
HW Board Member - role summary

Eligibility

Volunteers over the age of 16 can apply to be members of the Healthwatch Rutland (HWR) Board. Members are appointed for a term of up to three years. Board members have the responsibility for carrying out and contributing to a range of activities.

Core functions

- Help determine the strategic direction for HWR and, through the Manager/CEO, ensure efficient allocation and administration of resources to develop a work plan that will enable it to perform its functions effectively
- Ensure that HWR's operations are transparent and accountable
- Ensure that HWR seeks out and engages with members of the public, consumers and carers including 'seldom heard' groups, to gain their views on health and social care issues and problems in Rutland
- Ensure attendance at meetings with a variety of health and social care commissioners to represent public views as gathered through outreach work
- Ensure that there is representation by staff and volunteers at forums, committees and sub-committees with a variety of stakeholders (including user groups and partners) where these will help HWR to deliver on its aims
- Assess a range of projects, research and reports that will help HWR fulfil its role

To fulfil the role of an HWR Board Member, individuals will need a range of skills and expertise as well as the right experience and characteristics.



Time commitment for Board Members:

Read Board papers and attend Board meetings every 2 months (approximately 5-6 hours).

Respond to emails and attend other meetings and events on behalf of HWR as desired (average 2-4 hours per meeting or event).

HW Board Member - full role description

Term - Contract for service for up to three years

Remuneration - Mileage expenses

Board members will be responsible for carrying out and contributing to a range of activities. The core functions are summarised below.

- Help determine the strategic direction for Healthwatch Rutland and through the Manager/CEO, ensure efficient allocation and administering of resources to develop a work plan that will enable it to perform its functions effectively.
- Ensure that the organisation operations and practices are transparent and accountable.
- Ensure the organisation seeks out and engages with members of the public, service users and carers including “seldom heard” groups, to gain their views on health and social care issues and problems in Rutland.
- Ensure attendance at meetings with a variety of health and social care commissioners to represent public views as gathered through outreach work.
- Assess a range of projects, research and reports that will help Healthwatch Rutland fulfil its role.
- Ensure that there is representation by staff and volunteers at forums, committees and sub committees with a variety of stakeholders (including user-groups and partners) where these will help Healthwatch Rutland to deliver on its aims.

Role requirements

To fill the role of Board member for Healthwatch Rutland, individuals will need a range of skills and expertise as well as the right experience and characteristics.

Skills and knowledge

- Members need to be good communicators and be capable of playing an active role at regular meetings and contribute to the discussion informing policy decisions.
- Members will be communicating with a range of different individuals from commissioners to members of the public, and must be willing to engage with all of them.

- Members should have good analytical skills and awareness, and understanding of research and research costs, in order to identify gaps in public feedback and the provision and quality of local health and social care services.
- Members should have an awareness of health and social care issues and an understanding of the importance of public involvement in these issues.
- Members should have some experience of health and/or social care services. This should come from personal experience or a previous paid role.
- Members will also need strategic awareness to give advice in the best interests of Healthwatch Rutland in exercising its functions.
- Members are public representatives so they should have a good idea of what is expected from a position of civic responsibility.

Experience

- It is desirable, but not essential for members to have had some experience or knowledge of public representation, particularly in health and social care. This may be as a representative of a service user group or acting as an advocate.
- Members will be responsible for overseeing work on reports and shaping the projects, so some experience of project management will be useful.
- Members will need to be, or want to be, active in their communities, so a track record of previous community activity is desirable.
- Members should have proven communication and people skills and be able to demonstrate this with their experience.

Attitude and Approach

- Members are tasked with acting in the public interest, and should therefore be public spirited and committed to the principle of championing the public's interests in health and social care.
- Members need to be open-minded and inclusive, as Healthwatch Rutland will be tasked with engaging and representing the entire spectrum of the local population.
- Members need to have an active interest in how public involvement can shape health and social care services and have the desire to promote it.
- Members need to have the will and desire to communicate effectively with all stakeholders and partners in fulfilling the Healthwatch role.

Eligibility

Anyone who is over the age of 16 and lives within Rutland or anyone who regularly uses health or social care services within Rutland may apply to be a Board member. 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 two 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.
- 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 five years or is not currently eligible to be a trustee of a charity.
- Anyone who fails to comply with the Healthwatch Rutland Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interests Policy.
- All County, Borough or District councillors who hold an executive position in their council.
- Enhanced Disclosure and Barring checks will be mandatory for members. If these raise issues about suitability, the panel may take them into account when deciding whether to confirm appointment.

Support

- All Board members of Healthwatch Rutland will receive induction training along with further training and support throughout their appointment in order to enable to fulfil their role to the best of their abilities.

Code of Conduct

- Members should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned, should not behave improperly, and should on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour.
- Members should make decisions on merit, including making appointments.
- Members should be accountable to the public for their actions and the manner in which they carry out their responsibilities and should co-operate fully and honestly with any scrutiny processes.

- Members may take into account the views of others, but should reach their own conclusions on issues before them and act in accordance with them.
- Members should respect the impartiality and integrity of Healthwatch Rutland officers.
- Members should uphold the law on all occasions.
- Members should do whatever they are able to do to ensure that resources are allocated prudently and in accordance with the law.
- Members should act in a way that secures or preserves public confidence.
- Members should be aware of their roles and responsibilities, and work in accordance with both to the best of their abilities.
- A member may be asked to stand down if they are seriously failing in their role or in violation of this code of conduct.
- A member must not use or attempt to use their position improperly to confer on or secure for themselves or any other person, an advantage or disadvantage. A member of the Board who is in any way either directly or indirectly financially interested in a contract or proposed contract arrangement or dealing with Healthwatch Rutland shall declare the nature of their interest at a meeting of the Board and thereafter shall withdraw and shall not vote on that particular matter.
- Members should identify individual learning and development needs and participate fully in training opportunities provided.
- Members should pay regard to the seven Nolan principles of public office.

The Nolan Principles

The seven principles of public life, known as the 'Nolan Principles', guide the way in which Healthwatch Rutland delivers the agreed strategy and supporting plans. These are:

Selflessness: HWR representatives should take decisions about health and social care issues in terms of the public interest. They should not do so to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

Integrity: HWR representatives should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisation that might influence them in performance of Healthwatch Rutland duties.

Objectivity: In carrying out public business, HWR representatives should ensure decision making is informed by the available evidence.

Accountability: Participants in HWR are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate.

Openness: HWR representatives 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. There will be occasions when information is restricted due to clear requirements of confidentiality (e.g. person sensitive information).

Honesty: HWR representatives have requirements to declare any private interests relating to their participation and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest and the reputation of Healthwatch Rutland. Where there is an actual conflict of interest or a perceived conflict, this should be made clear by the Healthwatch Rutland representative with the conflict at the start of any discussion, and the representatives should refrain from taking part in those discussions, unless asked for their views by the Chair of the meeting.

Leadership: Healthwatch Rutland should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.