

Equality and Diversity Policy

Introduction

Healthwatch Darlington (HWD) recognises that discrimination and victimisation is unacceptable and that it is in the interests of HWD and its participants to utilise the skills of everyone. It is the aim of the HWD to ensure that no participant receives less favourable facilities or treatment (either directly or indirectly) in recruitment or employment on grounds of the following Protected Characteristics as stated in the Equality Act 2010.

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Our aim is that our organisation will be truly representative of all sections of society and each person feels respected and able to give of their best.

We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination or victimisation. To that end the purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all in our organisation.

All participants will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All participants will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of HWD will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

Our participants will not discriminate directly or indirectly, or harass other participants, volunteers or service users because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation in the work of HWD.

This policy and the associated arrangements shall operate in accordance with statutory requirements. In addition, full account will be taken of any guidance or Codes of Practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, any Government Departments, and any other statutory bodies.

Responsibilities

Responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation and operation of the Policy will rest with the Board CEO and staff of Healthwatch Darlington, who will ensure that:

- All participants are aware of the Policy and the arrangements, and the reasons for the Policy.

- Grievances concerning discrimination are dealt with properly, fairly and as quickly as possible. **See policy 013 Disciplinary and See policy 029 Volunteer Conduct Monitoring.**
- Approved records are maintained.
- This Policy and arrangements are reviewed on an annual basis and recommendations made to the Board of Directors.

Responsibility for ensuring that there is no unlawful discrimination rests with all participants. Participants must:

- Comply with the Policy and arrangements.
- Not discriminate in their day to day activities or induce others to do so.
- Not victimise, harass or intimidate any individual or group who have, or are perceived to have, one of the Protected Characteristics.
- Ensure no individual is discriminated against or harassed because of their association with another individual who has a Protected Characteristic.
- Inform the Board of Directors, CEO or staff member of Healthwatch if they become aware of any discriminatory practice.

Equality Training

All participants of HWD will be briefed or trained on equality following induction. Such training may be repeated as necessary.

Monitoring

An equality monitoring system underpins Healthwatch Darlington's work to measure the effectiveness of this Policy and arrangements, for example, during the Recruitment process.

This will involve the routine collection, maintenance and analysis of information on participants and clients on the basis of the Protected Characteristics.

The information collected for monitoring purposes is treated as confidential and in accordance with Data Protection Act 1998.

EQUALITY POLICY STATEMENT

Healthwatch Darlington encourages, values, manages diversity and is committed to providing equality for all. The aim of the Healthwatch Darlington Equality Policy is to:

- Prevent the unlawful discrimination of employees, members, volunteers or clients on the grounds of the Protected Characteristics.

Healthwatch Darlington opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination or victimisation, and recognises that such behaviour is unacceptable.

It is in the best interests of Healthwatch Darlington, its employees, members, volunteers and clients to utilise the skills of the total workforce and provide a service based on equality of opportunity for all.

Healthwatch Darlington will therefore ensure that no employee, member, volunteer or client receives less favourable facilities or treatment (either directly or indirectly) on the grounds of the Protected Characteristics and will be as representative of all sections of society as possible.

Selection for employment, membership, volunteer status, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees and volunteers will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential. Employees and volunteers will not discriminate directly or indirectly or harass clients on the grounds of the Protected Characteristics.

This Policy will operate in accordance with statutory requirements, for example, the Equality Act 2010.

Our Commitment

Healthwatch Darlington is committed to:

- Creating an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our employees, members and volunteers are recognised and valued.
- The principle that every employee and volunteer is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- Making training, development and progression opportunities available to all employees and volunteers.
- Promoting equality in the workplace which we believe is good management practice and makes sound business sense.
- Reviewing all our operational policies, arrangements, practices and procedures to ensure fairness.
- Regarding breaches of this Policy as misconduct which could lead to disciplinary proceedings.
- Monitoring this Policy and reviewing it annually.

Equality Policy – The Protected Characteristics.

Introduction: Information on the Protected Characteristics sourced from the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

- **Age**

Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).

- **Disability**

A person has a disability if that person has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

- **Gender reassignment**

The process of transitioning from one gender to another.

- **Marriage and civil partnership**

Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters.

- **Pregnancy and maternity**

Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

- **Race**

Refers to the protected characteristic of Race and includes Caste. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

- **Religion and belief**

Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

- **Sex**

A man or a woman.

- **Sexual orientation**

Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

Volunteer Expenses Policy	
Version	0.2
Author	Michelle Thompson B.E.M., Chief Executive Officer
Approved by	Board of Healthwatch Darlington
Date approved	13/03/2024
Effective date	13/03/2024
Review date	01/01/2027



healthwatch

Healthwatch Darlington
Morton Park Business Training Centre
Morton Park
Yarm Road
Darlington
DL1 4PJ
www.healthwatchdarlington.co.uk
t: 01325 380145
e: info@healthwatchdarlington.co.uk
🐦 @healthwatchdton
📘 @healthwatchdarlington @youthwatchdarlo