

## Volunteer Policy

### Background

Engaging Communities Solutions CIC (ECS) currently holds the contracts for the delivery of Healthwatch across multiple Local Authority Areas.

This volunteer policy sets out the principles and practice by which we involve volunteers and is relevant to staff, volunteers, Healthwatch Advisory Board (HAB) members and ECS Board Members within the organisation. It aims to create a common understanding and to clarify roles and responsibilities to ensure the highest standards are maintained in relation to the management of volunteers.

ECS recognise volunteers as an integral part of the organisation. Their contribution supports our mission and strategic aims, and complements the role of paid staff. We aim to encourage and support volunteer involvement to ensure that volunteering benefits the organisation, its clients and the volunteers themselves.

The ECS Volunteer Handbook gives further details about the support and procedures in place for the recruitment and ongoing support provided to volunteers.

### ECS aims to offer volunteering opportunities that provide...

- **Good quality** opportunities for volunteers to play an active role in helping their community.
- **Varied** types of roles for volunteers, full details are set out in the Volunteer Handbook.
- **Inclusive** opportunities to encourage a diverse range of people to volunteer with us from all groups, communities and backgrounds irrespective of their protected characteristics.
- **Well-structured** roles that give volunteers clear information about what is and is not expected of them.
- **Recognised** skills and experiences the volunteer has developed that they can use for future employment or volunteering opportunities or demonstrate self-development
- **Recognition and acknowledgement** of the contribution volunteers have made in their local communities and to ECS

### ECS is committed to providing:

- **Induction and training and development** - volunteers will have a core induction with training to equip them for their role; training to include safeguarding, data protection and valuing diversity and equality
- **Support and supervision** - volunteers will be offered support and supervision as appropriate and this is discussed during induction. Arrangements vary according to the volunteer and the role undertaken, and may include telephone support, group meetings or one to one reviews.
- **Health & Safety** - volunteers are treated the same as paid staff with regards to health and safety
- **Expenses** - are paid to volunteers in line with the policy set out in the Volunteer Handbook
- **Insurance** all volunteers are covered by ECS liability insurance policy whilst working on all contracts being delivered by ECS.

### Recruitment and selection

ECS is committed to offering a flexible range of opportunities and to encouraging a diversity of people to volunteer with us, including those from under-represented groups such as youth, people with a disability, older people and people from black and minority ethnic communities.

Equal opportunities principles will be adhered to in recruiting volunteers. Opportunities will be widely promoted, so as to attract interest from different sectors of the community. Positive action to target recruitment may be used where appropriate. ECS will utilise several different advertising media to attract volunteers.

ECS recognise that there are costs associated with volunteer involvement and will seek to ensure adequate financial and staffing resources are available for the development and support of volunteering.

### **Expectations of Volunteers**

ECS expects volunteers to carry out their activities as follows:

- **Code of conduct** - volunteers are expected to be reliable and honest and to adhere to the code of conduct as set out in the ECS Volunteer Handbook
- **Confidentiality** - all volunteers are expected to be aware of and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018/EU GDPR and to sign a confidentiality agreement
- **Respect** - to treat everyone with respect and courtesy, including respecting other people's opinion and beliefs
- **Equality and Diversity** – all volunteers are expected to promote equality of opportunity and respect diversity
- **Disclosure and Barring Checks (DBS)** - volunteers will be required to have a current standard or enhanced DBS check provided through ECS

### **Complaints**

If a volunteer is experiencing problems with the organisation, a staff member or another volunteer they are encouraged to raise these issues, if they feel able, with the local manager.

If the problem cannot be resolved they should raise a formal complaint using the ECS Complaints procedure.