



Healthwatch South Tees Board Code of Conduct

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Healthwatch South Tees (HWST) Board - Code of Conduct

HWST has a duty to protect its good name and reputation. The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to set out the standards of behaviour expected of all staff and volunteers of HWST and those acting on behalf of HWST to ensure that anyone who comes into contact with one of our representatives is treated in accordance with this Code of Conduct.

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

Scope of this Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct applies to anyone involved in HWST activities including all volunteers, staff and those providing services or support on behalf of HWST.

Why HWST has a Code of Conduct

Our aim is to create a positive environment within which individuals and organisations with an interest in our work can contribute freely, equally and openly.

To achieve this we need to ensure that:

- Contributions from individuals and organisations with an interest or stake in our work are treated with respect and courtesy
- Breaches of the Code of Conduct are tackled consistently and fairly
- The Nolan Committee's Seven Principles of Public Life are applied to all aspects of HWST activity

The Nolan Principles of Public Life

HWST expects all members and those acting on behalf of Healthwatch to be committed to the following principles and behaviours:

Respect

Respect and uphold the good reputation of HWST and treat everyone they come into contact with through HWST with equal respect and courtesy.

Openness and accountability

Conduct themselves fairly and openly when involved in HWST activities and be accountable to HWST for any decisions and actions taken on behalf of HWST.

Honesty

Conduct themselves honestly and withdraw from involvement in any business of HWST, where they have, or could be seen to have, a conflict of interest, whether personal, professional, financial or other. In particular, make known any interest in any matter under consideration by HWST which:

- Either creates a real danger of bias - that is, the interest affects him/her, or a member of his/her organisation or household, more than others affected by the decision;
- Or which might reasonably cause others to think it could influence the decision.

In the above situation, they should, act in accordance with the Conflict of Interest Policy, declare the nature of the interest and withdraw from a meeting or discussion, unless the remaining members agree otherwise.

Best interests and objectivity

Act in the best interests of HWST at all times, taking any decisions on merit and promoting public confidence in HWST. When speaking on behalf of HWST, accurately represent the collective views of those they are representing on behalf of HWST, and provide timely and accurate feedback to HWST and those they are representing.

Integrity

Conduct themselves in a manner which does not damage or undermine the good reputation of HWST or place them under any financial or other obligation to any person or organisation that may attempt to influence any decision or action taken on behalf of HWST.

Leadership

Lead by example, supporting these principles in order to maintain and strengthen public trust and confidence in the business of HWST.

Equality and diversity

HWST is committed to understanding, accepting and appreciating individual difference. In practice, this means treating others with dignity and respect, recognising the value of each individual and their experience. HWST will not tolerate discrimination against others based on (but not limited to) age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Representing HWST

Board members are required to represent the best interests of HWST within the Nolan Principles (above) and to provide feedback to HWST and others in a timely and structured way. When speaking or acting on behalf of HWST, representatives will reflect the priorities and policies of HWST, even if they differ from personal views. Approaches to staff and volunteers by third parties for HWST information or views (including contact with the media) must be referred to the Project Lead Officer or the Chair of the Board.

Confidentiality

Those involved in HWST activities will respect confidentiality and not divulge third party information without the agreement of the third party, Project Lead Officer or the Chair of the Board and operate in line with Pioneering Care Partnership's Confidentiality Policy.

Compliments, comments and complaints about HWST

HWST will respond to any compliments, comments and complaints in a timely and consistent way, in line with its published policy.

Participation in HWST meetings and other activities

HWST representatives agree to:

- Attend on time and be prepared
- Send apologies if unable to attend
- Listen to, respect and value the opinions of others
- Speak one at a time, through the Chair or meeting facilitator
- Be clear and keep to the point, using plain English and avoiding jargon and acronyms
- Ask for more information or explanation, if necessary
- Declare an interest where one exists or may be perceived to exist
- Work positively with HWST staff and representatives
- Provide feedback to those they represent
- Respect the authority of the role of the Chair or meeting facilitator and accept a majority vote, where needed, as decisive

Sanctions

Breaches of this Code of Conduct will be handled by the HWST Chair and Executive Board with support and advice where required from Pioneering Care Partnership.

The following sanctions are available to the Board:

- Informal warning
- Formal warning
- Suspension from some or all HWST activities

Breaches of this Code of Conduct by staff and those providing support and services to HWST via a formal arrangement with Pioneering Care Partnership will be dealt with through Pioneering Care Partnership's policies and procedures.