Together and the organisations it manages is explained

Section Two

- This section sets out how we recruit and train our volunteers. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of our volunteers

Section Three

- This section provides the policies and procedures we have in place to support and protect you as a volunteer

Volunteer input to the handbook

- No handbook can answer all the questions you might have about volunteering with us. If you have suggestions for improvements or if you need more information, we will be delighted to hear from you

Section One - Healthwatch and Connected Together CIC

1.1 Background to Healthwatch

The UK currently spends over £140 billion a year on public provision of health and over £20 billion on social care. The pressures on the NHS and social care services are intense and the demand for health and social care is increasing at a time when budgets are being squeezed and health inequalities are increasing.

Local Healthwatch organisations were established under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to act as a local consumer voice for people using health and social care services. There is a local Healthwatch in every area in England. Healthwatch West Northamptonshire and Healthwatch Rutland were established in April 2013.

Healthwatch England is a national body which provides leadership, guidance, and support to local Healthwatch and campaigns on national issues.

1.2 Connected Together CIC Organisational Structure

Connected Together Community Interest Company (CTCIC) is a not-for-profit organisation and social enterprise. CTCIC is commissioned by West Northamptonshire Council to deliver the role and functions of Healthwatch in Healthwatch West Northamptonshire and Rutland County Council to deliver the role and functions of Healthwatch in Rutland.

CTCIC is the responsible body with legal, financial, and contractual responsibility for the organisations, including its volunteers.

For a diagram showing the governance and staffing structure of Connected Together CIC, Healthwatch West Northamptonshire and Healthwatch Rutland, please see our website or ask your volunteer coordinator to show you a paper copy

<https://www.connectedtogether.co.uk/about-us/>

1.3 Healthwatch West Northamptonshire Values and Strategy

Our vision

Healthwatch West Northamptonshire will be a strong, resolute, and independent community champion. We will give local people a voice and work in partnership to influence the design and quality of health and social care provision so that all local people have an opportunity for an improved quality of life

Our values

- We will be accessible and visible
- We will be independent and objective
- We will be open, honest, and transparent in all that we do
- We will be inclusive and embrace diversity and equality, reflecting the diverse needs of local people
- We will listen to and understand the views and needs of local people
- We will speak up for local people and enable people to speak for themselves
- We will be fair and credible
- We will seek out and use evidence, including that from the public, to inform our work
- We will strive to make a positive difference and champion the best possible health and social care for local people

Our strategic priorities (April 2025- March 2026)

We have five strategic priorities:

1. To deliver our statutory functions
2. To champion the views of all people who live in or use health, social care or wellbeing services in Northamptonshire and commit to prioritising issues relating to health inequalities
3. To recruit and develop staff and volunteers in West Northamptonshire to continue to build the capacity of Healthwatch West Northamptonshire as an independent consumer advocate of health, social care and wellbeing
4. Working alongside community partners for improved health, social care and mental health outcomes for adults, including vulnerable adults and carers
5. To work for improved health, social care and mental health outcomes for children, young people and families

1.4 Healthwatch Rutland Values and Strategy

Our vision

To ensure timely, equitable access to health and social care that meets the needs of the individual and is delivered with compassion to everyone in Rutland

Our values

- Independent: our work is driven by what local people tell us. We are a critical friend to decision-makers
- Inclusive: we embrace diversity and equality, reflecting the needs of local people. We Listen to everyone in Rutland especially if they don't always have their voices heard
- Empowering: Speaking up for local people and enabling them to speak for themselves
- Evidence-based: Seeking insight from local people and acting on it to drive change and make health and care better
- Collaborative: partnering with providers of care, commissioners and the voluntary sector to drive service improvement.

Our strategic priorities (2025-2028)

1. To deliver our statutory functions
2. To champion the views of all people who live in or use health, social or wellbeing services in Rutland including people who do not put themselves forward to be heard
3. To work for improved health, social care and mental health outcomes for all, including adults, children and young people, families, vulnerable people and unpaid carers
4. To work closely with other local partners to identify opportunities for joint engagement, information sharing and representation
5. To be strong, well governed and use our staff and volunteer resources for greatest impact

Section Two - Connected Together Volunteer Strategy

2.1 Introduction

1. Definition

‘Volunteering is the commitment of time and energy, for the benefit of society and the community, the environment, or individuals outside (or in addition to) one’s immediate family. It is unpaid and undertaken freely and by choice’¹.

2. Purpose of the Volunteer Strategy

Volunteering is widely recognised in society as being very important to the voluntary, community, public and private sector and to the volunteers themselves. CTCIC volunteers, including HWW and HWR volunteers, are recognised as a valued resource, key to our ability to deliver the organisational strategy and one that requires a structured approach to sustain and develop it.

3. CTCIC vision for volunteering

To build a diverse volunteer community of people who have the opportunity to have a meaningful, enjoyable volunteering experience.

Our volunteers will be well-trained, supported, valued, and recognised for the vital contribution they make to our organisation and its strategic objectives.

4. CTCIC core values for volunteering

CTCIC is committed to:

- Growing our volunteer community to enable us to accept the numerous opportunities to deliver public and patient involvement across health and social care services
- Embracing diversity - campaigning and networking to encourage volunteers from all the diverse communities which we serve

- Promoting inclusion - we will provide fair and open access to volunteer opportunities and support
- The promotion of best practice in managing, supporting, and working with our volunteers
- Adequate resourcing of volunteering that is stringently monitored to ensure best value at a time of financial challenge

2 [Microsoft Word - It's All About Time Full Report 2007.doc \(volunteernow.co.uk\)](#)

- Promotion of a culture where volunteers are welcomed, valued, and thanked for their contribution
- Being impact focused - we believe that success is measured by outcomes and will seek to deliver results that benefit individuals, community, and our organisation
- Being forward looking - we will recognise the need for continual review and improvement in our volunteer strategy

5. Benefits of volunteer involvement

For CTCIC and the organisations it manages, including HWW and HWR:

- ✓ Volunteers bring a variety of skills, expertise, and a fresh perspective, for example cultural understanding and personal experience
- ✓ Volunteers can offer time and passion to a particular project, adding value to our work and supporting our sustainability
- ✓ Volunteers have knowledge of their local communities; by involving volunteers we are able to build stronger links with those local communities, including those who are hardest to reach
- ✓ Volunteers act as ambassadors, promoting CTCIC's activities and services. This is a unique role and does not replace the role of paid workers
- ✓ Volunteers increase our capacity so that we can achieve more

For volunteers:

- ✓ An opportunity to give back
- ✓ Offers the chance to be part of your community
- ✓ Provides new challenges and a chance to develop or learn new skills
- ✓ Motivation and a sense of achievement
- ✓ Can be a steppingstone into employment or training opportunities
- ✓ Provides an opportunity to be involved with something interesting, absorbing, and worthwhile
- ✓ Meet a diverse range of people
- ✓ Can improve health and wellbeing

6. Strategic Aims

The overarching aim of the volunteer strategy is to develop and promote good practice in the involvement and support of volunteers within CTCIC that will in turn contribute to effective delivery of our organisational strategy.

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Connected Together CIC ensures it meets the ‘Investing in Volunteers’ quality standards in the development and implementation of its volunteer strategy supporting policies and procedures. CTCIC was awarded ‘Investing in Volunteers’ status in April 2022. For full details see www.investinginvolunteers.org.uk and [We have been awarded the Investing in Volunteers accreditation! | Healthwatch West Northamptonshire](#)

2.2 Young Healthwatch

Young Healthwatch Northamptonshire is a group of 11-24-year-old volunteers who ensure children and young people’s views on health and social care services are listened to by those who commission, provide and design services.

Since its launch in February 2015, Young Healthwatch Northamptonshire has been making sure that young people’s voices are being heard in the county. In early 2018 Young Healthwatch received the ‘Investing in Children’ award, which recognises and celebrates good practice in including children and young people. Young Healthwatch volunteers have their own handbook to support them in their volunteering role.

For more information on Young Healthwatch visit: [Young Healthwatch Northamptonshire | Healthwatch West Northamptonshire](#)



2.3 Recruiting volunteers

Connected Together CIC and the organisations it manages, including HWW and HWR, recruits' volunteers via a range of channels including:

- Advertising via our websites and social media accounts
- Word of mouth
- Newsletters
- Public engagement events
- Contact with voluntary and community sector organisations

We also undertake recruitment campaigns around particular issues. For example, if a particular service is being redesigned such as cardiology or respiratory services, we will want to recruit people who have experience of that service and their families or carers.

Campaigns also occur where we do not have sufficient representation from particular communities reflecting the diversity of the local population.



Applying to become a volunteer

- When a potential volunteer makes contact with CTCIC and HWW they will be asked to complete a short 'expression of interest' form
- If anyone requires assistance with completing the form, help will be provided and/or the form can be completed by a member of staff over the phone or in person
- Once completed the 'expression of interest' form should be completed online and returned by email to:

Northamptonshire- enquiries@healthwatchwestnorthants.com

Rutland- info@healthwatchrutland.co.uk

Healthwatch Rutland also have paper copies if you are unable to complete online.

Informal interview

- All applicants will be offered an informal interview with the volunteer lead - either face to face or by telephone. This conversation enables potential volunteers to find out more about the organisation and the range of volunteer roles on offer
- In the rare event, unsuccessful applicants will be notified within two working days. A member of our volunteer team will discuss this with the applicant and may be able to suggest other contacts for volunteering opportunities
- Successful applicants will also be notified within two working days

Next stage of the application process

- The successful applicant will be asked to complete a full application form, including details of two referees and an emergency contact

References

- References will be taken up for all successful applicants
- If we do not receive a reference within 10 working days, we will make a second request to the referee
- If after 10 more working days, we still have not received the reference then the volunteer lead will contact the applicant and ask them to supply another referee
- **Please note: We cannot accept a volunteer without two satisfactory references**

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks

For some volunteer roles (e.g. Authorised Representative with HWW and HWR), volunteers will be required to have a standard check with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). This is important to ensure that we are compliant with regulations for Enter and View visits and our safeguarding procedures for children and vulnerable adults.

The DBS certificate, once issued by the Disclosure and Barring Service, will be sent solely to the volunteer. It is therefore the responsibility of the volunteer to bring the certificate into the CTCIC office or to show it to a staff member at a relevant meeting. The volunteer lead or another staff member will check the certificate and add the DBS certificate number to the volunteer database as evidence of the DBS check having been successfully completed. If there are any issues noted from the DBS check these will be discussed with the volunteer by the CEO or volunteer lead. We will, wherever possible, try to find alternative roles for people who are unable to provide a clear DBS check.



If volunteer applicants, make a false statement about convictions during the recruitment process this will be considered gross misconduct and could justify termination of the volunteering relationship.

It is the responsibility of the volunteer to inform the volunteer lead if, at any time during their period of volunteering with CTCIC or the organisations it manages, they are subject to any criminal record, cautions, warnings or bind overs, or any changes to their existing DBS or clearance status, including any police investigations which may make the continuation of their present volunteering role unsuitable.

The full CTCIC DBS Policy is available on our websites or can be viewed in the policies folder kept in the CTCIC offices.

Next stage of the application process

Once satisfactory references have been received, and a satisfactory DBS check (if applicable) has been carried out:

- The volunteer's details will be added to our secure volunteer database
- The volunteer is provided with this volunteer handbook in their preferred format
- The volunteer will be introduced to the relevant staff and attend the next group or board meeting as appropriate
- Induction training will be arranged for the next available training session, usually within 3 months
- The volunteer will be asked to confirm acceptance of the CTCIC Code of Conduct, Confidentiality Policy and will also be asked to complete a Declaration of Interests form, in line with our Declaration of Interests Policy in the Volunteers Agreement Document

2.4 Information, mentoring and support

- Our staff team are always here to provide support for volunteers
- The volunteer lead will arrange a follow up telephone call, email, or meeting with the volunteer within six weeks of their appointment to review and discuss any support or other needs and to get the volunteer's feedback
- The volunteer will receive regular newsletters by email with details of key events and information
- We also notify volunteers by email of opportunities to take part in events or projects as they occur

2.5 Core values for volunteering

- Volunteers will be valued, made welcome and thanked for their contribution
- Volunteers will receive support and supervision, usually in a group setting but one to one sessions are available on request
- Volunteers will have regular access to a named person who ensures they have adequate support and someone they can contact if they have concerns about their role
- Volunteers should have a clear idea of their tasks and responsibilities
- All volunteers will be offered training. This includes induction training to introduce them to the organisation, its history, aims and objectives, and to the place where they volunteer. Volunteers will be offered specific training for their role and ongoing training
- Volunteers will have proper health and safety provision
- Volunteers will be properly insured against any risks involved in volunteering
- Volunteers should receive all reasonable out-of-pocket expenses in line with our Volunteer Travel and Expenses Policy
- Volunteers should be provided with the appropriate equipment/tools/materials to enable them to carry out their tasks
- Paid workers and volunteers should experience a complementary and mutually beneficial relationship
- Volunteers are not contractually employed, but offer their time free of charge and they choose when they are available to help
- More and more meetings are now being held virtually because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Where volunteers participate in virtual online meetings, which can be either internal meetings or external partner meetings, volunteers can claim £5 per meeting towards the cost of telephone calls, internet connection, printing ink, paper and other sundries. Volunteers can claim this allowance via the expenses form in the usual manner itemising the meeting or event that they attended along with submitting a meeting report to the office if it is an external meeting

2.6 General Standards

Connected Together representatives:

- Are required to treat everyone with courtesy and respect at all times and to respect the privacy, dignity and rights to confidentiality of members of the public, patients, consumers and carers we work with
- Will strive to establish and maintain effective professional relationships with CTCIC and within the CTCIC organisation(s) in which they are based, respecting colleagues, and developing a spirit of teamwork

- May have to deal with behaviour that challenges them in the course of their roles. High standards of professionalism and fairness should be shown at all times and training and support will be provided to our representatives
- Will embrace equality and diversity. Racist, sexist, or homophobic behaviour which discriminates against or demeans others because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, and sexual orientation, political, cultural or other beliefs is not acceptable
- Reported breaches of the code of conduct could result in action being taken to protect the reputation and integrity of CTCIC and to uphold this code of conduct. This could result in representatives being asked to leave CTCIC with the first steps being an informal conversation to seek to resolve issues
- Representatives who require support in relation to this code of conduct should speak to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), a board member, volunteer lead, or their project lead, as directed at induction
- Representatives are expected to present a professional image appropriate for the role being performed

The Nolan Principles

The seven principles of public life, known as the 'Nolan Principles', guide the way in which Connected Together delivers the agreed strategy and supporting plans. These are:

Selflessness: CTCIC representatives should take decisions about health and social care issues in terms of the public interest. They should not do so to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

Integrity: CTCIC representatives should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisation that might influence them in performance of Connected Together duties.

Objectivity: In carrying out public business, CTCIC representatives should ensure decision making is informed by the available evidence.

Accountability: Participants in CTCIC are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate.

Openness: CTCIC representatives should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands. **There will be occasions when information is restricted due to clear requirements of confidentiality (e.g. personal sensitive information).**

The seven principles of public life

Source: Committee on Standards in Public Life, 2008



References to prospective employers

If you require a reference from us for employment or other purposes, please contact us to discuss this.

Please note: We can only supply a reference in respect of your volunteering role.

2.7 Volunteer induction and training

Introduction

Connected Together CIC is committed to the induction, training and development of our volunteers. Ensuring that volunteers have the correct training for their particular role is essential for the success of our volunteer programme.

We aim to provide new volunteers, or ones facing a new task, with the information required to ensure that they are able to maximise their contribution. This will be done via induction training followed by regular support. All volunteers will have the opportunity to participate in ongoing training and will be briefed on opportunities relating to their role.



Equal opportunities consideration

Connected Together CIC will:

- Strive to prioritise training opportunities for volunteers who have traditionally missed out on such opportunities
- Seek to facilitate attendance at conferences and training events by volunteers with children or other caring responsibilities. This will be achieved by approving expense claims for childcare, crèche provision, and carers and in other ways as necessary, in line with our Volunteer Travel and Expenses Policy
- Continue to promote training that furthers equality of opportunity or helps individuals and voluntary groups challenge oppression and oppressive behaviour
- Where required, supply training materials in other formats or to provide additional support or assistance

Induction

Induction is an important opportunity to introduce volunteers to the organisation, communicate relevant policies and procedures and set out both what is expected of them and what they can expect in their new role.

Induction is usually delivered in a group setting as this encourages wide-ranging discussions and can also enable volunteers to start to build relationships and support systems.

Individual induction may also be arranged where required, for example to fit in better with the volunteer's other commitments and where there is a need for the training to be adapted for volunteers who require particular support.

Volunteer training

Some training is provided in-house by CTCIC staff, and some is delivered by external organisations. Online training and webinars may be offered as well as face-to-face training.

We ask that all volunteers commit to attend training to keep their knowledge and skills up to date. All HWW and HWR volunteers are required to undertake training in safeguarding. This is mandatory for Authorised Representatives who are going to conduct 'enter and view' visits to health and social care services and/or to speak to people in their own homes.

Identification of volunteer training needs

CTCIC will provide other training courses as required, specific to particular roles, projects and organisational needs.

Volunteers are often in the best position to put forward suggestions for training courses to the volunteer lead.

CTCIC incurs costs in delivering the training, e.g. room hire and refreshments. If you cannot attend training that you have registered for, please let us know as soon as possible. We can then reduce catering numbers or move to a smaller room.



Training courses for CTCIC Healthwatch volunteers

The table below sets out the core training offered to volunteers with HWW and HWR. Training is open to all volunteers, but Authorised Representatives are required to attend the training which is marked * before carrying out their role. At the end of every training session, we ask trainees to complete an evaluation form.

This helps us to improve delivery content and arrangements for future training sessions.

Core training for Healthwatch volunteers
Induction for new volunteers
Enter and View*
Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults*
Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)*
Other training offered - as required, or on a rolling basis
Equality and Diversity
Introduction to the NHS/social care
The role of the Care Quality Commission (CQC)
Domestic abuse
Deaf awareness
Autism awareness
Disability awareness
Dementia awareness
Drugs and alcohol awareness
Health literacy

Some training should be refreshed every 3 years to keep knowledge and skills up to date.

Volunteer training is logged on your volunteer record, so please tell us if you have done training elsewhere that is relevant to your role.

2.8 Ending your volunteer involvement

Feedback process

Volunteers will wish to cease their volunteering role for many reasons. It is helpful if you could notify the staff team that you will no longer be volunteering for CTCIC or any of the organisation it manages (including HWW and HWR). This means we can remove your details from our volunteer register and prevent you receiving further communications from us if you so wish.

We also like to take the opportunity to thank you for the volunteer work you have carried out for us. It is also useful to understand why you are leaving, would you have stayed if things had been different and what thoughts do you have on how to improve the volunteering experience for others?

Volunteer exit forms

All volunteers who cease volunteering will be offered the opportunity to fill in a short Volunteer Exit Form. Your input is very valuable, and we welcome any information, suggestions and recommendations you are prepared to share about any aspect of your volunteering experience. CTCIC uses an exit form to enable us to compare feedback from other departing volunteers and to note any emerging patterns.

Exit interview

We would appreciate it if you were able to attend a brief exit interview, either on the phone or face-to-face, so that we can discuss your feedback with you in more depth.

Where issues come to light

If your completed exit interview form and/or face-to-face interview brings up issues that need addressing, we will endeavour to do something about it. If this involves others, it is important that we have your signed permission on the exit interview form to act upon your comments and suggestions without identifying the volunteer.

2.9 Volunteer roles within HWW and HWR

Volunteers play a key role in telling us about your own experiences of health and social care services and collecting and sharing feedback about services from your community and networks with us.

There are also opportunities for volunteers to be involved as members of the board, planning groups, task and finish groups, as authorised representatives, as community engagement volunteers and as office support.

The role descriptions for each of these volunteer roles are provided below. Should you require these in a different format please contact the volunteer lead.



Time commitment: on the following pages you will see the estimated time commitment for each of the volunteer roles. We advise that as part of your decision making about the roles you would like to volunteer for you also consider the time implications.

If you would like to try out a role first or would like to discuss shorter term or flexible volunteering opportunities, then please contact the volunteer lead.



HWW and HWR Advisory Board Member

Purpose of the role

The Boards take decisions about how HWW and HWR should work to improve the health and social care outcomes of each county's population. The length of term for HWW and HWR Board members is up to 3 years, before seeking re-election or retiring from the Board.

Main tasks and responsibilities

- Help determine the strategic direction for HWW and HWR and, through the CEO, ensure efficient allocation and administration of resources to develop a work plan that will enable it to perform its functions effectively
- Ensure that HWW and HWR's operations are transparent and accountable
- Ensure that HWW and HWR seek out and engage with members of the public, consumers and carers including 'seldom heard' groups, to gain their views on health and social care issues and problems in the relevant county
- Ensure attendance at meetings with a variety of health and social care commissioners to represent public views as gathered through outreach work
- Assess a range of projects, research and reports that will help HWW and HWR fulfil its role
- Ensure that there is representation by staff and volunteers at forums, committees, and sub-committees with a variety of stakeholders (including user groups and partners) whether these will help HWW and HWR to deliver on its aims

Skills and experience needed

To fulfil the role of an HWW or HWR Board Member, individuals will need a range of skills and expertise as well as the right experience and characteristics:

- Members need to be good communicators and be capable of playing an active role at board meetings and contribute to the discussion, information, and policy decisions
- Members will be communicating with a range of different individuals from commissioners to members of the public, and must be willing to engage with all of them
- Members should have good analytical skills and awareness, and understanding of research and research costs, in order to identify gaps in public feedback and the provision and quality of local health and social care services
- Members should have an awareness of health and social care issues and an understanding of the importance of public involvement in these issues
- Members should have some experience of health and/or social care services. This should come from personal experience or a previous paid role

- Members will also need strategic awareness to give advice in the best interests of HWW or HWR in exercising its functions
- Members are public representatives so they should understand what is expected from a position of civic responsibility
- It is desirable, but not essential, for members to have had some experience or knowledge of public representation, particularly in health and social care. This may be as a representative of a service user group or acting as an advocate
- Members will be responsible for overseeing work on reports and shaping the projects, so some experience of project management will be useful
- Members will need to be, or want to be, active in their communities, so a track record of previous community activity is desirable
- Members should have proven communication and people skills and be able to demonstrate this with their experience
- Members are tasked with acting in the public interest, and should therefore be public spirited and committed to the principle of championing the public's interests in health and social care
- Members need to be open-minded and inclusive, as Healthwatch Northamptonshire will be tasked with engaging and representing the entire spectrum of the local population
- Members need to have an active interest in how public involvement can shape health and social care services and have the desire to promote it
- Members need to have the will and desire to communicate effectively with all stakeholders and partners in fulfilling HWW and HWR's role

Eligibility

Anyone who is over the age of 16 and lives within West Northamptonshire or Rutland, or anyone who regularly uses health or social care services within West Northamptonshire or Rutland may apply to be an Advisors Board member.

However, the following exceptions apply:

- People who are the subject of an undischarged bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order
- Anyone who has been dismissed from paid employment within the last 2 years due to misconduct (without being re-instated) where that dismissal has not been the subject of a finding of unfair dismissal by a tribunal or court
- Anyone who is under a disqualification order under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986
- Anyone who has been removed from trusteeship of a charity within the last 5 years or is not currently eligible to be a trustee of a charity
- Anyone who fails to comply with the Code of Conduct and Declaration of Interests Policy the signed new one
- All County, Borough or District councillors who hold an executive position in their council
- Anyone who is part of a campaign group we are unable to accept

In addition to this role description, members are required to sign the **Code of Conduct**, the **Confidentiality Agreement** and complete a **Declaration of Interests**



Time commitment for Board Members:

Read Board papers and attend Board meetings every 3 months (approximately 5-6 hours). Respond to emails and attend other meetings and events on behalf of HWW or HWR as required (average 2-4 hours per event).



Planning Group Member (HWW)Planning Group Member (HWR)

Purpose of the role

The Planning Group (HWW) and Planning Group (HWR) work closely to the Strategic and Operational Plans of HWW and HWR respectively. Membership of the (Operations and) Planning Group is open to any interested individuals living and/or working in West Northamptonshire or Rutland, and to representatives of local voluntary and community sector organisations. Meetings are held in public; members of the public are welcome to comment, contribute to discussions occurring and to put forward issues for attention. Items for discussion may be forwarded to the office for the attention of the chairs prior to the meeting. There are opportunities for (Operations and) Planning Group members to represent HWW or HWR and to undertake more detailed work.

Main tasks and responsibilities

- Attend and participate in Planning Group meetings
- Undertake other agreed actions as required and report back at future meetings
- Some Planning Group members attend committees, focus groups or workshops on behalf of HWW and HWR and provide written feedback on meetings attended

Skills and experience needed

- Interest in health and social care issues
- Good listening and communication skills
- Ability to discuss issues and reach a consensus which may not be your view
- Ability to relate easily to all sorts of people in an empathetic and non-judgmental way
- Ability to work effectively as a member of a team
- Confidence in communicating with a wide range of people and organisations
- Willingness to report back on meetings attended and to follow up action plan priorities identified by the group
- Willingness to undertake training and develop knowledge/understanding as required
- Understand and respect the need for confidentiality
- Ability to access and respond to emails on a regular basis



Time commitment for Planning Group Members:

Read agenda and papers and attend meetings as far as is possible (approximately 2-4 hours per meeting).

Respond to emails and attend other meetings and events on behalf of HWW/HWR, depending on availability (2-4 hours per meeting).



Task and Finish Group Member

Purpose of the role

Volunteers may be invited to join Task and Finish Groups where they have a particular interest. Task and Finish Group members work together in small groups, often with staff members, on time-limited pieces of work to evaluate and assess specific issues. They produce reports, which include recommendations for change where necessary, to commissioners and providers.

Main tasks and responsibilities

- Scope projects and develop a project plan, in consultation with HWW/HWR staff
- Identify stakeholders to involve in a piece of work
- Collect and collate information from individuals, groups, and organisations
- Analyse data, write draft reports and make recommendations
- Provide regular updates/reports to the (Operations and) Planning Group

Skills and experience needed

- Interest in health and social care issues
- Ability to work as part of a small team
- Ability to be objective
- Good interpersonal and communication skills
- Basic IT skills
- Demonstrate a commitment to and understanding of equality and diversity
- Willingness to undertake training and develop knowledge/understanding as required
- Understand and respect the need for confidentiality



Time commitment for Task and Finish Group Members:

Each meeting will last approximately 2 hours. The number and frequency of meetings will depend on the size and complexity of the project. Additional time may be involved to collect and analyse data and write reports

Authorised Representative

Purpose of the role

An Authorised Representative is a trained volunteer who participates in the 'Enter and View' activities of HWW and HWR alongside other volunteers and staff, to make observations and gather the experiences and views of patients, consumers, carers and the wider public. The 'Enter and View' function applies to health services for adults and children and social care for adults.

Main tasks and responsibilities

- Visit health services to assess the quality of care from the perspectives of patients and the public. This will include talking to patients, visitors, and staff to gather views and experiences
- Visit care homes and other care services to observe care and facilities provided and talk to service users, carers, staff, and other visitors
- Assist in the preparation of reports that detail the findings of visits and make recommendations for improvements
- Liaise with health and social care staff and managers to make arrangements for visits and to discuss initial findings

Skills and experience needed

- Interest in health and social care issues
- Good observation and listening skills
- Ability to talk to people from diverse backgrounds
- Ability to be objective
- Willingness to undertake training and develop knowledge/understanding as required
- After training, ability to identify good and poor practice in care
- Ability to present information in a clear straightforward way
- Understand and respect the need for confidentiality

Additional requirements

Authorised Representatives are also required:

- To be over the age of 18 years
- To supply two references
- To have a satisfactory DBS check
- To complete training in 'Enter and View' and Safeguarding



Time commitment for Authorised Representatives: Once trained it is at the discretion of the individual how much time they wish to commit. On average an 'enter and view' visit will last 3 hours allowing for briefing and debriefing. Writing the visit report will take 1-1½ hours. Attendance at other events and meetings is usually between 2 and 4 hours.



Community Engagement Champions

Purpose

The role of community engagement representative focuses on public and patient engagement, enabling HWW and HWR to listen to individual experiences of health and social care services and helping us to collate evidence directly from service users. The role also involves publicising HWW and HWR and what we do within local groups and communities.

Main tasks and responsibilities

- Help HWW/HWR to engage with the public at a variety of events, gathering views via comment cards and where applicable inviting participation in surveys and other methods of engagement, such as focus groups
- Promote understanding of the purpose and function of HWW/HWR, raising our profile and highlighting our achievements and activities
- Deliver presentations to a variety of small groups, e.g. at coffee mornings, community groups, community events to provide information about HWW/HWR
- Listen to and record individual experiences and views of health and social care services
- Support HWW/HWR in gathering views from local communities, particularly from those who are currently seldom heard by decision-makers

Skills and experience needed

- Interest in health and social care issues
- Understanding of the role of Healthwatch in the local health and social care environment
- Enthusiasm for networking with community groups
- Willingness to encourage others to feed their views into HWW
- Good listening skills
- Good presentation skills, using a prepared script
- Use of own transport is desirable, travel expenses will be refunded
- Understand and respect the need for confidentiality, especially when sharing information with others



Time commitment for Community Engagement Volunteer:

Once trained it is at the discretion of the individual how much time they wish to commit. Average 1 - 4 hours per meeting or event.



Office Volunteer

Purpose of the role

Office volunteers provide invaluable support to the staff team by carrying out general administrative tasks. Where a volunteer has appropriate or specialist skills, other tasks may be available, e.g. communications and media work, data entry or helping with event preparation.

Main tasks and responsibilities

An office volunteer may undertake some of the following:

- General office duties including scanning documents, filing, shredding, and photocopying
- Answering and transferring telephone calls
- Administration for organising events and conferences
- Preparation of leaflets and other publicity materials
- Monitoring and assessing media coverage of health and social care issues
- Data entry
- Identifying information and signposting opportunities

Skills and experience needed

- Ability to work as part of a small team
- Good interpersonal and communication skills
- Basic IT skills
- Willingness to undertake relevant training
- Understand and respect the need for confidentiality



Time commitment for Office Volunteer:

Office volunteers can do a regular weekly session or come in on an ad hoc basis as work requires, usually for 2-3 hours at a time.

Office volunteer opportunities are dependent on the resources available in the office, including desk space and staff support.

Section Three - Policies and Procedures for CTCIC Volunteers

3.1 Introduction

Volunteer policies and procedures ensure we maintain the highest standards in meeting our legal responsibilities to volunteers and those who receive our services. As a volunteer you are required to read the full policy documents which are available on our websites and in our offices in West Northampton and Rutland. Copies can also be requested in other formats.

These policies are updated periodically. We will notify you of any updates, but it is your responsibility to ensure that you are reading the latest version.

3.2 CTCIC Relevant Policies

CTCIC Policies	Policy Links	Policy Id
Complaints	CTCIC-Policy-Complaints-Policy-KH-08062022.pdf (connectedtogether.co.uk)	003/QD23
Code of conduct CYP	CTCIC-Policy-Code-of-Conduct-with-CYP-KH-10062022-1.pdf (connectedtogether.co.uk)	004/QD24
Confidentiality	CTCIC-Policy-Confidentiality-Policy-KH-26042022-1-2.pdf (connectedtogether.co.uk)	005/QD25
Data protection (GDPR)	Data Protection Policy 14122018 (connectedtogether.co.uk)	009/QD29
Declaration of interests	CTCIC-Policy-Declaration-of-Interests-Policy-KH-01072022-1.pdf (connectedtogether.co.uk)	014/QD34
Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)	CTCIC - Policy - DBS Policy 27032023 KH(May 2023).docx (live.com)	011/QD31
Enter and View Healthwatch CTCIC.	CTCIC-Policy-Enter-and-View-Policy-KH-19102022.pdf (connectedtogether.co.uk)	018/QD38

Environmental	CTCIC-Policy-Environmental-Policy-KH-08042022.pdf (connectedtogether.co.uk)	019/QD39
Equality and diversity	Equality and Diversity Policy (connectedtogether.co.uk)	020/QD40
Harassment and dignity	CTCIC-Policy-Harassment-and-Dignity-Policy-1.pdf (connectedtogether.co.uk)	026/QD46
Health and safety	CTCIC-Policy-Health-and-Safety-Policy-KH-30032022-003-1.pdf (connectedtogether.co.uk)	027/QD47
ICT acceptable use	CTCIC-Policy-ICT-Acceptable-Use-v6-KH-04052022.pdf (connectedtogether.co.uk)	028/QD48
Media	CTCIC-Policy-Media-Policy-KH-20052022.docx (live.com)	032/QD52
Problem solving	CTCIC-Policy-Problem-Solving-Volunteers-KH-14092022.pdf (connectedtogether.co.uk)	038/QD58
Safeguarding of children and young people	CTCIC-Policy-Safeguarding-Children-and-Young-People-KH-01042022-2-1.pdf (connectedtogether.co.uk)	044/QD64
Safeguarding of vulnerable adults	CTCIC-Policy-Safeguarding-of-Vulnerable-Adults-v1-APPROVED-121216-1.pdf (connectedtogether.co.uk)	043/QD63
Volunteers Travel and expenses	CTCIC-Policy-Volunteers-Travel-and-Expenses-KH-28072022.pdf (connectedtogether.co.uk)	052/QD81
Whistleblowing	CTCIC-Policy-Whistleblowing-Policy-KH-26042022.pdf (connectedtogether.co.uk)	053/QD71



Contact details

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01572 720381 (Rutland)

Text message: 07951 419331

Email: enquiries@healthwatchwestnorthants.com (Northamptonshire)
info@healthwatchrutland.co.uk (Rutland)

Websites: www.connectedtogether.co.uk
[Home | Healthwatch West Northamptonshire](#)
www.healthwatchrutland.co.uk

Volunteers Page: [Volunteer | Healthwatch West Northamptonshire](#)
[Volunteer | Healthwatch Rutland](#)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Healthwatchwestnorthamptonshire/>
www.facebook.com/healthwatchrutland
<https://www.facebook.com/younghealthwatchnorthamptonshire>

Twitter: <https://x.com/Healthwatchwn>
<https://twitter.com/YHWNorth1>
<https://twitter.com/HWRutland>

Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/yhwnorthamptonshire/>
<https://www.instagram.com/healthwatchwn/>