



**Job title: Research Officer**

**Contract: Permanent, Full-time**

**Salary: £23,000 - £28,000 per annum, plus pension**

**Location: Earls Colne, Essex**

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### **Background and role description**

Healthwatch Essex is an award-winning charity that aims to change the future of the NHS and social care. One of the ways we do this is by using innovative research methodologies designed to access in-depth accounts of patient, service-user, carer, and staff experiences of health and care.

We are looking for an enthusiastic and motivated person to join a small but dynamic team in the role of **Research Officer**. You will be part of the Research Team and carry out research on people's lived experience of health and social care to inform local policy and practice. We work closely with stakeholders from the NHS, local authorities and universities, and voluntary and community organisations to help shape and improve the quality of care and user involvement.

The post holder will be expected to scope out and design a research project, collect data, carry out data analysis, write high quality reports and papers and present their work. Our projects for the forthcoming year will reflect our core principles:

- to address issues that cut across health and social care boundaries;
- to seek out the stories of those who are 'seldom heard' or poorly represented;
- to engage with users and providers in the co-production of research;
- to address issues where we can make an impact by influencing policy and practice.

Recent studies include an ethnography of end-of-life care, a project on self-care for older adults with social care needs and multiple long-term conditions, and a project on the health and social care experiences of homeless people in Essex.

The post holder will have a relevant PhD, or master's degree and expertise in applied social science research methods, preferably in health and social care. It is expected that the output of the research will be of sufficiently high standard to make Healthwatch Essex visible on a national scale, competing alongside comparable charities, think tanks, universities and private-sector research consultancies. This includes the publication of articles in peer-reviewed journals, as well as our own highly-regarded reports and other publications.

## **Key accountabilities**

The post holder will be expected to:

- Co-design research along with other members of the team.
- Engage key stakeholders in design and implementation of research.
- Prepare and submit research proposals for ethics approval.
- Carry out associated research administration responsibilities.
- Implement study design and carry out data gathering activities.
- Analyse and report findings.
- Be actively involved in the dissemination of research outputs through participation in national conferences, writing for peer-reviewed journals, and presenting research outputs to our stakeholders.
- Adhere to Healthwatch Essex's data protection protocol (as well as other relevant policies and procedures) and to conduct research to high ethical standards.
- Comply with project deadlines and time frames.
- Attend team meetings and liaise and work with other members of the Healthwatch Essex team as required.
- Participate positively in regular supervision and annual appraisal.
- Conduct other tasks and duties as considered reasonable by the Research Manager and CEO.

## **Person specification**

The post holder will be highly capable of conducting qualitative research, and possess and understanding of quantitative research, with a critical and analytical eye for both detail and the bigger picture. You will be an effective communicator, with excellent written and verbal skills, and comfortable working within a small and ambitious team, as well as with volunteers.

You will have a high regard for the sensitivities of working within health and social care and be confident in using innovative but robust means of handling and presenting information in order to illuminate the lived experience of users of health and social care. You will show a high regard for the values and principles of Healthwatch Essex and be willing to work flexibly to achieve the organisation's strategic objectives. The nature of this role mean that a DBS check will be required.

## **Knowledge, skills attributes and experience**

### **Essential:**

- Have completed a postgraduate qualification including a qualitative research study in sociology, health studies, or relevant social science subject.
- Knowledge and experience of qualitative methods, research design, data gathering (e.g. interviews and focus groups), analysis and reporting.
- Demonstrated experience of using/undertaking applied social research in clinical, health and/or social care settings
- Proven experience of project management with high levels of independence

- Experience or a willingness to work in a fast-paced office environment, managing a potentially unpredictable workload.
- An understanding of the peer-review publication process in qualitative research.
- Knowledge and experience of health and social care policy.
- Knowledge and experience of research governance.
- Ability to organise and prioritise workload, and work using own initiative.
- Possess sufficient knowledge of phenomenological, or closely related qualitative methodologies, to contribute to the development of original research projects.
- Excellent IT skills.
- Interpersonal skills that enable you to work with colleagues, external stakeholders and research participants.

**Desirable:**

- Have a PhD in sociology, health studies, or relevant social science subject.
- Knowledge, experience of, or an interest in, people with learning disabilities and a desire to help instigate evidence-informed policy changes.
- Knowledge and experience of researching sensitive issues relevant to the contemporary social context of health and social care.
- Experience of working with research or policy stakeholders.
- Experience and knowledge of social media and its applications.
- Evidence of continuing personal and professional development.

**About Healthwatch Essex**

Healthwatch Essex was created as a result of the Health and Social Care Act 2012, and the Government's aim of 'putting patients and the public first' through strengthening their collective voice. The Act created a national network of local Healthwatch organisations, as well as a national umbrella organisation, Healthwatch England. The Act also gives local Healthwatch organisations certain powers in law to carry out their role, as well as certain obligations.

Our small team comprises thirteen members of professional staff, as well as a thriving network of volunteers and a Board of Trustees. Our work is primarily grant funded by central government (including the Department of Health), via Essex County Council, although we also undertake commissioned work through our subsidiary organisation HWE Insights Ltd.

For more information about Healthwatch Essex, visit [www.healthwatchessex.org.uk](http://www.healthwatchessex.org.uk), or contact Dr John Day, Research Manager: [john.day@healthwatchessex.org.uk](mailto:john.day@healthwatchessex.org.uk)

Healthwatch Essex is committed to providing equal opportunities in the recruitment, training and development of employees.