

**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement**

Healthwatch Sutton is fully committed to valuing diversity and working with equality as a core value and aims to promote equality of opportunity, celebrate and value diversity, and eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination. HWS is committed to ensuring that staff, directors, volunteers, members and the general public is less favourably treated or denied opportunities because of their:

* Age
* Disability
* Race
* Sex
* Religion or cultural beliefs
* Gender reassignment
* Marital status and civil partnership
* Sexual orientation
* Pregnancy and maternity

*(‘Protected characteristics’ as defined in the Equalities Act 2010)*

HWS recognises that Sutton is socially and culturally diverse and believes its work is enriched by the varying qualities and experience brought by people from Sutton’s communities to their work as directors, employees or volunteers. This diversity is recognised, respected and valued.

HWS recognises that certain groups and individuals in society are oppressed and disadvantaged due to discrimination directed against them. In all its work, HWS 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.

When listening to communities and individuals, HWS will make every effort to understand the context in which people live their lives. Where understanding is more difficult, HWS staff, directors and volunteers will be supported in respectfully seeking information.

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

HWS recognises that the promotion of equal opportunities requires more than passive opposition to discrimination; we are therefore committed to taking positive action towards equality of opportunity, recognising that the limited resources and the operational needs of the organisation may impose justifiable restrictions upon our ability to take such action.

HWS demonstrates its commitment to this statement in their Equality and Diversity Policy.