



Healthwatch South Tees Board Terms of Reference

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Healthwatch South Tees (HWST) Board - Terms of Reference

This Terms of Reference document outlines the purpose of HWST and the role, activities, requirements and governance of the HWST Board.

This forms part of HWST Board governance, which include HWST:

- Recruitment Pack
- **Terms of Reference**
- Code of Conduct
- Conflict of Interest
- Decision Making Policy
- Compliments, Comments and Complaints

Our vision

To understand the needs, experiences and concerns of people who use health and social care services, and speak out on their behalf.

Our aim:

1. To give local people and communities a stronger voice to influence and challenge how health and social care services are provided within their locality, supporting local people to shape health and social care delivery;
2. To provide or signpost people to information to help them make choices about health and social care services;
3. To encourage and support people and groups to share their views about services, and listen and respond to people's needs and experiences of services, supporting local people to influence the services they receive personally;
4. To enable people who use NHS services to access support when making a complaint.

Healthwatch South Tees (HWST) has the following legislative powers:

- To 'Enter and View' specific types of premises where care and services are provided.
- To ask for information and expect a response within a specific timescale.
- To make recommendations to service commissioners and providers and expect a response within a specific timescale.
- To refer matters to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) and expect a response.
- To alert the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to concerns about specific care providers.

Overarching objectives

HWST will:

- Fulfil its statutory duties and functions, holding providers and commissioners of health and social care services to account.
- Operate as stated in The Health and Social Care Act 2012, embedded in local communities.
- Act as a local consumer champion, representing the collective voice of patients, service users, carers and the public through its statutory seat on the Health and Wellbeing Board and providing robust challenge and scrutiny in the interests of the citizens of South Tees.
- Exercise real influence on commissioners, providers, regulators and Healthwatch England, using its knowledge of what matters most to local people.
- Report concerns about the quality of local health and social care services to the Care Quality Commission (CQC).
- Provide information to patients and public who need to access health and care services and promote informed choice in health and social care services.
- Support individuals to get information and independent advocacy if they need help to complain about NHS services.
- Build on and utilise existing networks, knowledge, skills and services in support of local Healthwatch rather than duplicate what is already in place

Role and Purpose of the Healthwatch South Tees Board

To provide strategic oversight and good governance to Healthwatch South Tees (HWST) and ensure that HWST delivers its strategic objectives and adheres to any regulations published by the Government relating to Local Healthwatch.

Primary Activities

- To agree priorities and sign off the annual work programme for HWST, based on feedback from communities and other key health and social care strategies.
- Consider emerging issues identified and requests raised with HWST and agree further action and/or escalation as appropriate.
- Receive reports and recommendations from Task & Finish Groups and agree further actions and escalate where necessary.
- Oversee Enter and View activity in line with the work programme, receive reports and recommendations and escalate where necessary.
- Oversee the proportionate and judicious exercise of other statutory duties and powers held by HWST.
- Actively promote the work of Healthwatch to anyone in the South Tees area who could benefit from its services and support or could contribute to its goals.
- Ensure the views of the public are fully considered by the Board and that feedback is regularly provided about decisions and priorities set.
- Ensure HWST operates to high quality and equality standards, and manages any breaches of code of conduct, complaints or conflicts of interest in line with agreed policies and procedures.
- To agree and sign off an annual report providing information to members on the activities of HWST.
- Actively take part in two yearly workshop style events with our locality forums (HWST Community Champions).

Board membership

HWST is an independent organisation. Board members will be appointed using a fair and transparent recruitment process. We aim to ensure the make-up of the Board is reflective and representative of the diverse communities of South Tees. The Chair will be recruited separately via a fair and transparent process against set criteria.

A board member may resign at any time by filing a written resignation with the Chair and Project Lead.

When Board members stand down creating vacancies, a fair and transparent recruitment process will be applied to fill any vacancies. Board members can agree to co-opt additional members where required skills and knowledge do not exist within core board membership.

Lines of accountability and legal status for Board

The Board are accountable to the residents of Middlesbrough, and Redcar and Cleveland for the effective, fair and transparent governance of HWST.

The Board are not formally accountable to the local authority for the delivery of Healthwatch. Pioneering Care Partnership has a contract with the local authority for the delivery of HWST and is the accountable body for its delivery.

The Board are required to sign off all reports prepared by Pioneering Care Partnership reporting on the activities of HWST including:

- How HWST has been representative of the local area;
- How HWST has carried out engagement, and gathered the views of the local people;
- Outcomes - what has been achieved;
- Next steps - plans for the coming year.

Board Requirements

Board Meetings

Board members are expected to attend all scheduled meetings of the Board. This also includes two yearly workshop style events with our locality forums (HWST Community Champions) where an agreed specific topic will be explored to further inform our workplan.

Working together

Board members will be required to support the objectives and policies agreed by the Board, and to contribute to and share responsibility for the decisions of the Board. They will be expected to work constructively with other Board members and staff of HWST.

Code of Conduct

Board members will be expected to abide fully with HWST's Code of Conduct, to

maintain high standards of probity and follow the Nolan principles of standards in public life. They must also present a positive image of the Board and HWST at external events.

Training

Board members will be supported to identify training and development needs, and seek opportunities for development, attending training events as required. Specific mandatory training will be offered which is relevant to the role of HWST Board members.

External Meetings and Representation

Board members will be asked to attend key partnership meetings on behalf of HWST and to participate in events linked to supporting, developing or promoting HWST and its objectives. This may from time to time include representing HWST at regional or national events.

Preparation time

Board members are required to allocate time for reading reports and preparing for HWST meetings and external meetings where they are representing HWST.

Meeting governance

- a) The Board will be considered to be quorate if a minimum of 3 members are in attendance.
- b) The Chair will have the casting vote in the event of a split vote.
- c) Conflicts of interest involving any individual Board member should be declared at the beginning of each meeting in line with the Code of Conduct.
- d) The Board will meet a minimum of 4 times per annum.
- e) Minutes of all meetings will be taken by HWST staff and minutes will be signed as a true record by the Chair at the following meeting.
- f) The Chair will have authority to make decisions in between Board meetings of a nature deemed by the Chair and HWST Project Lead as not requiring consideration by the full Board.
- g) Special meetings will be convened where an urgent important decision requiring full Board consideration is required in between set meetings.

Compliments, Comments and Complaints handling

The Chair and HWST Project Lead will be responsible for reviewing Compliments, Comments and Complaints in line with the HWST Policy, which can be accessed by clicking [here](#).