

news & views

your newsletter from Healthwatch Redbridge
issue 5 - Volunteer Special: Summer 2015

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Do you live in Redbridge & want to make a difference to local health & care services? Volunteer with Healthwatch Redbridge!

Healthwatch Redbridge leads award winning project to raise involvement for deaf people.

Healthwatch Redbridge led a partnership of other Healthwatch's to win two national awards championing the involvement and training of deaf people to become Enter and View representatives and mystery shoppers working across the North, Central and East London region.

Working with 13 local Healthwatch; Healthwatch Redbridge developed and supported the involvement of profoundly deaf people who use British Sign Language (BSL). The project also worked closely with the British Deaf Association, a user led organisation that supported the engagement to reach deaf people and involve them in a series of training sessions to train to become volunteer representatives.



Left: Members of the HENCEL project steering group from left to right: Robert, Healthwatch Haringey; Jaime, HW Waltham Forest; Cathy, HW Redbridge; Emma, HW Islington; Georgina, HW England; Shelly, HW Camden; and Lorna from HW Enfield

Cathy Turland, Chief Executive of Healthwatch Redbridge said:

"I am absolutely delighted that this important work has been recognised not just for its creativity but also for its involvement of underrepresented groups. Deaf people have told us that for a long time they have felt unheard. Now they tell us they have a voice."

Please note that the views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of Healthwatch Redbridge.



Volunteering at Healthwatch Redbridge

In June we celebrated volunteer week so we thought what better way to continue celebrating our volunteers than dedicating our summer newsletter to them.

We already have over 50 dedicated volunteers who between them have given us over 3000 hours of their time this year. Our volunteers are representative of our community and we work with individuals to ensure we meet their access needs when identifying any support they might need to be involved in the many and varied volunteering roles we have on offer.

By volunteering with Healthwatch Redbridge you can help us improve health and social care services in the borough. Some people have used volunteering as an opportunity to improve their communications skills and to gain experience which might help them in finding a job. We value our volunteers through offering opportunities to learn new skills and build their confidence which in turn helps us to engage better with local communities.

Abdullah Al Junaid
Volunteer Co-ordinator



Current Volunteering Roles

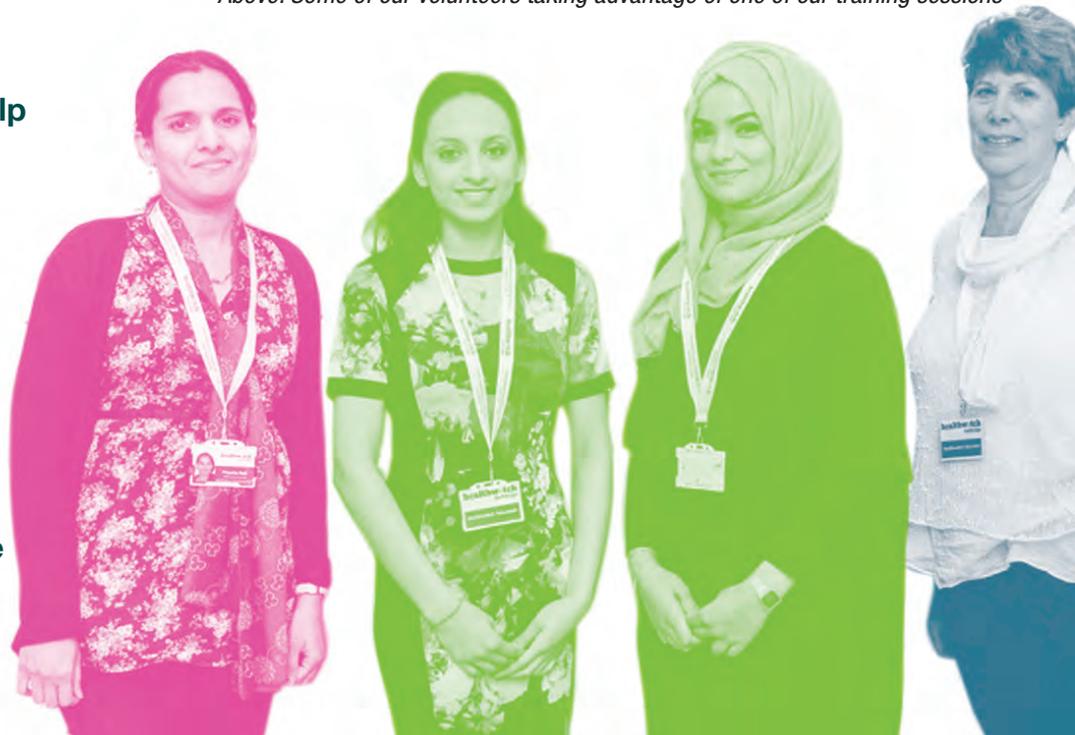


Above: Some of our volunteers taking advantage of one of our training sessions

Office Support

Volunteers are required to help with general office admin.

Duties may include updating member databases, creating documents on Microsoft, taking phone calls and taking messages. Volunteers will be required to be available for a minimum of five hours a week and have must have some basic office skills. Some training may be provided.





Above: Engagement Champion Shazad, at an outreach session in Ilford Central Library

Project Development Group

Volunteers are invited to join our Project Development Group who meet quarterly to discuss and support new projects for Healthwatch Redbridge development.

Engagement Champion

Volunteers are required to support and engage with the Redbridge community about their local experiences with health and social care services in Redbridge.

Engagement champions may visit places such as libraries, hospitals and community groups. Volunteers must be outgoing and approachable, some training may be available.



Above: Some of our Enter and View Representatives receiving their certificates for completing the course



Enter and View Representatives

We are currently looking for people to join our Enter and View team. The Enter and View programme is an important part of the way we work. Healthwatch representatives can visit and report on premises where health and social care services are being used by Redbridge residents such as hospitals, GP Practices and care homes for example.

Healthwatch needs people who can talk with users and take note of what is happening in places where problems have been reported, or where examples of interesting or good practice can be made known and publicised.

Healthwatch wants to attract a diverse group of Redbridge residents who would like to work for users and patients in this way, connect with them and represent their views. You will need some knowledge of health and social care services either from work, volunteering, or personal experience. Training and support will be given.



Above: Volunteers & community groups at the recent HENCEL event

Please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Abdullah on 0208 553 1236 or email Abdullah@healthwatchredbridge.co.uk for further information and an application pack.

Volunteering with Healthwatch Redbridge: a personal view

Priyanka Mehta started volunteering with Healthwatch Redbridge in December 2014. Her role included supporting Healthwatch Redbridge staff with office administration duties such as filing, data entry and supporting at local events.

Why did you choose to volunteer with Healthwatch Redbridge?

“I applied to volunteer because I wanted to gain experience working in an office environment, this would then hopefully be the necessary experience needed to apply for other jobs. I also learned about the work that Healthwatch Redbridge was doing, this just increased my interest.”

How has volunteering with us helped you?

“Before volunteering, I was shy and didn’t feel confident speaking to people. One important skill I gained was communication, HWR organised an Effective Engagement and Communication skills training session- this was a really beneficial training course which allowed me to understand how to communicate effectively. I used what I learnt in that session and applied it during my job interviews.”

What did you most enjoy about volunteering?

“I enjoyed working with all the team members at Healthwatch. They are all very helpful and supported me whilst I volunteered with them. I also enjoyed engaging with members of the public at events which allowed me to further develop my communication skills.”



Above: Abdullah explains office information to Priyanka

Since the interview Priyanka has found employment in a primary school and we wish her great success with her new venture.



Above: Office admin volunteer, Priyanka Mehta



could **you** be a volunteer for Healthwatch Redbridge?

If you would like to find out more about volunteering opportunities at Healthwatch Redbridge please visit www.healthwatchredbridge.co.uk for more information.

Or you can contact Abdullah on **020 8553 1236** or email Abdullah@healthwatchredbridge.co.uk