

## **Volunteering Report 2024-25**

### **Purpose**

1. This report provides an update on Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough involvement of volunteers, for the period 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024.

### **Key issues**

2. We currently have 92 active volunteers, across all our volunteering roles. Some of these roles are transient as they are linked to specific projects.
3. We continue to recruit to all our available volunteering roles using a variety of strategies to do so. We are also trying to make it easier to create new volunteering opportunities by asking all of the team to consider ways in which they can involve volunteers in their work.
4. We will continue to seek the views of our volunteers and to act on them, learn from them and give feedback following the survey carried out in early 2024. Our volunteers will be actively involved re-assessment for Investors in Volunteering in Spring 2025.
5. We will continue to develop Youthwatch to improve our levels of engagement with young people.
6. The volunteer strategy will be reviewed to align with the new organisation strategy in April 2025.

### **Action required by the Board**

The Board is asked to:

- Note the report

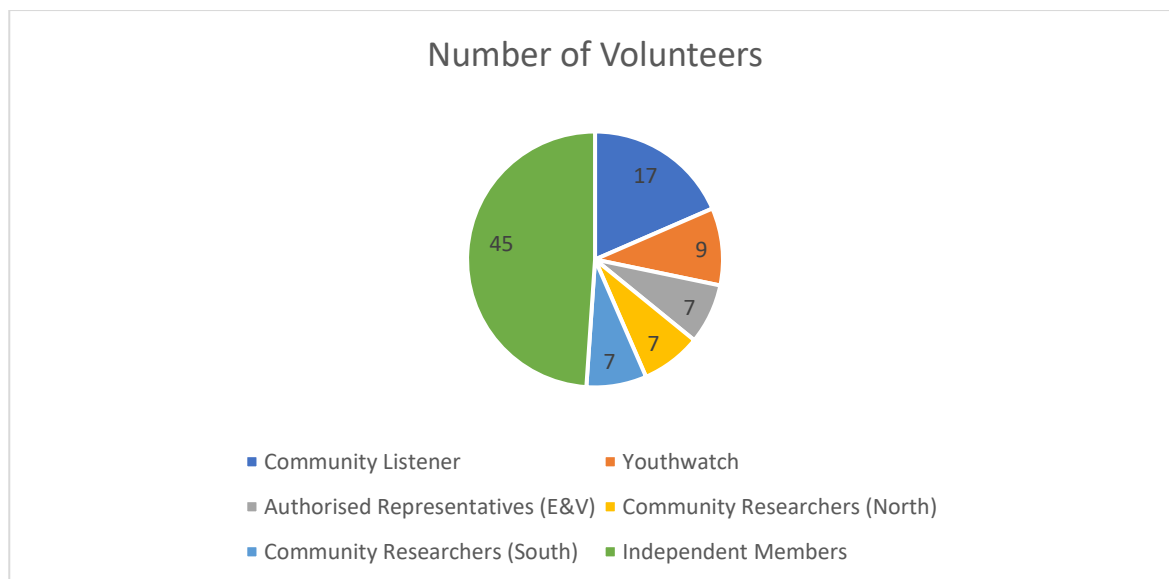
### **Author**

Caroline Tyrrell-Jones – Head of Operations.

14 January 2025

## Volunteer numbers

7. The chart below shows numbers of volunteers, correct at the end of December 2024, displaying the number of volunteers carrying out each role. Please note, some of our volunteers carry out more than one volunteering role.



8. Please note, the number of volunteers working as Community Researchers (North) has recently dropped from 16 to 7 as this project came to an end on 31 October 2024. Some volunteers remain in this role attending their local Integrated Neighbourhood board meetings.

## Recruitment

9. We are currently actively recruiting for all our volunteer roles. We have a robust recruitment process in place with timescales set for each stage to ensure all expressions of interest are followed up swiftly. It is important to note that not all expressions of interest go on to become volunteers as some people, following initially getting in touch may change their minds or do not respond to follow-up contact.
10. Our Engagement team promote our volunteering opportunities at events and we also advertise on social media. We also attend recruitment events,

although these have not always proved to be an effective way to recruit, with some exceptions to this, for example at recent Anglia Ruskin events a number of expressions of interest were received, all of which have been followed up.

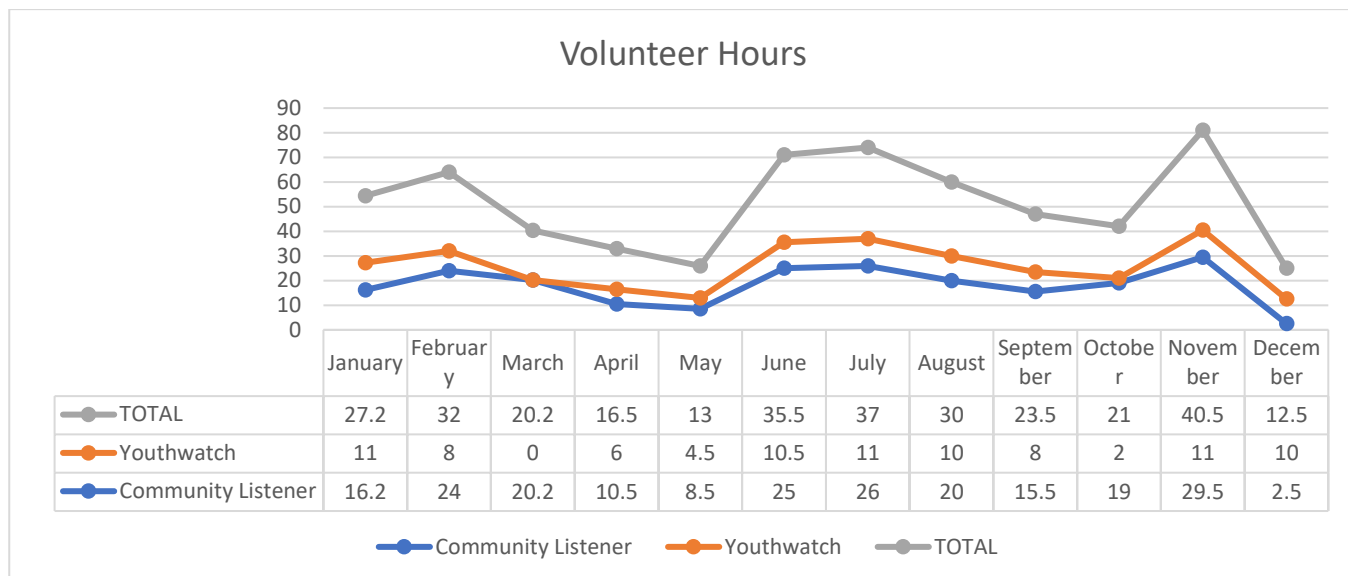
11. We continue to use a range of approaches to recruit new volunteers, with targeted action to fill gaps in terms of geographic cover and also to keep our volunteer base as diverse and representative as possible, including further recruitment of young volunteers. **We will aim to recruit at least one new volunteer per month.** There will also be focus on retention of our existing volunteers although it acknowledged that at times some of our volunteers find it necessary to pause or cease their activity due to a range of factors.

### **Our volunteer roles**

12. Currently we have volunteers working in the following roles:
  - **Community Listener** – these volunteers assist our Engagement Team, increasing our capacity to speak to more people at events.
  - **Youthwatch Volunteer** – these are our younger volunteers who assist us in hearing more feedback from young people and also work on specific projects, such as our Vaping Survey.
  - **Authorised Representatives** – these volunteers assist with carrying out our enter and View visits
  - **Community Researchers** – These volunteers assist us in specific project work separately commissioned by the ICB. In the North Place the project has now reached a conclusion (End October 2024) with the South Place project finishing at the end of March 2025.
  - **Independent Members** – this group of volunteers with specific areas of lived experience attend our Partnership Board meetings.
  - **Non-executive directors** – volunteer as members of our Board. The management of our Non-executive directors (NEDS) is not covered by our Volunteer Manager.

### **Volunteer hours**

13. We track the collective number of hours contributed by our dedicated volunteers to support the work of Healthwatch. The chart below highlights the total hours contributed by our Community Listener and Youthwatch volunteers throughout 2024.



### Keeping in touch with our volunteers – our survey

14. During early 2024 we carried out a survey to find out the views of our volunteers about their experience of volunteering with us. Responses to the survey were largely positive, although there some points raised which we can learn from. Points of interest were:

- 100% reported that they felt well supported by their key contact for volunteering although one respondent said they were unsure who their primary point of contact was. 97% said they would know who to go to if they had a problem. All respondents also reported that they felt valued by Healthwatch and that we thanked them for their involvement.
- We learned that most volunteers felt they received adequate training and support to engage fairly and appropriately with people during their volunteering activities, including safeguarding. However, some volunteers could not recall completing specific training in these areas, despite it being provided during induction. This suggests a potential need to improve how we document and communicate training. Implementing a training checklist or issuing certificates for completed training modules could help volunteers better understand what has been covered. This would also provide a clear framework for them to raise concerns if they feel their training in any area is insufficient for their role.
- 83% of respondents said they felt their time and skills were well used by our Healthwatch. There were comments about some projects taking time to get going (although understood this was often beyond our control). One

respondent reported that they have contacts and experience, also access to meetings that Healthwatch could be involved with but are not.

- 96% reported that they felt their volunteering with Healthwatch has improved their skills. One respondent reported that it has opened their eyes to new experiences, new ways of working and how to be usefully involved in their community. Another volunteer said their confidence has been improved, and in a further response a volunteer had learned how to create surveys.
- 93% of respondents told us they felt we provided a good level of feedback about the difference their involvement has made. We also heard from others that we could improve in this area. One person who was happy with our level of feedback acknowledged that it can take a long time for change to happen making it difficult to establish how much impact had been made.
- We heard from 97% of respondents that the opportunities we offer are flexible enough for their needs, we also heard comments that some volunteers would like to see incentives for their volunteering involvement. Volunteers appreciated being given plenty of notice of upcoming opportunities which allowed them to plan their schedules.
- We heard that 97% of respondents felt they are able to share their views about what Healthwatch does. One person shared that they would like to see much more done to promote what we do at a local level, helping people to understand we are 'the' organisation to report feedback to and also to get information and support. They stated that it is their 'dream' that the work of Healthwatch is understood more widely in the community and heard of in the same way organisations such as Citizens Advice Bureau are.
- 81% respondents felt they are offered sufficient opportunities to network with other volunteers. Regular volunteer catch-ups are offered in each area, however these are not always well attended. Our volunteers are regularly asked for their views about times which would work best for them to meet and meeting times are adjusted accordingly.

### **Valuing our volunteers**

15. We have held monthly volunteering meetings for our Community Listener volunteers to enable them to connect with their peers and share experiences, as well as being kept updated with what our Healthwatch are doing including future plans. Our other groups of volunteers also have regular opportunities to catch up, arranged by their own Project Manager. Youthwatch meet on a monthly basis on an evening in line with their preferences and our Partnership

Development Manager keeps in touch with our Independent Member volunteers in between meetings. We also hold other events including a 'Thank you' events during Volunteers week in June to give us opportunities to express our gratitude to our volunteers for their ongoing support and involvement.

## **Future plans for volunteering**

### *Investors in Volunteering*

16. We are currently in the process of renewing our Investors in Volunteering quality mark. We were last assessed in 2020 and are due to be reassessed during late spring 2025.

### *Future Recruitment Metrics*

17. We will endeavour to recruit one new volunteer per month during 2025, as well as replacing volunteers who resign from their involvement with us.

### *New roles*

18. We will create more flexibility in creating new volunteering roles, with all members of the team being encouraged to look at ways they could involve volunteers in their work. We are developing new roles that align with the new strategy that is currently in progress.

### *Youthwatch*

19. We will continue to develop our Youthwatch and overall levels of involvement of young volunteers, including working with the group to identify new projects they are interested in working on.

### *Volunteer Management System*

20. During the early part of 2025 we will be starting to use a new volunteer management system (CRM) following doing some research on various systems available. This will enable us to better manage our recruitment processes, also better options for reporting including logging volunteer hours. There is also the option of allowing volunteers to interface with the system,

Some of our Youthwatch Volunteers



North Place Integrated Neighbourhood Volunteers

