

Healthwatch Hillingdon

Trustees/Board Members Code of Conduct Policy

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1. SCOPE

- 1.1 This code applies to all Healthwatch Hillingdon (HWH) trustees/board members. It sets out what is expected of trustees/board members and what their responsibilities will be as a trustee/board member of HWH.

2. GENERAL

- 2.1 Trustees/board members will, at all times, act within the scope of the statutory functions governing HWH, and abide by the policies and procedures of the organisation. This includes having knowledge of the contents of the governing document and relevant policies and procedures.
- 2.2 Trustee/board members will support the vision, mission and values of HWH, championing it, and using their skills and knowledge to further that mission and seeking expert advice where appropriate.
- 2.3 Trustee/board members will be active trustees/board members, making their skills, experience and knowledge available to HWH and seeking to do what additional work they can outside trustee/board meetings, including sitting on sub-committees.
- 2.4 Trustees/board members will respect organisational, board and individual confidentiality, while never using confidentiality as an excuse not to disclose matters that should be transparent and open and to act in the public interest.
- 2.5 Trustees/board members will develop and maintain a sound and up to date knowledge of HWH and the health and care sectors. This will include an understanding of how HWH operates, the social, political and economic environment in which it operates and the nature and extent of its work.
- 2.6 Trustees/board members will use HWH resources responsibly, and when claiming expenses will do so in line with Healthwatch Hillingdon's Volunteers Expenses and Benefits Policy.
- 2.7 Trustees/board members will seek to be accountable for their actions as a trustee/board member of HWH, and will submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate.
- 2.8 Trustees/board members will treat all information relating to service users, staff, volunteers, trustees and the organisation as strictly private and confidential.

3. MANAGING HEALTHWATCH HILLINGDON INTERESTS

- 3.1 Trustees/board members will not act in order to gain materially or financially from their involvement with HWH unless specifically authorised to do so.
- 3.2 Trustees/board members will act in the best interests of HWH as a whole, and not as a representative of any group - considering what is best for HWH and its present and future beneficiaries and avoiding bringing HWH into disrepute.
- 3.3 Unless authorised, trustees/board members will not put themselves in a position where their personal interests conflict with their duty to act in the interests of the organisation. Where there is a conflict of interest trustees/board members will ensure that this is managed effectively in line with HWH policy. It is understood that a failure to declare a conflict of interest may be considered to be a breach of this code.

4. MEETINGS

- 4.1 Trustees/board members will attend all appropriate meetings and other appointments or give apologies. If they cannot regularly attend meetings trustees/board members should consider whether there are other ways they can engage with HWH.
- 4.2 Trustees/board members will prepare for all meetings and other tasks carried out for the organisation. They will actively engage in discussion, debate and voting in meetings, contributing in a considered and constructive way, listening carefully, challenging sensitively and avoiding conflict.
- 4.3 Trustees/board will participate in collective decision making, accept a majority decision of the board and will not act individually unless specifically authorised to do so.

5. GOVERNANCE

- 5.1 Trustees/board members will contribute to the improvement of the governance of the board of trustees by participating in the recruitment of new trustees in accordance with agreed selection criteria, their induction and training.

6. RELATIONS WITH OTHERS

- 6.1 Trustees/board members will endeavour to work considerately and respectfully with all those they come into contact with in the course of

carrying out the role as a trustee for HWH, and will respect diversity, different roles and boundaries, and avoid giving offence.

- 6.2 Trustees/board members will recognise that the roles of staff, trustees and volunteers are different, and they will seek to understand and respect the difference between these roles.
- 6.3 Trustees/board members will not make public comments about HWH unless authorised to do so. Any public comments made will be considered and in line with Healthwatch Hillingdon policy, whether they are made as an individual or as a trustee/board member.

7. LEAVING THE BOARD

- 7.1 It is understood that a substantial breach of any part of this code may result in procedures being put in motion that may result in trustees/board members being asked to resign from the board of trustees.
- 7.2 Should this happen, HWH procedure as set out in its memorandum and articles of association will be followed. In the event this situation is not covered in the memorandum and articles association a panel of at least two board members will review the evidence collected in the investigation and meet with the trustee/board member who will have the opportunity to have their case heard. The panel will make a decision on whether the trustee/board member is to be removed from the board. There will be a right of appeal to a panel of at least two board members.

Please note: where schemes have an insufficient number of trustees on the board to meet the above requirements, they should contact the Association Policy and Guidance Manager for further advice.

- 7.3 If a trustee/board member wishes to cease being a trustee/board member at any time, they should inform the chair in advance in writing, stating their reasons for leaving.
- 7.4 Departing trustee/board members will not disclose, discuss or make use of (for financial gain) any confidential information that they were privy to during their tenure as a trustee/board member. These exclusions will remain in force for a period of six months following the end of their tenure as a trustee/board member of Healthwatch Hillingdon. However, departing trustees/board members will not be bound by these exclusions if they believe that it is in the public interest and is covered by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. It is the responsibility of the person making the disclosure to ensure that any disclosure they may make is protected by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and any subsequent legislation.