



## Healthwatch Advisory Board Member Role Descriptor

Healthwatch Halton (HWH) is delivered by Engaging Communities Solutions (ECS) CIC which is a community interest company that brings public engagement, consultation, and consumer advice services together in a central organisation to create evidence and insight to help improve local health and social carer services.

### What is Healthwatch?

HWH are set apart from the statutory structures, voluntary and community sector they work within, as they perform public functions, deliver statutory duties, and receive public funding. This is recognised in law. Their core purpose of making sure the views of the public shape the health and social care services they need, requires them to be independent in purpose, voice, and action. With your support and involvement, we can raise awareness of key issues affecting your local health and social care services and recommend improvements to providers and commissioners of services.

The Healthwatch Advisory Board with membership comprising of volunteers who live in or have a vested interest in the local service delivery area with a range of skills, knowledge, and experience, which when combined, can be used to support the ECS Board to ensure good governance in the delivery of HWH. This also includes monitoring the delivery of the contract between ECS and Halton City Council.

Regulation 40 of the NHS Bodies and Local Authorities (Partnership Arrangements, Care Trusts, Public Health and Local Healthwatch) Regulations 2012<sup>i</sup> state that each local Healthwatch must have a procedure for making relevant decisions, which specifically includes definition as to who may make relevant decisions to guide the work of HWH.

Relevant decisions to be taken by the Board of HWH in accordance with the Decision-Making Policy & Procedure include:

- When to escalate issues to Healthwatch England and/ or the Care Quality Commission and other regulators
- Which health and social care services HWH is looking at covering with its priority projects, and activities
- Whether to request information from commissioners and providers
- Whether to make a report or recommendation to a service provider
- Which premises to Enter and View and when those premises are to be visited
- Whether to refer a matter to an overview and scrutiny committee
- Whether to report a matter concerning HWH's activities to another person
- Any decisions about sub-contracting/ commissioned work

Relevant decisions do not include day to day administrative activity of other internal office functions that may be required to carry out exploratory work, priority assessments and/ or identifying resources prior to making any of the above decisions.

The HWH Advisory Board will adhere to the Nolan Principles of public life<sup>ii</sup>; namely:

1. Selflessness
2. Integrity
3. Objectivity
4. Accountability
5. Openness
6. Honesty
7. Leadership

and will be responsible for ensuring that HWH must carry out the following activities:<sup>iii</sup>

- Promoting and supporting the involvement of local people in the commissioning, the provision and scrutiny of local care services.
- Enabling local people to monitor the standard of provision of local care services and whether and how local care services could and ought to be improved.
- Obtaining the views of local people regarding their need for, and experience of, local care services and importantly to make these views known to persons responsible for commissioning, providing, managing, or scrutinising local care services and to Healthwatch England.

- Making reports and recommendations about how local care services could or ought to be improved. These should be directed to commissioners and providers of care services, and people responsible for managing or scrutinising local care services and shared with Healthwatch England.
- Providing advice and information about access to local care services so choices can be made about local care services.
- Formulating views on the standard of provision and whether and how the local care services could and ought to be improved; and sharing these views with Healthwatch England.
- Making recommendations to Healthwatch England to advise the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to conduct special reviews or investigations (or, where the circumstances justify doing so, making such recommendations direct to the CQC); and to make recommendations to Healthwatch England to publish reports about issues.
- Providing Healthwatch England with the intelligence and insight it needs to enable it to perform effectively.

The Advisory Board will receive appropriate administrative and professional support from ECS.

## **Commitment**

The term of office for a member of the Healthwatch Advisory Board is either 2 or 3 years. As a general guide, membership of the Healthwatch Advisory Board would involve at least two days per month, plus:

- Public Advisory Board meetings
- Advisory Board development/business meetings
- Representing HWH at agreed strategic/partner network meetings.

As individuals, Group members are expected to:

- Attend meetings being prepared to contribute to soft and local intelligence.
- Develop a thematic interest in particular areas of interest/expertise (e.g., mental health, children and young people, adult social care, volunteering, carers, etc).
- Challenge the content of papers and presentations based on own experience and interests.
- Develop links with Healthwatch partner/network organisations and individuals to support the development of effective Networks.

- Make every effort to attend meetings. If members miss 3 consecutive meetings in any one year, they will be deemed to have resigned unless there are extenuating circumstances.
- Respond in a timely manner to emails, calls and invitations.
- Be willing to participate in training and development activities.

## Role and Responsibilities

### General Abilities

There are a number of general abilities that all members of the Healthwatch Advisory Board will need:

- **Equality and diversity** – ECS adopt a principle of ensuring that diversity of the area is covered, that all have an equal opportunity to voice their views and take part. It is therefore important that fresh and different perspectives are drawn upon to be inclusive in the way it fulfils its purpose. For this to be achieved all members of the Board will sign up to these principles but at least one member will have experience in addressing equality and diversity issues and a good understanding of the diversity of Halton.
- **Commitment** – in line with ECS's and Healthwatch Halton's purpose to provide a voice for the community of Halton, members of the Board will need a high level of commitment to the principles of patient and public involvement, especially enabling the involvement of disadvantaged groups. This will include having the time to contribute to the work of the Board and the ability to promote Healthwatch Halton and encourage further involvement from a wide cross section of the local population.
- **Team working** – the ability to contribute as an individual and collectively to the work of the Board and ECS generally.
- **Influencing and communication** – the ability to gain support and influence as well as good communication skills.
- **Contributing to planning the future** – having the ability to think ahead, not only identifying problems but also providing solutions.
- **Holding to account** – as well as the ability to accept accountability and probe and challenge constructively all members of the Board will promote public accountability in health and social care through open and transparent communication with commissioners and providers.

All members of the Healthwatch Advisory Board are expected to demonstrate high standards of corporate and personal conduct and adhere to ECS policies and code of conduct.

### **Conflict of interests**

All members of the Board will be required to declare any potential conflict of interests in accordance with the 'Declaration of Interests and Conflict of Interest Policy'. Areas of concern are involved in the provision, management or regulation of health/social care provision and commissioning. Having an interest in such an area should not prevent applications for membership of the Group if the applicant is open about those interests and they are declared on the application form.

### **Equal Opportunities**

The Healthwatch Advisory Board and any groups established to fulfil the purpose of ECS and Healthwatch Halton will adopt the principles of openness and transparency in all processes and provide equal opportunities for all, irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

### **Remuneration**

Whilst there is no remuneration for these roles, all members of the Advisory Board will be able to claim for their reasonable out of pocket expenses which have been incurred whilst undertaking approved Healthwatch duties in accordance with the ECS expenses policy at the time.

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<sup>i</sup> [Regulation 40 of the NHS Bodies and Local Authorities \(Partnership Arrangements, Care Trusts, Public Health and Local Healthwatch\) Regulations 2012](#)

<sup>ii</sup> [Nolan principles of public life](#)

<sup>iii</sup> [Section 221 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007](#)