

Equality and Diversity Policy

This is Healthwatch Camden's Equality and Diversity Policy and it forms a major part of our ethos. All employees are bound by its contents:

1. Equality and diversity statement
2. Management issues and delivery mechanisms
3. Employee practices
4. Service delivery
5. Monitoring and evaluation
6. Review of this policy

1. Equality and diversity statement

Healthwatch Camden aims to promote equality and diversity as an employer and seeks to ensure that equality and diversity principles underpin all areas of the organisation's work and service provision.

Healthwatch Camden recognises that many people and groups suffer discrimination and face serious barriers when trying to fulfil their true potential. It also recognises that not all forms of unreasonable and unfair discrimination are the subject of legislation. It is the aim of this organisation to take positive steps to redress discrimination, to improve equality of opportunity and to combat any unreasonable or unfair treatment which places people at a disadvantage for any reasons not directly related to their ability to do a job for this organisation or to their eligibility to receive services from us.

We are committed to meeting our obligation not to discriminate as set out in legislation, and also to do what we can to combat disadvantage caused by additional social, educational and economic reasons.

Healthwatch Camden will not tolerate discrimination, harassment, bullying, victimisation or abuse of people who are members of staff or of people connected with the services provided by Healthwatch Camden.

2. Management issues and delivery mechanisms

Healthwatch Camden's Board of Trustees has ultimate responsibility for the equality and diversity policy. It is however the responsibility of the Chief Officer to implement, monitor and evaluate the equality and diversity policy in terms of employment practice and service delivery. S/he is also under a duty to ensure that the Board of Trustees is regularly kept informed of the policy's implementation and the implications of the Board of Trustee's decisions and policies for equality and diversity issues. It is the responsibility of all staff to report any discrimination of which they become aware.

All employees and Board of Trustee members will be informed that an equality and diversity policy is in operation and that they are bound to comply with its requirements. The policy will also be drawn to the attention of **Healthwatch Camden's** members, funding agencies, job applicants and those using the services of Healthwatch Camden.

Healthwatch Camden's grievance and disciplinary procedures will be used to deal with any complaints about discrimination, harassment or bullying involving staff.

Complaints from people using the organisation's services will be through the complaints procedure for Healthwatch Camden.

Healthwatch Camden seeks a broad and representative Board of Trustees. It is expected that if staff or Trustees represent Healthwatch Camden on the committees of other agencies they will endeavour to ensure that equality and diversity principles and practices are adopted by those agencies.

3. Employment practices

Healthwatch Camden aims to promote equality and diversity as an employer and to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that cannot be shown to be justifiable within the context of the policy.

Healthwatch Camden regards discrimination, harassment, abuse, victimisation or bullying of staff, clients or of others in the course of work as disciplinary offences that could be regarded as gross misconduct. Condoning such behaviour could also be treated as a disciplinary offence. As well as disciplining the perpetrator(s), we will give appropriate support to people who complain of harassment of themselves or others.

Selection, recruitment, training, promotion and employment practices generally will be subject to regular review to ensure that they comply with the equality and diversity policy.

Healthwatch Camden will attempt to accommodate staff requests to work flexibly, whether part-time or some other working arrangement, for whatever reason, so long as agreement is consistent with the needs of the organisation.

We will take a positive approach to the employment of disabled staff, and make adjustments which are reasonable to enable them to do their job without unnecessary difficulty.

We accept our obligation not to discriminate against applicants and employees on the basis of their religion or belief. We will try to accommodate employees' religious beliefs in any way which is compatible with the work of the organisation.

Healthwatch Camden will not discriminate on grounds of age in recruitment, promotion, training, or in the availability of benefits such as pension contributions.

4. Service delivery

Healthwatch Camden seeks to ensure that its services are accessible to all sections of the community served by Healthwatch Camden. In particular Healthwatch Camden will ensure that this applies to those most at social, economic or educational disadvantage.

Healthwatch Camden will make public its commitment to combating discriminatory attitudes where these are encountered.

Healthwatch Camden will attempt to ensure that none of its policies discriminate directly or indirectly against any group or individual.

Healthwatch Camden will attempt to find ways of making our service accessible to everyone, including people for whom English is not a first language, people with visual or hearing impairments, and people who cannot easily travel.

Healthwatch Camden will take all reasonable steps to ensure that all its activities are carried out in premises which are accessible to people with disabled people.

Healthwatch Camden will be sensitive to the particular needs of service users by trying to provide for example, having regard to religious and other dietary requirements when providing food.

Healthwatch Camden will operate a variety of means to allow people to contact staff.

Healthwatch Camden will be concerned especially with people and communities that are disadvantaged and excluded and will find ways to support the representation of their interests.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

Healthwatch Camden will regularly evaluate its services and the effectiveness of its equality and diversity policy, by a variety of means.

Monitoring may be carried out by Healthwatch Camden to provide the data for this regular evaluation. For instance, Healthwatch Camden may ask clients using our services, job applicants, volunteers and trustees for information about their ethnic origin, disability, age or other personal information. We will only do this for a specific defined purpose such as

collecting statistical data for funders, for research or for our own monitoring to evaluate this policy's impact.

Healthwatch Camden will be sensitive to groups and individuals and will have due regard for the principles of data protection when seeking information. Where sensitive information is gathered, those responding will be explicitly informed of the purpose and that they are at liberty to withhold the information. All monitoring information will be securely stored, aggregated and anonymised.

6. Review of this policy

Healthwatch Camden's commitment to equality and diversity is an active one. This document should be amended on a regular basis as part of this active commitment.

Healthwatch Camden's equality and diversity policy will be reviewed as and when required and in line with changes in legislation.

Healthwatch Camden will also seek to keep abreast of new developments in Equality and Diversity practice and actively seek information on this issue.

[The Equality Act 2010](#)

Date of issue: 29 July 2013
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