



Code of Conduct

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Scope

The code of conduct applies to all staff, volunteers, board trustees and trainees who undertake, work, duties or tasks on behalf of Healthwatch Rochdale and is based on the Nolan Principles of Public Life. The Code of Conduct applies to all types of activity undertaken on behalf of Healthwatch Rochdale and the methods of communication used by staff, volunteers, trustees and trainees (referenced as representatives in this document); including verbal, electronic, written and body language.

The Code of Conduct will:

- Create a positive environment for the Healthwatch Organisation to develop within and for staff and volunteers to work.
- Ensure that all Healthwatch representatives (both paid and voluntary) can contribute to the work of Healthwatch Rochdale effectively and are treated with respect and courtesy.
- Provide guidance to Healthwatch Rochdale representatives and others about what is expected of their behaviour and actions during any activity they undertake on behalf of the organisation.
- Create a core set of values that will underpin the behaviour, actions, attitudes, and decisions of Healthwatch Rochdale staff and volunteers at all times.

Key Principles

All Healthwatch Rochdale representatives agree to uphold the following principles (based upon the Nolan Principles of Public Life):

□ Selflessness

Healthwatch Rochdale representatives undertake not to make assumptions based upon their own personal response to what they see or hear, when communicating with members of the public on behalf of Healthwatch Rochdale. Any activity undertaken on behalf of Healthwatch Rochdale will be for the benefit of the organisation, not the individual, and information will be discussed and shared on that understanding, not making comparisons to one's own experience but purely listening to the information shared and providing sign posting information where possible to support the person to access individual help if required.

□ Respect

Healthwatch Rochdale Representatives agree to act appropriately and always treat people equally with respect and courtesy. It is important for Healthwatch Rochdale Representatives to be sensitive to issues of cultural diversity and of difference in general when representing Healthwatch Rochdale.

□ Accountability and Openness

Healthwatch Rochdale Representatives are accountable to the Healthwatch Rochdale Board, the public and to all appropriate scrutiny bodies for any decisions and actions they take during

engagement activities. Therefore, all dealings as a Healthwatch Rochdale representative must be fair, open and transparent and bound by this code of conduct.

□ Honesty

Healthwatch Rochdale representatives have a duty to declare any private and professional interests they have that relate to their public duties with Healthwatch Rochdale where there may be a conflict of interest (financial or otherwise). In this case Healthwatch Rochdale representatives need to act honestly and withdraw from any engagement activity that may create any conflicts, to protect the public interests of the Rochdale Community.

□ Objectivity and Best interests

Healthwatch Rochdale Representatives will act only in the best interests of the Rochdale people in their engagement activities, promoting public confidence in Healthwatch Rochdale, and accurately representing the different views of residents and their relatives when reporting their discussions.

All decisions about the Healthwatch Rochdale Representatives engagement work plan will be made on merit and in the public interest, signed off by the Healthwatch Rochdale Chair and Board volunteers, providing a rationale for the choice of engagement activities to be carried out.

□ Integrity

Healthwatch Rochdale Representatives must not place themselves under any obligation, financial or otherwise to a person or organisation that may influence their performance, decisions, or actions on behalf of Healthwatch Rochdale. All Healthwatch Rochdale Representatives having access to sensitive information or working with vulnerable people, training will be provided to ensure these individual cases are dealt with appropriately.

Representatives undertaking certain roles will attend training sessions as requested to help consolidate their skills and develop mentorship roles towards newly trained Healthwatch Rochdale Representatives. The frequency of refresher training required will be identified within the volunteer roles that people choose to undertake.

□ Leadership

Healthwatch Rochdale Representatives will take responsibility for promoting and supporting these principles and leading by example in order to maintain and strengthen both the public's trust and confidence, and that of regulators and commissioners, in the integrity of Healthwatch Rochdale in conducting public business through engagement activity within the local community.

Equality and Diversity

Healthwatch Rochdale places great emphasis on understanding, acceptance, and appreciation of individual differences. As such, Healthwatch Rochdale Representatives will treat everyone they are in contact with during their engagement activities with dignity and respect, recognising the value of each individual and their experience. Healthwatch Rochdale expects volunteers to demonstrate attitudes and behaviours which support this position and will not tolerate discrimination by Healthwatch Rochdale representatives arising from, (but not limited to),

employment status, ill health, social exclusion, ethnic origin, gender, disability, age, sexuality and religion.

Acting as a Healthwatch Representative

Any role undertaken by a person representing Healthwatch Rochdale, including any potential contact with the media, must be authorised first by the Healthwatch Rochdale Board and includes an obligation to represent the best interests of Healthwatch Rochdale and the wider community, rather than their own individual views and experiences. There is a further obligation to provide feedback whenever such activity should occur to the Governing Board. When speaking on behalf of Healthwatch Rochdale as a representative, comments will reflect Healthwatch Rochdale priorities and policies even when these do not reflect personal views and no information must be divulged unless the Healthwatch Rochdale representatives are in possession of evidence to back up any statements made.

Standard of Personal Behaviour

Acting with Integrity

As Healthwatch Rochdale representatives, we share a common responsibility to protect our reputation for integrity. We must always demonstrate our commitment to the highest standards of ethics and professional behaviour in our dealings with our service users, stakeholders, communities, and colleagues. We can do this by: -

- Knowing, understanding, and acting in accordance with the values and principles expressed in this Code and applying them to everything we do and everywhere we operate
- Taking responsibility and holding each other accountable. We have a shared responsibility to act ethically as individuals, and to expect the same of our colleagues.
- Raising concerns and asking questions. We each have an obligation to immediately report unacceptable conduct. If you believe that a colleague's behaviour contravenes the values and principles of conduct outlined in this code, or our supporting policies, or have a genuine concern that something is not right, it is vital that you raise the matter immediately with your line manager.

Adherence to Policies and Procedures

It is each individual's responsibility to become familiar with and adhere to organisational policies and procedures. This means that you are also responsible for seeking advice when needed. For staff, abiding by the standards outlined in this code and organisational policies and procedures is a condition of continued employment. Failure to adhere to them may result in disciplinary action.

For board members and volunteers, abiding by the standards outlined in this code and organisational policies and procedures is a condition of continued service. Failure to adhere to them may result in termination of your appointment with the organisation.

Attendance and Timekeeping Employees:

Have a duty to comply with the rules for the reporting of absence.

Should arrive at work at their contracted starting times and remain at work until their contracted finishing times unless there has been agreement with their manager to change these times.

Must obtain authorisation from their manager if for any reason they wish to change their agreed normal start and finish times.

Flexibility

Employees may be:

- requested to work additional hours with reasonable notice, in accordance with their job description
- required from time to time to work at locations other than their normal place of work
- required to undertake other duties commensurate with their post

Confidentiality

Healthwatch Rochdale representatives will respect all confidences they are party to and will not divulge third party confidences without their agreement or that of the Healthwatch Rochdale Board, in line with governing or local safeguarding policies and the law on data protection.

Healthwatch Rochdale Representatives will hear personal information during discussions during engagement activity and shall treat this with the highest confidentiality. Healthwatch Rochdale Representatives will abide by the regulations of the Data Protection Act which governs the use, handling and storage of personal information that may be held in Healthwatch Rochdale's database.

Participation in Community Engagement Activities

It is an acknowledged fact that Healthwatch Rochdale Representatives will bring their own views and opinions to roles. However, none of this should in any way affect any decisions made about their work as a Healthwatch Rochdale Representative. Any community engagement work carried out by Healthwatch Rochdale Representatives should be authorised and organised by the Governing Board and Healthwatch Rochdale staff team as part of the work plan. Reports of any discussions or information shared during such activity, should be made to a Healthwatch Rochdale staff member verbally or in writing following any engagement to enable support staff to add the information to the Healthwatch Rochdale database.

Community engagement activity will be carried out with support from staff wherever possible to ensure that Healthwatch Rochdale Representatives have access to the support and information they may require when acting on behalf of the organisation.

Professional Performance and Conduct

Adherence to rules and instructions

Healthwatch Rochdale expects individuals to follow all reasonable rules and instructions.

Conduct outside the organisation

We do not seek to dictate how employees; board members or volunteers conduct themselves in their personal lives. However, unlawful, anti-social or other conduct which may jeopardise the organisation's reputation or position will be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure.

Dress Code

We do not operate a formal dress code, however it is expected that Healthwatch representatives ensure that they dress appropriately according to the situation, and ensure that they present a professional image that reflects sensitivity to customer perceptions.

Teamwork & Co-operation

Individuals are expected to engage positively with their colleagues, work collectively to solve problems, create positive solutions and support the achievement of our collective goals. It is expected that all individuals involved with the organisations recognise and respect the difference between people, value their contribution, listen to, and support each other.

Monitoring & Evaluation Quality of Services Delivered

Paid employees are expected to provide a high quality of service, according to our service commitment, and are expected to keep accurate and good quality records of services, including the measurement of outcomes for the individual or organisation in receipt of the service. It is the responsibility of members of the governing body to ensure that they are aware of the organisation's performance against work plans and budgets and to hold the Chief Executive Officer to account for poor performance.

Breach of Code

Any breach of this Code of Conduct will be dealt with by the Healthwatch Rochdale Board and may necessitate a review of the Healthwatch Rochdale Representatives' role, including possible removal from the Healthwatch Rochdale Representatives register, or even suspension from all Healthwatch Rochdale activities, depending upon the severity of the breach.