



Healthwatch Oldham Board Member Role Description and Person Specification

Healthwatch Oldham

Healthwatch Oldham (HWO) was set up in 2013 as part of the Government's Health and Social Care Act. It carries out several statutory and discretionary functions designed to provide an independent consumer voice for local people using NHS and social care services in Oldham.

HWO gathers the views of local patients, service users and families to review the quality of health and social care services and shape the way services are designed and delivered. The services we cover range from GP practices, dentists, hospital-based services and pharmacies, to social care services covering care homes, reablement and ongoing care where health funding is involved.

Role of the Healthwatch Oldham Board

The Healthwatch Oldham Board is responsible for setting the strategic direction of the organisation, ensuring that the organisation delivers a high-quality service in line with its vision, aims, and values. The Board is also responsible for providing governance to ensure delivery of the contract, service specification, legislation and guidance from the Department of Health and Healthwatch England. The Healthwatch Oldham Board is accountable to Action Together, the organisation that holds the contract to provide Healthwatch in Oldham.

The Healthwatch Oldham Board has up to 12 members who are appointed using a process agreed upon by the Board, based on a balanced mix of skills, knowledge and experience needed to deliver its core contract and legal responsibilities.

The Healthwatch Chair is appointed by the Board, from within its membership.

Commitment

We anticipate the minimum time commitment will be approximately one day per month including Board meetings which will usually be held every two months. Additional time commitment through roles representing the interests of Healthwatch Oldham at partnership meetings and events is at the discretion and availability of the Board member.

Whilst the role is voluntary, reasonable expenses will be reimbursed in line with good practice in the community and voluntary sector.

Responsibilities

Board members are responsible for ensuring that Healthwatch Oldham:

- Develops, implements and reviews effective governance structures and procedures;
- Remains continuously able to discharge its duties and responsibilities as set out in legislation and the Local Authority service specification;

- Recruits supports and retains Board members who have the necessary skills to be effective in their roles and who collectively are representative of the communities of Oldham;
- Always behaves with the utmost transparency and responsiveness and is accountable to the Local Authority (who commissions the service) and reports to its local community and stakeholders, and Healthwatch England;
- Builds and maintains effective relationships with Oldham Council, the Oldham Clinical Commissioning Group / Oldham Locality Team (GM-ICS) and local overview and scrutiny arrangements; and
- Acts in the best interests of the local population at all times and having regard to securing the best use of public money.

The Chief Executive of Action Together CIO and the Healthwatch Manager will support the Chair and Board members to meet these responsibilities some of which can only be achieved through effective partnership working.

Key tasks for Board members:

- Strive to attend all Board meetings and be an active participant in discussions and activities.
- Take part in the Board's business efficiently and effectively, including through a framework of delegation and systems of internal control that also enables the work of Healthwatch to be carried on effectively between meetings of the Board.
- Attend meetings as a representative of the Healthwatch Board, acting as an ambassador and promoting its work throughout the community.
- Undertake mandatory training on Safeguarding Equality and Diversity.
- Follow appropriate standards of behaviour in line with an agreed code of conduct.
- Ensure the impact and outcomes of the work undertaken by Healthwatch Oldham are widely reported, including an Annual Report and Accounts, highlighting priorities and progress and key issues.
- Help to build good relationships in the spirit of partnership with other stakeholders.
- Feedback on work to the wider community through publicity and public meetings and events.
- Avoid conflicts of interest where possible or ensure conflicts are declared in line with the arrangements laid out in the governance framework.
- Work closely with the Healthwatch Chair, Chief Executive and Manager to maintain effective working relationships.
- Work towards fulfilling the statutory and contractual duties of Healthwatch.
- Act jointly - exercising no powers alone unless specifically delegated to do so by the Board.
- Prepare for Board meetings by reading the agenda, minutes and any other papers in advance of the meeting.
- Fulfil any responsibilities assigned to you at the meeting and be prepared to report back on your progress at the next meeting.

Person Specification

The following attributes are required of the Board (this is a collective requirement - individual Board members are not expected to demonstrate all of these):

Experience

- Experience of organisations that operate for the benefit of communities
- Experience in working with public and/or community organisations
- Experience in building and developing successful partnerships, alliances and working relationships with a range of organisations and stakeholders
- Experience as a member of a management board, committee or senior management team
- Good judgment and independence of mind.

Skills and Abilities

- Strong communication and interpersonal skills, able to liaise effectively with a wide range of stakeholders and audiences
- Ability to work collectively as part of a group
- Ability to engage in constructive debate and dialogue, rather than confrontation

Knowledge

- Understanding of health, social care and wellbeing policy issues
- Good understanding of, working with customer-focused organisations and a commitment to high standards of customer care
- Understanding of complaints processes

Personal behaviour and style

- Passionate about promoting better outcomes in health and social care for all
- Proactively demonstrates a strong commitment to equality and diversity
- A style that motivates people to work together and to deliver their best
- Open to learning and development, for self, staff and the Board
- Time and commitment to effectively discharge the responsibilities of the post.

Eligibility criteria

To be considered for the role of Healthwatch Board member, you must be aged 18 or older and either:

- resident in Oldham; or
- have experience or knowledge of health or social care services in Oldham.

However, the following exceptions apply:

- People who are the subject of an undischarged bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order.
- Anyone who has been dismissed from paid employment within the last 2 years due to misconduct (without being re-instated) where that dismissal has not been the subject of a finding of unfair dismissal by a tribunal or court.

- Those who have had an earlier term of appointment terminated will not be eligible to re-join the board without first acquiring approval from the current board to reapply.
- Anyone who is under a disqualification order under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986;
- Anyone who has been removed from trusteeship of a charity within the last 5 years or is not currently eligible to be a trustee of a charity.
- Someone who has been or is convicted of a serious criminal offence (in particular any offence involving dishonesty or any other in relation to promotion, formation, management or liquidation of a company).
- Anyone whom the Healthwatch Board has judged as failing to comply with the Healthwatch Oldham Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interests guidelines unless this failure has been resolved to the Board's complete satisfaction.
- Any councillor who holds an executive position in Oldham Council.
- Anyone who is not capable of managing their own affairs.

People who match one of the following descriptions may be eligible for election or appointment to the Board, however, potential conflicts of interest will need to be carefully managed:

- Someone who is employed in a senior management capacity by the NHS, Oldham MBC or an organisation contracted to deliver health or social care services in Oldham.
- Anyone who is an NHS Non-Executive Director, company director or partner in an organisation providing health or social care services in Oldham.
- Anyone who is a lay member of a Clinical Commissioning Group procuring services for Oldham residents.

DBS (criminal record) checks may be required for the Chair and Board members. If these raise issues about suitability, they may be taken into account when deciding whether to confirm the appointment.

Note that the Chair or any Board member may be dismissed if they fail to declare circumstances which make them ineligible to be on the Board and these subsequently come to light.

Term of Office

Board members will normally serve three years and may be eligible to serve again at the end of that period subject to an election process.