

The Role of a Health, Safety and Wellbeing Representative (HSWR) and Health, Safety and Wellbeing Champion (HSWC)

People are at the centre of New Zealand Red Cross (NZRC). Everyone has a role to play in making sure NZRC is a healthy and safe place to work and participate in volunteering activities. So, everyone should have a say, and everyone's views and contributions should be considered and valued!

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Representatives (HSWRs) and Health Safety and Wellbeing Champions (HSWCs) play an important role in ensuring our people participate, are engaged and are represented in HSW at NZRC. This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) resource explains what these roles are.

1 What is a Health, Safety and Wellbeing Representative (HSWR)?

A Health, Safety and Wellbeing Representative (HSWR) is an **employee**, who is nominated (and elected if needed), by their work group to represent them on HSW matters. An employee can also nominate themselves.

As set out in the *HSW Standard for Worker Engagement, Participation and Representation*, NZRC has 5 work groups for representation which are aligned to our organisational structure – People Experience & Support, Migration, Emergency Management & International, Engagement & Enterprise, Organisational Services and Office of the Secretary General (Organisational Services and Office of the Secretary General are combined into one work group due to the size of these groups).

The role and function of an HSWR is set out in legislation ([Health and Safety at Work Act 2015/HSWA 2015](#)). HSWRs hold legal powers and functions once formally trained with an approved/accredited external provider. Note that the legislation refers to this role as a Health and Safety Representative (HSR), however at NZRC the role is referred to as a Health, Safety and Wellbeing Representative (HSWR).

2 What is a Health, Safety and Wellbeing Champion (HSWC)?

A Health, Safety and Wellbeing Champion (HSWC) can be an **employee or member/volunteer**. An HSWC can be elected by someone else in their workgroup or nominate themselves.

In the HSWC role, you can be a voice for HSW matters in your work group. You may work closely with HSWRs in the same work group to help improve HSW for your colleagues.

3 Summary – differences between HSWR and HSWC roles

Refer to the *HSW Standard for Worker Engagement, Participation & Representation*, which provides more detail on work groups, and the number of HSWR and HSWC positions available. The main differences between HSWRs and HSWCs are:

	HSWR	HSWC
Who	Employees only	Employees and members who volunteer
Legal powers	As set out in HSWA 2015. Able to formally represent other workers once formally trained. Full details will be covered in training.	No legal powers
Training	In-house induction plus 2-day training with an external provider, gaining NZQA unit standard 29315. Up to two days' paid leave per year to attend health and safety training.	In-house induction only
Time commitment	Approximately 4 hours per month (this may vary)	Approximately 2 hours per month (this may vary)
Term of role	Maximum of three years, unless otherwise agreed	Maximum of three years, unless otherwise agreed
Number of roles	Approximately 2-3 per work group as set out in the Standard	Up to 5 per work group as set out in the Standard. Final number is at the discretion of the work group's GM and/or Director
Meetings	Attendance at HSW meetings (e.g. Committee meetings) as required	Opportunities to attend HSW meetings (e.g. Committee meetings), but not a requirement
What it doesn't involve	Managing site safety issues e.g., issues with service centre building or facilities – these are to be managed as per site processes.	

4 What do HSWRs and HSWCs do?

HSWRs and HSWCs play important roles in keeping NZRC people healthy and safe. Both roles are voluntary, no one can be forced to take on the role. Key responsibilities are to:

- Act as a voice and advocate for HSW matters in their work group.
- Listen and engage with people in their work group to find ideas and suggestions on how work could be made safer and healthier.
- Talk to people leaders on behalf of their work group to raise issues or share ideas if needed.
- Provide feedback and suggestions for solutions on HSW risks, issues or concerns; for example, be consulted as part of process of learnings from incident or hazard investigations.
- Provide feedback on how NZRC can improve HSW systems and processes.
- Attend meetings to share ideas, learnings and track progress on HSW matters raised.

- Raise awareness of HSW issues and promote HSW initiatives with their teams and work group.
- Be a positive influence and set an example, e.g. by pro-actively reporting incidents and hazards.

HSWRs and HSWCs need to:

- Be a part of the work group they are acting for.
- Be willing and keen to act in the role.
- Be able to dedicate 2-4 hours per month to their HSWR or HSWC role alongside your normal work or volunteering duties. Have a chat with your people leader if you're not sure.

Note: People leaders are workers so can become HSWRs or HSWCs. However, most HSWRs and HSWCs should be people who directly carry out work or volunteer activities for NZRC, i.e. working with the public, clients or customers.

5 What are the key attributes of an HSWR and HSWC?

Being an effective HSWR or HSWC starts by caring about the health, safety and wellbeing of other NZRC people. You don't need to have lots of HSW knowledge!

Our HSWRs and HSWCs will:

- Be positive, friendly and approachable.
- Have great listening skills and be interested in others' views on HSW.
- Be constructive and keen to work with others.
- Be confident to speak up about issues and suggest improvements.

6 Who will support me?

Leadership support is crucial for HSWRs and HSWCs to operate effectively. People leaders will support these roles by:

- Raising awareness of the HSWR and HSWC roles and their function at NZRC.
- Consulting with HSWRs and HSWCs (and others if needed) on matters that may impact HSW (such as a change to a system or process, or the introduction of new equipment).
- Providing time for HSWRs and HSWCs to fulfil their role and attend the required training and induction, and to discuss HSW matters with their work group.
- Listening without judgement to any issues or ideas raised by an HSWR or HSWC and supporting the escalation of issues as needed.

7 What training is provided?

HSWRs are provided with formal training to carry out their role. This training is recognised outside of NZRC so this could be a great personal development opportunity!

HSWRs must complete an in-house induction, plus formal training (2 days duration) with a WorkSafe approved external NZQA training provider. The formal training will allow HSWRs to hold certain powers and functions under HSWA 2015. Also, HSWRs are entitled to 2 x days of formal refresher training annually.

HSWCs must complete an in-house induction which covers a background to HSW at NZRC, and how they can contribute by having a voice and improving HSW.

The HSW team will arrange training once HSWR and HSWC nomination and election processes (if needed) are complete.

8 How do I become an HSWR or HSWC?

HSWRs or HSWCs must be recruited through a formal expressions of interest process which is initiated by the HSW team. This process will take place during initial recruitment for the roles (mid-2024) and then occur as needed (when roles become vacant, or existing HSWR/HSWC term expires). If people are interested in becoming an HSWR or HSWC, they should contact hsw@redcross.org.nz.

9 Information about this FAQ Sheet

Policy/ Standard	NZRC Health, Safety & Wellbeing Framework
	HSW Standard for Worker Engagement, Participation & Representation
Other Documents	HSW Quick Guide - How to have a proactive HSW kōrero
Audience	All Red Cross people
Approval date	May 2024
Effective date	May 2024
Review date	May 2027
Document Reference	HSWI03
Version	1
Questions?	Contact hsw@redcross.org.nz for any questions
Approving authority	General Manager, People Experience and Support