



## HVM Policies: Ethics

### 1. About us

Hopkins Van Mil's vision is a better society built on thoughtful social insights explored and implemented with humanity and kindness. We:

- Bring people together to inform the future
- Distil the collective voices of society
- Deliver meaningful insights
- Provide spaces for change

We are:

#### *Kind and thoughtful*

We care deeply about what we do, and how we go about doing it. Thoughtfulness and kindness are our lifeblood and shape all our client work and participant relationships.

#### *Respectful and ethical*

We hold ourselves, and influence others, to practice the highest standards of research (and research integrity). We seek and use robust evidence to deliver the highest quality recommendations.

#### *Creative and curious*

With participants we find new, exciting and accessible ways to unpack and understand the big issues within our society, so that we can help solve them.

#### *Collaborative and supportive*

We work together to create a safe, inclusive, purposeful and intellectually stimulating environment. We support our clients and participants to listen, explore and challenge people's perspectives to find constructive ways forward.

A summary of our E,D&I policy is set out below. It has been written on the basis of being a micro-business and our policies are in proportion to the scale of our operations. We are currently working with an E,D&I specialist in a programme of staff training and in the development of an E,D&I road map and strategy for HVM to improve and develop our policy. This statement should be seen as an interim measure whilst we finalise this work.

### 2. Ethics plan

Hopkins Van Mil are members of the Market Research Society (MRS), the Association of Qualitative Research (AQR) and the Social Research Association (SRA). We abide by their codes of conduct, principles and guidelines to ensure we approach all our research and engagement ethically. At the core of this is the principle of 'do no harm'. More than that, our research programmes are people centred and led. We want participants to feel they have benefited from taking part



in a public dialogue, that they have learnt something, been able to express their views and felt safe in doing so.

For each project we fill in an internal ethics plan. Since June 2022 SRA has begun to offer an independent ethical review service. HVM will decide on a project-by-project basis if it is appropriate to use this to enhance our internal ethical plans.

Our internal plans include a checklist to ensure that research participants have been informed of their role in the research; understand that they can withdraw at any time; have been sent and signed research approval forms; understand that their confidentiality is maintained throughout the research process and that data protection policy is being implemented by all HVM team members.

The plan ensures that research and consultation participants are identified and approached ethically, without coercion or conflict of interest. It highlights that *if* their participation is incentivised, that payments will be prompt and that this does not conflict with their right to withdraw at any time.

We specify any potential risks to participants and researchers and mitigate these within the plan.

### 3. Safeguarding approach

HVM believes that everyone we come into contact with, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. We will not tolerate abuse and exploitation by anyone involved with our programmes. This includes protecting staff and associated personnel.

HVM commits to addressing safeguarding throughout its work, through the three pillars of prevention, reporting and response. We:

- Ensure all staff have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities within the safeguarding policy
- Design and undertake all its programmes and activities in a way that protects people from any risk<sup>1</sup> of harm that may arise from their coming into contact with HVM. This includes protection from use of personal data<sup>2</sup>
- Implement stringent safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing and deploying staff and associated personnel
- Ensure staff receive training on safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role in the organisation
- Follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process
- Have established procedures for supporting research participants in ways that are appropriate including:
  - Effective briefings on their roles and responsibilities to themselves and others when participating in our work programmes

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<sup>1</sup> See the risk register for each HVM programme

<sup>2</sup> Covered under HVM's Data Protection policy

- Having a dedicated safeguarding support facilitator for all workshops – whose contact details are made available
- Providing information within participant workbooks, participant packs or other online resources as appropriate which signpost external resources and support organisations
- Having a dedicated space in face-to-face or online workshops where participants can take time out or receive a listening space should this be required
- Giving time before and after all workshops to enable participants to ask questions and raise concerns they have
- Enabling individual participants to report any issues they have (see below)
- Have established procedures for supporting staff and associated personnel in ways that are appropriate including ensuring that after every workshop there is time to reflect on any issues that have occurred as a group, and (where necessary) individually, in the first instance, with the safeguarding lead for that programme. If appropriate and necessary gaining access to HVM's independent counselling/ listening service
- Additionally, HVM staff and associated personnel are obliged to contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy (available on request)

#### *4. Equality impact assessment*

We conduct EIA our projects. It is our standard practice to do this to ensure in our practice and process we have considered all potential impacts on research participants and those with whom we work. It is essential to HVM's work that we meet our [core values](#) in all that we do.

#### *5. Social impacts*

We aim for all our dialogue programmes to have positive social impacts. We achieve this through the quality of our reporting and by learning from evaluation processes. Our team are experts in deliberative processes including working creatively and innovatively to produce public dialogues which improve and enhance our understanding of individual and societal needs. We are a learning organisation and priorities opportunities for team members and wider associates to learn from our own practices and those of the wider sector. One of our core values is to be collaborative and supportive. As such we work together to create a safe, inclusive, purposeful and intellectually stimulating environment. We support our clients and participants to listen, explore and challenge people's perspectives to find constructive ways forward. We work with clients after our programmes are complete to ensure that all opportunities are taken to maximise the potential of participants to be heard and to influence public policy and strategy for the good of society.



## *5. Review and monitoring*

HVM undertakes monitoring to ensure that we engage people in our work ethically including employing those with whom we work without discrimination or prejudice and review our equality and discrimination policy annually to check it continues to fulfil the requirements of the law and best practice.

## *5. Training*

HVM is committed to ensuring its team are trained in ethics, equality, diversity and inclusion. We aim to ensure that adequate training is provided so that our team is able to operate this policy. This will include specific training on race, gender, gender identity, disability, sexuality, age and religion or belief, in accordance with the requirements of the law and good practice.

The HVM Director is responsible for:

- Implementing the policy as part of their day-to day management responsibilities and in applying policies and practices in a fair and equitable way;
- Ensuring equality and diversity issues are addressed in performance;
- Ensuring all staff act in accordance with the equality and diversity policy providing necessary support and direction;
- Effectively manage and deal promptly when investigating issues relating to potential discrimination, including those matters concerning members of the general public taking part in public dialogues;

HVM will not tolerate any behaviour from which breaches our equality and diversity policy from staff, sub-contractors, associates, stakeholders, participants in dialogue or community engagement programmes, or workers. Any such breaches will be regarded as serious and may lead to immediate severance of employment or involvement in HVM programmes.

Reviewed January 2022

Next review due February 2023