



# Healthwatch South Tees

## Partnership Board

### Code of Conduct

### 2018-2020

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**0800 989 0080**

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**healthwatch**  
Middlesbrough

**healthwatch**  
Redcar and Cleveland

## INTRODUCTION

There is a local Healthwatch in every area of England. We are the independent champion for people using local health and social care services. We listen to what people like about services and what could be improved and share their views with those with the power to make change happen. We also share them with Healthwatch England, the national body, to help improve the quality of services across the country. People can also speak to us to find information about health and social care services available locally.

Our sole purpose is to help make care better for people.

In summary - local Healthwatch is here to:

- Help people find out about local health and social care services.
- Listen to what people think of services.
- Help improve the quality of services by letting those running services and the government know what people want from care.

As of 1 April 2017 Healthwatch, Middlesbrough and Healthwatch Redcar & Cleveland are working together to deliver Healthwatch activities across South Tees.

This Code of Conduct provides guidance on the responsibilities and conduct expected from HWST Partnership Board Members.

### **1. Key Responsibilities of Individual Partnership Board Members**

- 1.1** The key principles upon which the HWST Code of Conduct is based are the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles) and the Nine Principles of Public Service Delivery. Appendices A and B.
- 1.2** The actions and decisions of HWST Partnership Board members should be informed by these principles. HWST Partnership Board members are expected to:
  - Act in good faith and in the best interests of HWST.
  - Maintain their independence and objectivity by, among other actions, avoiding conflicts of interest, refusing any gift that could reasonably be expected to compromise their personal judgement or place them under an improper obligation.
  - Deal fairly, objectively, and impartially with all members of the public, stakeholders, and HWST staff.
  - Make decisions that are consistent with the established purpose of HWST within the resources available.
  - Regularly review the efficiency and effectiveness of HWST success in meeting aims and objectives, including assessing own performance and actions as a Partnership Board member.
  - Always maintain confidentiality, subject to applicable safeguarding laws.
  - Treat staff employed to deliver HWST with courtesy and respect and not ask or encourage employees to act in any way which would conflict with their own Code of Conduct.

## **2. Media and Public Speaking Engagements**

- 2.1** HWST Partnership Board members should inform the HWST Development and Delivery Manager if they have any public engagements which are likely to involve matters related to HWST. Members should always be explicit whether they are speaking as a representative of HWST or expressing their own personal views. A member should not claim to speak or give the impression that they speak on behalf of HWST unless there is a collective agreement by the HWST Partnership Board.
- 2.2** The Chair of HWST will be the official spokesperson for HWST. Partnership Board members should not commit to media interviews as representatives of HWST without first consulting and gaining the approval of the HWST Partnership Board.
- 2.3** HWST Partnership Board members should be, and be seen to be, politically impartial in their public role. They should not make political statements with regard to HWST.

## **3. Behaviour expected in HWST meetings**

- 3.1** HWST Partnership Board members are accountable to the public for their actions and the way they carry out their responsibilities. They should always behave in a manner which does not bring HWST into disrepute or damage the relationship between Local Healthwatch, the public, service providers and other stakeholders.
- 3.2** HWST Partnership Board members are expected to understand and respect the principle of collective decision-making. This means that, once the HWST Partnership Board has made a decision, all members are bound by that decision and should publicly support it.
- 3.3** The following guidance will assist HWST meetings to be well conducted, with informed and well-considered decisions being made. HWST Partnership Board members should:
  - Take account of the views of others but should reach their own conclusions on any issues presented and act appropriately.
  - Be as open as possible about their actions and decisions, being prepared to give reasons for their actions and willing for their decisions and actions to be scrutinised and challenged in a constructive way.
  - Allow everyone to take part without interruption or intimidation, respecting the contribution of other members and not interrupt when someone is speaking.
  - Respect the impartiality and integrity of all the HWST Partnership Board members, never being derogatory in their speech or manner. Members should not use language which could be construed as discriminatory or offensive to others and avoid using heated, emotional and value loaded language and behaviour.
  - Allow the conversation to move forward, not looking back at past discussion and staying with the point under discussion.
  - Not attempt to dominate the meetings for their own purpose or the purpose of a group or organisation they are representing.

- Ensure mobile phones are set to silent or vibrate during Partnership Board meetings and notify the Chair if they are expecting an urgent call and are likely to have to leave the meeting;

**3.4** Any member who does not comply with the Code of Conduct during a meeting may be asked to leave the meeting by the Chair. Any person excluded from an individual meeting because of their behaviour will only be allowed to return to future meetings if they agree to abide by the Code of Conduct.

## **General Conduct Expected of HWST Partnership Board Members**

### **4. Confidentiality**

**4.1** Members of the Partnership Board may occasionally receive information which is not in the public domain, often relating to individuals, organisations or in-confidence matters. It is the responsibility of each individual member to ensure that this information remains confidential to the meeting, unless prior authorisation has been given by the Chair for this to be discussed elsewhere. This duty of confidentiality continues to apply after members have left the Partnership Board meeting.

**4.2** Individuals must never use confidential information for their personal advantage or the advantage or disadvantage of anyone known to them or to disadvantage or discredit the Partnership Board.

### **5. Duty to Promote Equality**

**5.1** All HWST Partnership Board Members are under a duty to promote equality and not discriminate unlawfully against any person, treating all people with respect, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability.

### **6. Partnership Board Member Expenses**

**6.1** HWST Partnership Board members must comply with the rules set by MVDA in its Travel and Subsistence Policy regarding remuneration, allowances and expenses.

**6.2** It is a Partnership Board members personal responsibility to ensure compliance with all relevant HM Revenue and Customs' requirements concerning payments, including expenses.

### **7. Duty to Declare Interests**

**7.1** HWST Partnership Board Members must ensure that conflicts do not arise, or appear to arise, between their public duties and their private interests, whether these are financial or not. It is the personal responsibility of all Partnership Board members to declare any personal or business interests which may conflict with their responsibilities.

## **8. Failure to Comply - Sanctions**

**8.1** Breaches of this Code of Conduct by members of the HWST Partnership Board will be addressed by the HWST Leadership and Delivery Group with support where required by MVDA in partnership with RCVDA

### **8.2** Sanctions available

- Informal warning
- Formal warning
- Suspension from some or all Healthwatch South Tees activities
- Termination of Healthwatch South Tees membership, including the position of Partnership Board member

## **APPENDIX A**

### **The Seven Principles of Public Life**

The Code of Conduct is based on the '**Seven Principles of Public Life**', which apply to all in the public service.

#### **Selflessness**

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

#### **Integrity**

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

#### **Objectivity**

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

#### **Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

#### **Openness**

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

#### **Honesty**

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

#### **Leadership**

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

## Appendix B

### The Nine Principles of Public Service Delivery

**1. Set standards of service**

Set clear standards of service that people who use services can expect; monitor and review performance; and publish the results, following independent validation wherever possible.

**2. Be open and provide full information**

Be open and communicate clearly and effectively in plain language, to help people using public services: and provide full information about services, their cost and how well they perform. Where practical and appropriate, hold open meetings and release summary reports of meetings.

**3. Consult and involve**

Consult and involve present and potential people who use public services, as well as those who work in them; and use their views to improve the service provided.

**4. Encourage access and the promotion of choice**

Make services easily available to everyone who needs them, including using technology to the full and offering choice wherever possible.

**5. Treat all fairly**

Treat all fairly; respect their privacy and dignity; be helpful and courteous; and pay particular attention to those with special needs.

**6. Put things right when they go wrong**

Put things right quickly and effectively; learn from complaints; and have a clear, well publicised and easy-to-use complaints procedure, with independent review wherever possible.

**7. Use resources effectively**

Use resources effectively to provide best value for taxpayers and people who use services.

**8. Innovate and improve**

Always look for ways to improve the services and facilities offered.

**9. Work with other providers**

Work with other providers to ensure that services are simple to use, effective and coordinated, and deliver a better service to the user.