**Agenda item: Social Value Action Plan**

As part of the contract retender, we were required to provide a method statement detailing our social commitments, together with a timed Action Plan.

Social value (SV) in procurement is about making sure that contracts awarded by the Council create an overall positive impact on our people and communities. It can be divided into three main areas:

* social: this is about improving the wellbeing of individuals and communities, encouraging interconnectedness and mutual support among people
* economic: this focuses on promoting economic policies and business practices that uplift society’s wellbeing
* environmental: this stresses the importance of sustainable processes that take care of both the social and physical environment, ensuring a viable future for everyone

It is important to note that SV goes beyond delivering the core HW contract requirements, it is the additional community benefit we plan to achieve.

The Council chose the following Social Value Outcomes for the Healthwatch contract:

* Outcome 1: Create and support **volunteer opportunities for local people**
* Outcome 2: **Support staff who are carers and ensure flexible working practices**.
* Outcome 3: Have initiatives and **support for staff if they are the victim/survivor or perpetrator of domestic or sexual violence**.

In preparing our response we struck a balance between delivering what was realistic within our limited resources whilst being ambitious. Our Action Plan assesses the 25 commitments we made (over 3 years) as having the following impacts:

* **Minimal impact (12)** - these are commitments where we already delivering some SV but moving forward will require minimal additional work e.g. updating existing policies.
* **Moderate (9)** – these commitments build on what we do and will require additional resources to achieve them e.g. steps to become a dementia friendly organisation and wider recruitment of volunteers.
* **Significant (4)** – success will require working with new partners, identifying new training for staff and volunteers, and/or work required to achieve certification e.g. achieving Bronze and Solver awards relating to our signing up to the Armed Forces Community Covenant

HWBH’s financial model already supports SV by enabling us to recruit additional local people to our staff team in order to deliver the contract. We also deploy funding to support partnerships and deliver local VCSE sustainability e.g. we have funded Bridging Change to carry out engagement on our behalf.

The CEO and HWBH Board are responsible for delivering SV but as a small team, it is everyone’s responsibility.

**In summary**

For all three SV outcomes we will retain and attract the best employees and volunteers, reduce absenteeism, improve work-life balance and improve productivity, by offering:

* A free [Employee Assistance Programme](https://www.healthassured.org/?adgroup=Health%20Assured%20Prospects&msclkid=ebb0e246e9391e155968850274928224?utm_source=bing&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=*Brand&utm_term=health%20assured&utm_content=Health%20Assured%20%7C%20Prospects).
* Home working with appropriate equipment provided.
* Flexible working (including part-time roles and staff time to volunteer).
* And by updating our policies to provide for emergency leave (i.e. to support carers) and job sharing.

**Outcome 1: Volunteer opportunities**

A dedicated staff member leads the recruitment and ongoing support for volunteers.

Upskilling our volunteers can be a pathway to their employment e.g. with HWBH having recruited from our volunteer base. We also train our volunteers in diverse patient engagement techniques which enhances their knowledge of changes to local services.

Our volunteer support benefits the wider community by:

* **Ensuring the community shapes our work**.
* **Helping to scale our operations**, without creating additional financial strain. In 2023/24, volunteers provided 4,200 hours of support, equivalent to £92,000.
* **Increasing local community cohesion,** with volunteers connecting through their roles, fostering a greater sense of community spirit.

Additional activities we will undertake to achieve **Outcome 1** are:

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| **Activities** | **Detail (refer to action plan)** |
| **Flexible opportunities**  | We will offer flexible opportunities including short and long-term roles, weekday/weekend shifts, virtual volunteering and options to pause. (4) |
| **Enhanced recruitment practices**  | To diversify our volunteer base, we will:* Analyse volunteer role descriptions. (7)
* Analyse equalities data to inform future recruitment approaches e.g. to attract more people with long term conditions. (8)
* Work with partners to promote volunteering opportunities and proactively advertise roles with organisations that support people we want to attract e.g. Possabiity People (9).
* Become accredited as a [dementia friendly](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/support-age-well/register-be-age-and-dementia-friendly-business) organisation (10)
* Commit to sign the [Armed Forces Community Covenant](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/equality/brighton-hove-armed-forces-community-covenant). (11)
 |
| **Supporting students**  | To support university students to be ‘work ready’ we will offer placements and job training. We will advertise paid roles internally to final year students to retain local skills. (13-15) |
| **Recognising impact**  | We will hold quarterly appreciation events, evaluate volunteer satisfaction allowing us to improve and adapt our programme and provide a bespoke newsletter showing how their contributions are supporting our goals. (16-17) |

**Outcome 2: Supporting staff who are carers**

We provide a wide range of SV for our employees, including being a Real Living Wage employer and offering a flexible working environment, to ensure that all individuals can thrive in their caring roles and careers. Our approach enhances staff well-being and improves staff engagement.

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| **Activities** | **Detail (refer to action plan)** |
| **Promoting wellbeing**  | We will create an internal network for carers, where staff and volunteers can connect, share experiences, and offer mutual support. We will partner with the Carers’ Centre to provide people with access to information on financial and legal advice. (12) |
| **Flexible opportunities** | To remove employment barriers, we will identify staff who are carers and implement flexible working practices within 12 weeks of contract start date. (18) |
| **Organisational focus** | Our HR policies include equal opportunities for promotion, career development, and professional growth. We will revise our recruitment policy to extend guaranteed interviews to those who are carers., final year university students and ex armed forces personnel (19) |

**Outcome 3: Supporting staff who are victims of domestic or sexual violence**

HWBH fosters a safe, inclusive and supportive working environment, helping to deliver the [Pan-Sussex Strategy for Domestic Abuse](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/adult-social-care/keep-people-safe/sussex-wide-domestic-abuse-accommodation-and-support-strategy) and [Community safety and crime reduction strategy](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/community-safety-partnership/community-safety-and-crime-reduction-strategy-2023-2026). We include the protection of victims of [Modern Slavery](https://www.healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk/sites/healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk/files/Modern%20Slavery%20Policy_2.pdf) in our approach.

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| **Activities** | **Detail (refer to action plan)** |
| **Workplace safety**  | To protect people’s safety, we will update our [Domestic Violence Policy](https://www.healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk/sites/healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk/files/2024-11/Domestic%20Violence%20Policy.pdf) and be explicit about protections we offer (20) |
| **Promoting wellbeing** | To demonstrate a culture of safety, a named HWBH Board member will lead delivery of our social value commitment of supporting staff and volunteers who may be victims of domestic violence. They will provide initial support to staff and volunteers who may be victims of Domestic Violence. They will also monitor routine reporting of our progressback to our public Board**.** They will be the named point of contact for individuals and ensure escalation occurs. (21) |
| **Training and awareness**  | To improve understanding of domestic violence and how to respond to a disclosure, we will deliver training to staff and volunteers. This will include training on modern slavery. Our Domestic Violence and [Modern Slavery](https://www.healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk/sites/healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk/files/Modern%20Slavery%20Policy_2.pdf) policies were developed using ‘[Domestic Abuse: a toolkit for employers’](https://www.bitc.org.uk/toolkit/domestic-abuse-toolkit), and provide clear escalation routes and protocols. (22) |
|  **Raising awareness**  | We will raise wider awareness of Domestic Violence and the support available at events we attend or host, through our press and media work and via our newsletter. (23) |
| **Committing to joining the** [**Employer’s Initiative on Domestic Abuse**](https://www.eida.org.uk/membership)  | This will ensure our policies/procedures are up to date and demonstrate our culture of safety. We will publicise that we have made the pledge to encourage VCSE partners to sign up. (24) |
| **Supporting perpetrators**  | Everyone will understand our zero-tolerance approach to Domestic Violence and that disciplinary action can be taken. We will take steps to protect staff/volunteers and support modified behaviours by signposting perpetrators to relevant frontline support services. (25) |