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**Board Membership – What’s it all about?**

Q. **What is the Healthwatch Board?**

A. The Board is the group of people who are responsible for making sure that Healthwatch is run properly. It is also responsible for making sure we are representative of local people and our work is based on information from local people.

Q. **What does the Board do?**

A. The Board does three main things:

* Makes sure that Healthwatch meets its legal obligations – we have to operate in line with company law as well as use or legal powers in the best interests of local people;
* Makes sure that Healthwatch does what it is being paid to deliver – our funding agreement contains detailed information about the services that Healthwatch must provide;
* Agrees how we will set our priorities – the staff team is responsible for our day to day work but the Board is responsible for setting the overall work areas and the policies and procedures the staff team will follow.

Q. **What do Board members need to know?**

A. The Board needs a mixture of knowledge and skills. Some Board members will have expertise in running an organisation, some will have a good knowledge of health and care services and some will have on the ground experience of local communities. We expect every Board member to have something to contribute to one or more of these areas but we recognise that a range of backgrounds and experiences is valuable – it helps the Board to make balanced, well informed decisions.

Q. **What is expected from Board members?**

A. We expect Board members to be committed to good quality health and care services for people in Rochdale. In addition to this, there are some specific expectations:

* Attendance and participation in Board meetings – approximately one board meeting a month plus subcommittees quarterly.
* Preparation for Board meetings – reading the papers before the meeting and asking for more information if they need it.
* Participation in Board training and development activities.
* Acting as an ambassador for Healthwatch – including respecting and representing the Board’s agreed position on a range of topics.
* Always acting selflessly, in the best interests of Healthwatch, in line with standards of accountability in public life.

Q. **How will Board members be supported?**

A. All new Board members will complete an induction programme which helps them to understand what Healthwatch is expected to do and what their role is.

Every year the knowledge and skills of the Board are analysed and a training programme is organised to make sure that Board members have the information they need to be confident in their role. The Healthwatch staff team is also available to support Board members, especially those who are new to their role.

Healthwatch staff will provide detailed papers and information about topics for Board members.

Q. **Who can join the Board?**

A. Broadly speaking, board membership is open to individual people who meet the following requirements:

* They live or access health or care services in Rochdale
* They meet the legal requirements to be a company director (including being aged 18 or over).

The role description and person specification for Board members provides more detailed information.