

## **Advisory Group Membership - What's it all about?**

### **Q. What is the Healthwatch Advisory Group?**

A. The Advisory Group are an independent sub-committee of people who are responsible for ensuring residents views and experiences, in relation to health and social care, are communicated to the Healthwatch Rochdale Board. It is also responsible for making sure Healthwatch are representative of local people and our work is based on local peoples lived experiences.

### **Q. What does the Advisory Group do?**

A. The Advisory Group does three main things:

- Meaningfully contribute to make certain the quality improvement of local services by ensuring the patients voice and lived experiences are shared with providers, commissioners, and residents of the Rochdale Borough.
- Ensure that breadth of opinion is sought to represent the diversity of the Rochdale Borough.
- Make recommendations to the Healthwatch Rochdale Board so that its decision-making processes can be built upon and enhanced.

### **Q. What are the core principles of the Advisory Group?**

A. We work with these principles in mind:

- Confidentiality
- Respect
- Feedback
- Transparency
- Influence

### **Q. What do Advisory Group members need to know?**

A. The Advisory Group needs a mixture of knowledge and skills. Some Advisory Group 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 Advisory Group 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 Advisory Group to make balanced, well informed decisions and represent the diversity of the Rochdale Borough.

**Q. What is expected from Advisory Group members?**

- A. We expect Advisory Group members to be committed to good quality health and care services for people in Rochdale North, Rochdale South, Heywood, Middleton and the Pennines.

In addition to this, there are some specific expectations:

- Commitment to the post - We ask that Advisory Group members are committed to their role at Healthwatch Rochdale for a minimum of six months.
- Attendance and participation in Advisory Group meetings - The Advisory group will meet every six weeks for 2 hours, this will reduce to quarterly once it is operating effectively.
- Preparation for feedback to Board meetings - Task and action reporting on findings from residents as and when appropriate.
- Participation in Advisory Group training and development activities.
- Encouraging feedback from local people on their experiences of health and social care services throughout the Rochdale Borough.
- Acting as an ambassador for Healthwatch - including respecting and representing the Advisory Group'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 Advisory Group members be supported?**

- A. All new Advisory Group members will complete an induction programme and to agree to a code of conduct, this will help them to understand what Healthwatch is expected to do and what their role is as a member of the Advisory Group.

Each year the knowledge and skills of the Advisory Group is to be analysed and a training programme organised to make sure that Advisory Group members have the information they need to be confident in their role and develop their own skills.

The Healthwatch Rochdale staff team is also available to support Advisory Group members, especially those who are new to their role.

Healthwatch Rochdale staff will further support by providing detailed papers and information about topics for Advisory Group members.

**Q. What do we offer our Advisory Group?**

- A. Alongside the initial induction programme we will continually work to up-skill our Advisory Group members, with the appropriate training and developmental opportunities that they require throughout the year.

Travel expenses can be reimbursed monthly.

Healthwatch Rochdale are committed to ensuring the sustainability of the Advisory Group so their staff members will work continually to support the Advisory Group via a staff buddy system.

The opportunity to represent the people voice for the Rochdale Borough.

**Q. Who can join the Healthwatch Rochdale Advisory Group?**

A. Broadly speaking, Advisory Group membership is open to individual people who meet one, or both of the following requirements:

1. They live within, or access health or care services, in Rochdale
2. They represent one of the following special interest groups.
3. Health services, including GP Practices and hospitals
4. Mental health
5. Children and young people
6. Older people
7. BAME Communities
8. People with a physical or learning disability
9. Primary care health services (GP's, community pharmacy, dental, and optometry)
10. Secondary care health services (hospitals)
11. Adult Social Care
12. Children's Social Care
13. Carers

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