

Healthwatch Barnet Advisory Board - Terms of Reference

Background

Healthwatch is a national network of over 150 local Healthwatch organisations across the country, 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 the Barnet 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, Inclusion Barnet, staff, volunteers and stakeholders.

Membership

The Board will consist of up to 10 local members, the Healthwatch Barnet Manager and the Inclusion Barnet Head of Peer Services. Each person is entitled to voting rights.

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 Chair may appoint a Vice-Chair at any time. Membership of the Board will be for a term of two years, with the possibility of renewal for a maximum of two 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.

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 Healthwatch Barnet Manager. If an item requires a vote and there is a draw, the Chair will have the casting vote. If the Chair is unable to attend a specific meeting, they have the options of either postponing the meeting, or nominating another public representative member to act as Chair for that meeting. Where a meeting is not scheduled, decisions can be made by electronic methods which will be recorded at the next Board meeting.