



Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion are at the heart of Healthwatch Rochdale's values. We want to go beyond legislation and celebrate diversity. We will design our programs of work to meet the diverse needs of the residents of the Rochdale borough and to challenge inequality. Our sole purpose as an organisation is to give a strong and powerful voice to people who often go unheard within Rochdale.

We believe that everyone should have a fair and equal experience of health or social care. We recognise that some people and communities face multiple layers of disadvantage and discrimination, and we will ensure that our approach to our work reflects this.

We will work to prevent and challenge discrimination and inequality in all our functions. Our approach to these issues is more important than ever, as we seek to understand and mitigate the different and disproportionate impact that COVID-19 is having on people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act.

Healthwatch Rochdale recognises that certain groups and individuals in society are oppressed and disadvantaged due to discrimination directed against them. In all its work, Healthwatch Rochdale will work to remove any barriers, bias or discrimination that prevents individuals or groups from realising their potential and contributing fully to our organisation's performance to develop an organisational culture that positively values diversity in the Rochdale borough.

PURPOSE

This policy aims to outline Healthwatch Rochdale's commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity and equal treatment for all staff, volunteers and service users in terms of employment, volunteering, and access to services. This policy will be reviewed on an on-going basis and amended in line with new developments in Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion best practice. This policy is non-contractual.

Diversity is an asset at Healthwatch Rochdale, and this means we will provide a fair and equal service for all whilst celebrating diversity and championing Healthwatch Rochdale.

Healthwatch Rochdale is committed to challenging all forms of discrimination and we believe that everyone should be treated with fairness and respect. We are working towards an inclusive culture where people can bring their whole self to work, or to volunteer, in order to succeed.

Healthwatch Rochdale's commitment to anti-discriminatory practice relates to any type of discrimination, as set out in the Glossary at the end of this policy.

SCOPE

The policy applies to Healthwatch Rochdale employees, board members, volunteers, consultants, service users and the general public in terms of service provision. Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to discriminate against people because of a protected characteristic. This list is not exhaustive.

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Race
5. Sex
6. Religion or belief
7. Gender reassignment
8. Marriage and civil partnership
9. Sexual orientation
10. Pregnancy and maternity

Responsibilities

By creating a safe and inclusive environment where all processes are open and transparent, Healthwatch Rochdale have a responsibility to make sure that everyone is valued and can therefore make a valid contribution to Healthwatch Rochdale.

Healthwatch Rochdale value everyone as an individual and supports them, celebrates differences, and wants both staff and volunteers to look forward to coming to work or attending their volunteering opportunities.

Healthwatch Rochdale is working towards an inclusive culture with a fairness and respect for all. We value diversity.

Healthwatch Rochdale will not discriminate and will treat everybody with fairness and respect, this goes beyond the law and legislation.

We are committed to Inclusion for all, which means taking responsibility for:

- Fair recruitment and selection
- Training that is accessible to all
- A people centred culture
- Reasonable adjustments for disabled
- Providing working arrangements and conditions for a diverse range of employees and volunteers
- Providing a culture where dignity and respect are the norm
- Ensuring a safe environment free from harassment and bullying
- Offering flexible working or volunteering

DIGNITY AND RESPECT AT WORK

LAW / EQUALITY ACT 2010

Healthwatch Rochdale are committed to building a culture where everyone has the opportunity and support to progress and excel.

We are committed to creating an environment for all staff to be their authentic self and reach their full potential.

Aims

Healthwatch Rochdale is committed to working with equality, valuing diversity, and inclusivity as a core value.

Healthwatch Rochdale will aim to remove any barriers, bias or discrimination that prevents individuals or groups from realising their potential and contributing fully to our organisation.

We recognise service users may experience barriers to access health and social care services and we are committed to bringing any issues to the attention of partners/organisations.

All forms of discrimination are unacceptable, regardless of whether there was any intention to discriminate or not.

Staff and volunteers have a duty to co-operate with Healthwatch Rochdale to ensure that this policy is effective in ensuring equal opportunities and in preventing discrimination.

Employees and volunteers should draw the attention of their line manager to suspected unfair treatment, discriminatory acts, practices or cases of bullying or harassment.

Healthwatch Rochdale aims to:

- Promote equality of opportunity
- Celebrate and value diversity
- Eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination

Healthwatch Rochdale will provide equality of opportunity and equal treatment as an integral part of good practice. The organisation is committed to a working environment in which the contribution and needs of everyone are fully valued and recognised.

It will support staff, volunteers and members in not tolerating any inappropriate, violent or abusive behaviour from colleagues, volunteers, other organisations or clients.

Recruitment and Training

Healthwatch Rochdale will ensure that no job applicant, volunteer applicant, employee, nor volunteer is treated unfairly in the recruitment process.

We will promote recruitment across the Rochdale borough and have a transparent and compliant recruitment process to ensure that we have a fair representation.

Where appropriate training opportunities will be adapted and made available to everyone taking into account digital exclusion, languages and barriers to digital technology.

Healthwatch Rochdale as a Service Provider

Our service will be accessible for all. In developing its services and publicity materials, Healthwatch Rochdale will make sure that all are accessible.

Those people experiencing discrimination may experience particular issues when accessing health and social care services. When working with partner organisations within the borough, Healthwatch Rochdale will be aware of discriminatory practice and how this may manifest itself. Staff and volunteers will be supported in bringing any issues to the attention of partner organisations.

Complaints

Healthwatch Rochdale will treat seriously any complaints of unfair treatment, unlawful discrimination made by employees, board, volunteers, consultants, service users and will act where appropriate.

All complaints made by external parties will be investigated in accordance with Healthwatch Rochdale's Complaints Procedure and the complainant will be informed of the outcome.

In the event of an investigation concerning a complaint against an employee, the Grievance Policy and Procedures will be followed and any action necessary dealt with under Disciplinary Procedure.

GLOSSARY

Protected characteristics

The protected characteristics as listed in the Equality Act 2010 are sex, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, age, disability, pregnancy and maternity.

Disability

Under the Equality Act 2010, a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Gender reassignment

A transsexual person is someone who proposes to, starts, or has completed a process to change his or her gender. The person does not have to be under medical supervision.

Race

Race includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins. A racial group can be made up of two or more different racial groups (e.g., Black Britons). The change from BAME has been replaced with PERI - people experiencing racial inequalities, or CERI - communities experiencing racial inequalities.

<https://www.gmcvo.org.uk/publications/gmeqal-inclusive-language-guidance>

Religion or belief

Under the Equality Act 2010, religion includes any religion. It also includes lack of religion, in other words employees or jobseekers are protected if they do not follow a certain religion or have no religion at all. Additionally, a religion must have a clear structure and belief system. Belief means any religious or philosophical belief or a lack of such belief. To be protected, a belief must satisfy various criteria, including that it is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour.

Sexual orientation

Includes bisexual, gay, heterosexual, and lesbian people.

Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourable than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have (see perceptive discrimination below), or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic (see associative discrimination below).

Associative discrimination

This is direct discrimination against someone because they are linked or associated with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

Perceptive discrimination

This is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination can occur when you have a condition, rule, policy or even a practice in your company that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic and which cannot be justified in relation to the job.

Harassment

Harassment is "unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristics, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual".

Third party harassment

Harassment of employees by people (third parties) who are not employees of your company, such as clients. Healthwatch Sutton has a duty to prevent harassment and may be liable if aware that harassment has occurred on at least two previous occasions and does not take reasonable steps to prevent it from happening again.

Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint about discrimination or harassment or raised a grievance under the Equality Act; or because they are suspected of doing so. An employee is not protected from victimisation if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint.

Positive action

Some people with protected characteristics are disadvantaged or under-represented in some areas of life, or have particular needs linked to their characteristic. They may need extra help or encouragement if they are to have the same chances as everyone else. The new positive action provisions held within the Equality Act 2010 enable service providers to take proportionate steps to help people overcome their disadvantages or to meet their needs.