

Volunteering with Healthwatch Rutland

What is Healthwatch Rutland?

Healthwatch Rutland is the voice of the people of the county on all aspects of health and social care. Our aim is to make sure the public's views on these crucial services are heard. We listen to their views and concerns and ensure that the decision makers in the relevant service providers hear their voice. By doing this we hope to improve services in our community.

The Value Volunteers Bring to Healthwatch Rutland

Volunteers bring a variety of skills and a fresh perspective:

- They can offer time and passion to a particular project, adding value to our work
- They have knowledge of our local communities enabling us to build stronger links with the local community
- They act as ambassadors, promoting Healthwatch Rutland's activities and services

Healthwatch Rutland welcomes volunteers and aims to involve a diverse range of people from across the county, who are reflective of the local community.

What Does Volunteering with Healthwatch Rutland Involve?

All volunteers belong to the Operations Group, which coordinates and develops our activities and have the opportunity to get involved in individual projects. The amount of time they give to Healthwatch is up to them.

Projects may involve:

- carrying out a listening role, collecting the experiences of people who access services for example
- representing Healthwatch Rutland at a variety of meetings, groups or committees discussing the provision of health and social care services for Rutland residents
- participation in producing reports and surveys
- helping to organise Healthwatch Rutland events or representing Healthwatch Rutland at other organisation's events
- undertaking planned visits to health and social care facilities as a trained Enter & View representative

What Can People Get from Volunteering with Healthwatch Rutland?

Healthwatch Rutland can provide new challenges and help people learn new skills. It can allow people to make a positive difference to our community. It can also provide an opportunity to meet new people and be involved with something personally rewarding.

For some volunteering for Healthwatch Rutland can be a stepping stone into employment or training opportunities. Healthwatch Rutland will support volunteers on this journey by providing references to those who have completed a volunteering project or volunteered for three months or more.

Selection, Induction, Training and Ongoing Support

Because we sometimes work with vulnerable people and deal with sensitive information we must have a selection process. We use one or more of the following methods, dependent on the role:

- Informal or formal interview
- References - all volunteers must give the names of 2 people who can be approached for personal references
- All volunteers must have a Disclosure and Barring Service check, in line with Healthwatch Rutland's Safeguarding Policy
- We provide induction and appropriate ongoing training for volunteers, linked to their volunteering role, so that they are prepared for the tasks they volunteer for, e.g. safeguarding, Enter and View etc
- We provided support; this could be through one to ones with a staff member or peer support
- Volunteers have the opportunity to feedback on the progress of their volunteering role, discuss personal development needs or talk about any problems. Volunteers will be offered the opportunity of an annual development review meeting

Volunteer Expenses

As part of its commitment to ensuring equity of access to volunteering opportunities, Healthwatch Rutland is committed to paying pre-agreed out of pocket expenses to volunteers, that are incurred solely in undertaking the volunteering role. Details can be found in the Healthwatch Rutland Volunteer Involvement Policy (available online at www.healthwatchrutland.co.uk).

Volunteer Responsibilities

All Healthwatch Rutland volunteer must agree to abide by all Healthwatch Rutland policies (available online at www.healthwatchrutland.co.uk). In particular, the Healthwatch Rutland Code of Conduct explains what is expected of anyone representing Healthwatch Rutland, including volunteers.