



Job title: Engagement Officer

Salary: £22,000 - £24,000 per annum FTE

Location: Earls Colne, Essex

Background

Healthwatch Essex is an award-winning charity which aims to be 'an independent voice for the people of Essex, helping to shape and improve local health and social care services'. We are a small and growing organisation, with powers and responsibilities set in law to help us achieve our role of changing health and social care for the better. We do this by making sure that the voice and lived experience of all people in Essex is taken account of by the people who commission and deliver local NHS and social care services.

Our work includes engaging the public in innovative and effective ways, such as films and panel debates, as well as carrying out high-quality social research. We also provide a telephone- and web-based information service to help the public access and understand the NHS and social care services. Above all, we aim to influence the decisions made by local health and social care authorities. Our success depends on building constructive partnerships with the NHS, local authorities, and voluntary and community organisations.

We're a small and ambitious team of professionals and trained volunteers, known as 'Ambassadors'. We want to be an effective agent of local change, and to reflect the highest standards of national and international best practice.

Healthwatch Essex was created as a result of the Health & 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.

For more information about Healthwatch Essex, visit www.healthwatchessex.org.uk, or contact Dan Potts 01376 572829

The role

The Engagement Officer will be responsible for the day-to-day management of Healthwatch Essex (HWE) volunteers, and for working with the HWE team to deliver a variety of outreach and engagement and research-based events and projects.

The post holder will have knowledge and experience of outreach/engagement, as well as experience of planning and running events and projects. The role requires flexibility and multi-tasking, as well as confidence to complete varied tasks as delegated.

Overall, duties will differ according to the requirements of the HWE operational plan, but day-to-day responsibilities include ensuring that project work will be varied, but the main purpose is to ensure that the influence of HWE is maximised through the delivery of high-quality and well-organised events and activities that will capture and articulate the voice and lived experience of the people of Essex. This includes organisation of events ranging from volunteer celebrations to consensus conferences and workshops aimed at bringing together patients, service users and professionals within health and social care.

Other projects include the use of novel – as well as traditional – modes of outreach and engagement, such as the use of film. In conjunction with the Senior Management Team, the post holder will have responsibility for planning timescales, assessing risks, and monitoring and evaluating outcomes activities associated with projects.

Working alongside the HWE team, the Engagement Officer will ensure that HWE events and projects, as well as voluntary activities, are coherent, focused, and conducted in accordance with the principles and standards as set out in the HWE Strategic Plan.

Key accountabilities

- To work with HWE staff, and especially the Senior Management Team, to support the delivery of high quality and well-organised HWE projects and events. This includes:
 - project planning, to ensure that the aims, objectives and outcomes of any project are clear and in line with HWE strategy and plans, and that the intended activity is likely to achieve those outcomes; that suitable milestones and monitoring are in place; that budgets are realistic and represent best value; and that risks have been assessed.
 - project delivery, including working with and coordinating HWE volunteers and staff, as well as external partners/stakeholders, suppliers and contractors, to ensure that HWE projects and events are delivered according to plan;
 - ensuring that project delivery is on time and on budget, and that risk mitigations are in place;
 - working with the HWE Communications Lead to ensure that there is a PR and communications plan in place, and that it is implemented as

- appropriate;
 - ensuring that projects/events are evaluated appropriately, that outcomes are monitored, and that feedback is captured and provided to stakeholders.
- To work with the CEO, HWE staff and the Board of Directors to develop opportunities for diversifying revenue streams for HWE, whether through traded or commissioned activities, such as training, research and public engagement, or the exploration of opportunities outside the county of Essex.
 - To conduct other tasks and duties as considered reasonable by the CEO.

Person specification

The post holder will be highly organised, and an engaging and effective communicator, with good written and verbal skills. You will be capable of building effective relationships with individuals and organisations, including volunteers, and will be comfortable and highly capable in planning, coordinating and delivering different projects and events. You will have a high regard for the sensitivities of working within health and social care, and be able to demonstrate a commitment to advancing the interests of patients, service users and the public within the changing landscape of health and social care.

You will also be enthusiastic about working within a small and ambitious team, with a demonstrable regard for the values and principles of Healthwatch Essex and a willingness to work flexibly to achieve the organisation's strategic objectives.

Knowledge, skills attributes and experience

Essential

- Is educated to degree level, or has equivalent experience or related qualifications.
- Knowledge and experience of managing volunteers and/or staff.
- Demonstrable experience of managing projects and/or events, especially within the context of a complex and/or multi-agency environment.
- Experience of working in or knowledge of the voluntary and community sector and/or health and social care.
- Experience of working in a fast-paced office environment, managing a potentially unpredictable workload.
- Knowledge and experience of using IT-systems, including Microsoft Office and the internet.
- Experience and knowledge of social media and its applications.

Desirable

- Experience of applied social research.

- Experience of community outreach and engagement.