

Healthwatch Barnet Advisory Board - Terms of Reference

Background

Healthwatch is a national network of over 150 local Healthwatch organisations across the country that were established under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Healthwatch Barnet is the local, independent champion for people who use health and social care services. Healthwatch Barnet gives a voice to people who use those services and seeks to influence changes to services to improve peoples' experiences.

Aims of Healthwatch Barnet

Influencing local services: we want to understand peoples' experiences of local health and social care provision. We seek to use this feedback to produce reports and inform the commissioning, design, delivery and evaluation of services. Our aim is to gather views from a wide cross-section of Barnet's diverse population.

Championing your voice: we want to support people to have their say by providing an open platform where they can share their experiences and be heard, so services can be improved.

Signposting and information: we want more people to get the information they need to take control of their health and care and make informed decisions.

Community engagement: we want to develop close relationships with stakeholders and partners so we can share intelligence and work together effectively to improve services.

Purpose

The overall purpose of the Healthwatch Barnet Advisory Board is to enable the expertise, experience and knowledge of Board Members to assist Healthwatch Barnet in delivering its priorities and statutory obligations.

As part of this, the Board's purpose is:

- To participate in the planning of Healthwatch Barnet's priorities, including full projects, community events and Enter and Views every quarter.
- To receive, read and provide feedback and guidance on reports.
- To build and maintain effective relationships with key local stakeholders including Barnet Council's Health and Wellbeing Board, Barnet Council's public health department, the North Central London Integrated Care Board, service providers and voluntary organisations.
- To network and promote the work and purpose of Healthwatch Barnet.
- To act as an ambassador and representative for Healthwatch Barnet when working with the public, partners and stakeholders in meetings.
- To review and maintain Healthwatch Barnet's core Board policies and documents – Code of Conduct, Terms of Reference and Decision Making policy.

Chairperson

Key responsibilities

- To lead each Board Meeting effectively and constructively allowing all members the opportunity to express their views openly.
- To lead the Board in ensuring that it fulfils its responsibilities for governance in line with the Terms of Reference.
- To review any endorsements for communications to the press or stakeholders by Board members.
- To optimise the relationship between the Healthwatch Barnet Advisory Board, Public Voice, staff, volunteers and stakeholders.

Membership

The Board will consist of up to 10 local members, the Healthwatch Barnet Manager and the CEO of Public Voice and/or other member of the Public Voice Senior Leadership Team . Each person is entitled to voting rights, with the exception of the Public Voice member.

Membership will be drawn from local members of the public with a broad range of life experiences. Representatives of statutory stakeholders can also be invited to join as non-voting members. The Advisory Board may appoint a Vice-Chair at any time. Membership of the Board will be for a term of three years, with the possibility of renewal for a maximum of three further years.

All Board members are required to ensure that any information which is shared with them by Healthwatch Barnet, and which is not already in the public domain, is kept entirely confidential. Breaches of confidentiality are a serious matter and may lead to an investigation that could result in a member being required to step down from the Board.

Members should be selected based on their specialist knowledge, ability to represent the interests of stakeholders, and ability to help resolve issues the projects may face. New Members will be recruited through competitive selection, including an interview where the panel will include the Chair of the Advisory Board, another Advisory Board member, local representative community leader(s) and a senior representative from Public Voice. The Chair and Vice-Chair shall be appointed by the Advisory Board through a nomination and Advisory Board voting procedure. With consensus, the Advisory Board will have the ability to co-opt ad-hoc members when additional expertise/knowledge is required.

Meetings

The Board should meet at least four times per year with additional meetings as required. Meeting times and location can change to ensure the best possible attendance and participation. The Board may choose to meet more often, and the Chair will have the ability to call an urgent meeting as required to address immediate issues.

Quoracy

Board meetings should have enough members present to allow decisions to be made; there should be a minimum of 3 public representative members present and the Chair and Manager. If an item requires a

vote and there is a draw, the Chair will have the casting vote. Where a meeting is not scheduled, decisions can be made by electronic methods which will be recorded at the next Board meeting.

Healthwatch Committee

The Chair of the Advisory Board will be a member of the Healthwatch Committee, a sub-committee of the Public Voice Board. The Healthwatch Committee members consist of all Chairs of local decision-making bodies (e.g. the Advisory Board) of the local Healthwatch for which Public Voice is the host organisation, as well as a Director nominated by the Public Voice Board and the CEO of Public Voice as Chair.

The purpose of the Healthwatch Committee is to:

- Provide regular reporting of updates from local Healthwatch to the Public Voice Board, to advise and support the Public Voice Board in its strategic role as host organisation
- Share identified trends, issues, learnings and other relevant information between the local decision-making bodies hosted by Public Voice
- Allow the Public Voice Board (via the nominated Director and Public Voice CEO) to share regular updates and information to the local decision-making bodies (via their Chairs).

Healthwatch Committee meetings will take place at least quarterly. The meeting will be quorate only if the nominated Director or Public Voice CEO is in attendance. Meetings will be held either online or in person, at the discretion of the Healthwatch Committee members.

The reporting requirements for each local decision-making body's Chair and the nominated Director will be defined and communicated by the nominated Director and Public Voice CEO, in consultation with the local decision-making bodies' Chairs.

The Advisory Board Chair is expected to attend at least 75% of a year's cycle of Healthwatch Committee meetings. Should the Advisory Board Chair be unable to attend, the Vice-Chair should attend in their absence. Should the Vice-Chair be unable to attend, the Chair should prepare a written report meeting the reporting requirements at least 2 working days prior to the scheduled meeting, to be presented either by another nominated member of the Advisory Board, or to be communicated by the nominated Director.