



# Volunteer Newsletter

## Issue 1

August 2014

### IN THIS ISSUE

## Welcome

Welcome to the first of our quarterly newsletters, created to celebrate the contribution that WCA Volunteers provide. In each issue we will hear about the excellent work happening on various projects at WCA and hear from the various volunteers contributing to the work we do and the benefits of the experience they have gained.

### Why Volunteer at WCA

Here at WCA, volunteering is vital to helping us do what we do. In committing yourself to volunteering you are committing yourself to the overall aims of WCA.

We offer a range of volunteering activities that allow people with all abilities to experience the different elements of the work we do, whilst being supported and allowed to develop new and existing skills.

The volunteering roles WCA offer are about supporting the work of our various projects and actively getting involved in supporting our service users and the wider community. At WCA we know

that our volunteers have a key role to play in advancing our mission.

When you start volunteering with us we will guide you through our volunteering Policies and Procedures to make sure you are equipped and supported all the way.

### Who can volunteer?

Anyone can get involved, as long as you are reliable, punctual and responsible and willing to commit, you can apply to volunteer at WCA.

### What are the benefits?

The motivation for volunteering is different for everyone. It could be that you want to increase your experience, develop skills or give something back to the community.

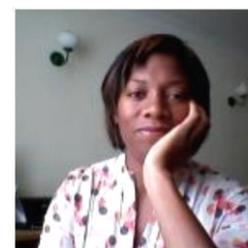
The benefits of volunteering with us will be the opportunity to improve your skills, increase your confidence and enhance your CV. We will also provide you with references when you move onto pastures new.



### Meet Delia Fitzsimmons

**Delia Fitzsimmons** is WCA's Volunteer Coordinator. With a background in Human Resources Delia has used her skills and experience to develop

WCA's Volunteering Policies and Procedures as well as our Good Practice Guide. Read more about Delia on [Page 5](#).



### Meet Alana Rhoden

**Alana Rhoden** is Healthwatch Wandsworth's Administrator. Alana has a wealth of administration experience and acts as the volunteer supervisor for Healthwatch volunteers. Read more about Alana on [Page 5](#).

## What is WCA all about...

**“WCA is working to improve health and wellbeing through community involvement, collaboration, action and a stronger voluntary sector voice.”**



### Our Projects

- Healthwatch
- Voicing Views
- Wandsworth Learning Disabilities Network (WLDN)
- Drug & Alcohol Service User Forum
- Social Sundayz
- Seldom Heard Groups Grant
- Skill Swap
- Battersea Audit

### Objectives

- Help people to help themselves
- Listen and take part in active dialogue
- Create connections
- Build platforms and tools for meaningful involvement
- Influence and effect change
- Recognise potential and release community capacity.

### FURTHER PROJECT DETAILS:

For more information on our projects, please visit our website :

<http://wca.btck.co.uk> and  
<http://healthwatch.co.uk>



## healthwatch Wandsworth

Healthwatch Wandsworth is one of WCA's largest projects.

Healthwatch Wandsworth is the new public consumer champion, here to give local people a say in the provision, commissioning and monitoring of their local health and social care services.

Through its outreach and engagement activities, use of its statutory Enter & View powers, and its Information & Signposting Service, Healthwatch Wandsworth will give a voice to those that are often unheard.

Volunteers are an integral part of Healthwatch Wandsworth and the work that it does.

There are always ways to be involved for those with the time and passion so if you think you would like to be involved in its work become a member today to keep up to date with volunteering opportunities, or contact the team on: 020 8516 7767 or email [enquiries@healthwatchwandsworth.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchwandsworth.co.uk)

## What We Think!

We do what we do because we believe that **effective change** comes when an individual or community is able to **recognise, value** and **build upon their own assets**.

This isn't always straight forward or easy, but we work with a range of marginalised communities, to try and **ignite** and **support** this **positive change** and in doing so **improve a community's wellbeing**.

At the core of our work is a recognition that, with the **right support, encouragement** and resources **people** possess the **potential to take ownership** of their own situation and **condition** and **make positive change**.



## Who We Work With!

Anyone who has a **vision** or **cause** which they believe could improve the wellbeing of them and their community. Specifically groups which currently exist at the **margins of society**, whose perspective is **unheard** and **underrepresented** and are **facing disadvantage**.

We believe that with the right **support, encouragement** and **resources (which is where we come in!)** people possess the potential to **take ownership** of their own situation and condition and make a positive change.

- Adults with Learning Difficulties
- Adults with Substance Misuse Issues
- Adults with Mental Health Problems
- Patients and local people
- Local voluntary sector and community groups
- Young People
- Commissioners
- Service providers

### Jason Edgington, WCA Director

Jason joined WCA in October 2007, talking on the role of Director. Over the past 8 years Jason has helped **and supported WCA become a successful and effective organisation** that works with the local community and marginalised groups to influence local services. Jason has a wealth of experience gained in the private sector and has worked over the past 15 years in Wandsworth and the voluntary sector.

The past 8 years have seen **WCA triple in size**, both in terms of personnel and the activities it carries out. Through the work of its projects such as Voicing Views, Healthwatch Wandsworth, Wandsworth Learning Disability Network and the Seldom Heard Groups Project **WCA is playing a key role within Wandsworth to build platforms for change and tools for meaningful involvement**. This is a trend that WCA intends to continue.

## Some of our Projects

### Enter & View Volunteers (WCA/Healthwatch)



Enter & View volunteers have authority to enter all publicly funded health and social care services premises to conduct unannounced spot checks or previously arranged visits. Volunteers then produce reports and recommendations based on their findings to the providers and commissioners of services and, where appropriate, to the regulators. The team is comprised of 8 members who meet once a month to discuss their progress.



### Skill Swap Pilot (WCA)

Skill Swap is a small three month pilot where five organisations will take part in swapping and sharing their skills and resources. **Natalie Daley** currently studying for her MA in Public Health, volunteers as the Broker on the project and ensures that the right match and swaps take place.

More to come in the  
next issue!

Involving

Connecting

Transforming

### Social Sundayz Project (WCA)

Social Sundayz is a peer led support project where service users recovering from drug and alcohol related issues provide a forum where fellow service users can meet up, socialize, chat and support each other in a safe environment. The demand for this project came from service users who found evenings and weekends particularly difficult and isolating whilst on their road to recovery.



The project has been extremely **successful** and volunteers have been supported to build on their success by having an evening session, T-Time Thursday's. Future plans for this group include plans to provide peer led programmes and play a part in the aftercare of service user treatment.

Volunteers on this project have all received the following training:

- **Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults**
- **Food & Hygiene**
- **First Aid**
- **Peer Support Training**

Volunteers also receive regular supervision sessions and support where required.

**Watch This Space!!!**

**In the next issue we will have feature interviews from a few volunteers working on our projects.**

## VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

### Delia Fitzsimmons, WCA Volunteer Coordinator

I joined WCA in October 2012, after 10 years of working in Human Resources Management. When I left HR I was seeking a role where interaction with people and supporting them was the primary element. My role within HR had increasingly removed me from this type of interaction.

My position as a volunteer co-ordinator at WCA was a brand new post and has provided me with lots of opportunities to interact with people from all backgrounds.

*'My first task at WCA was to create a robust volunteering system. I went about this by developing volunteer Policies & Procedures to ensure WCA was both statutory and legally compliant. These processes have ensured that we manage our volunteers effectively and hopefully make the volunteering experience more valuable.'*

I enjoy my role at WCA and have worked closely with most of the volunteers and have seen them grow as individuals and in confidence.

**There is still lots to develop and these are the areas I look forward to developing:**

- Encourage project managers to commit to using more volunteers to support them within their projects, buying into the wealth of experience volunteers bring.
- Further support volunteers within WCA and promote new opportunities.
- Celebrate and promote the work volunteers do and promote new opportunities through a quarterly newsletter.
- Work towards 'Investing in Volunteers' Standard.
- Develop an Annual Volunteer Celebration Event to celebrate the great work done by our volunteers.



### Alana Rhoden,

### Healthwatch Administrator

Alana joined Healthwatch in 2013 after various administration roles.

Alana has a keen interest in volunteering management and actively works in supporting the Enter & View and other Healthwatch volunteers.

Alana currently acts as the volunteer supervisor for volunteers within Healthwatch Wandsworth and has attended a training course on managing volunteers to ensure that she can support them effectively.

Alana states that:

*"So far managing and supporting Healthwatch volunteers has been both rewarding and challenging. It has been challenging because this is my first experience of managing other people. But it's been rewarding to see people gaining new skills and taking these skills with them to the workplace. I feel like I've also learnt a lot in a short space in time."*



## AVAILABLE OPPORTUNITIES

# healthwatch

## Wandsworth

### Do you want to make a difference?

**Healthwatch Wandsworth**, the new independent consumer champion for local health and social care is seeking local people to help us improve local health and care services for the residents of Wandsworth Borough.

Healthwatch Wandsworth is all about local voices being able to influence the delivery and design of local services. Not just for people who use them, but anyone who might need to in the future. Healthwatch will work to help local people get the best out of their local health and social care services.

We now need people to help us reach out into the community to connect with local people, as well as support our Enter and View Team conduct their inspections of NHS and Council funded health and care services.

We want to hear from people who feel they could represent a group of people they identify with, or represent Healthwatch at local or national level.

**You can volunteer in a way that best meets your skills and experiences.**

We have a number of opportunities available in the following areas:

- **Special Interest Champions**
- **Healthwatch Representatives**
- **Administration Assistants**
- **Enter and View Representatives**
- **Outreach and Engagement Assistants**
- **Research Assistants**

**Volunteers are a vital part** of the leadership and governance of Healthwatch Wandsworth and are involved in every aspect of the work that we do.

As well as the opportunities above, every member of Healthwatch Wandsworth has the chance to be involved just by being a member.

By being a member of Healthwatch Wandsworth **you'll be helping to bring about positive change through being involved in our research activities, responding to our surveys and consultations.**

You will also receive our regular **ebulletin** and quarterly newsletter with the latest news on health and social care developments in the borough and nationally.

If you would like to obtain more information about the roles that are available and an application form for our volunteering opportunities or to be a member, please contact:

[enquiries@healthwatchwandsworth.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchwandsworth.co.uk) or telephone 020 8516 7767

You can also find out more about the Healthwatch team and register to be a member on our website at:

<http://www.healthwatchwandsworth.co.uk>

## AVAILABLE OPPORTUNITIES

### Revolving Doors & Commissioning Together

#### Great opportunity for self-development and to help people have their say

Revolving Doors is a charity working across England to change systems and **improve services** for **people with multiple problems** who are in contact with the criminal justice system.

We know that offenders often have multiple and complex needs including poor mental health and high rates of substance misuse (the 'revolving doors' group).

However, **they can struggle to access health and social care services**. We want to ensure that people in this group have opportunities to say how services could better meet their needs.

We are offering training in peer research skills and developing **a new way to involve offenders and ex-offenders** with multiple and complex needs in local commissioning processes. To do this, we are looking to recruit service users and work with them to build their skills in carrying out research.

By working with people with direct experience, *Commissioning Together* will identify what works well locally and highlight any gaps in services.

We will **support people so they can engage fully in commissioning processes**. As a result, we want to see more people receiving the help and support they need to improve their mental health and to **reduce** the number of people with mental health problems being inappropriately imprisoned.

We are particularly interested in **recruiting local people who within the past five years have had direct personal experience of the criminal justice system**, e.g. short prison sentence(s), community hours, probation, drug testing and treatment orders, anti-social behavior orders, and who **have experience of multiple and complex needs such as mental health problems, homelessness and issues with drugs and/or alcohol**.

By taking part, you will get **full training** to **ongoing support** in your role.

You will **experience full participation in a peer research project and learn about commissioning** (how local needs are identified and how services are planned, paid for, delivered and measured).

Importantly, you will help others have their say.

**This is a great opportunity to develop your skills, work with other people and build your confidence.**

Interested? We would be delighted to hear from you. Please tell others about the project.

To get involved or to find out more, please contact Aidan Moloney at Revolving Doors Agency on 020 7940 9755 (direct line) or 07540 534 090 (mobile) or [aidan.moloney@revolving-doors.org.uk](mailto:aidan.moloney@revolving-doors.org.uk).

You can visit the **Revolving Doors** website at [www.revolving-doors.org.uk](http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk).

## TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES



MENTAL

HEALTH

AWARENESS  
TRAINING



**This is a **FREE** two day training open to ALL including service users, carers and providers!**

- Do you want to learn to spot early signs of mental distress?
- Do you want know some of the **signs**, **symptoms**, **causes** and **treatments** of common mental health disorders (**depression**, **anxiety**, **phobias**, **dementia** etc)
- Do you want to increase your knowledge on **Schizophrenia**, **self-harm** and **suicide**?
- Do you know what to do in a event of a crisis?
- Do you want to learn to guide a person to professional and self help?

Date: **Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> September**

Time: **10:00am-4.30pm**

Venue: **Wandsworth**

To find out more please contact a member of the healthwatch Wandsworth team on  
**020 8156 7767 [enquiries@healthwatchwandsworth.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchwandsworth.co.uk)**

If you're interested in Volunteering with WCA please **Get IN Touch!**  
As we would love to hear from you.....

WCA  
Volunteer  
Newsletter  
Quarterly

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Visit the WCA website: <http://wca.btck.co.uk>

Visit Healthwatch website: <http://www.healthwatch.co.uk>