

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR HEALTHWATCH HAMPSHIRE DIRECTORS

Introduction

This code applies to members of the Board of Healthwatch Hampshire. All Directors have legal duties and responsibilities, and have duties under company law.

This Code of Conduct is not a list of Directors' legal duties, although many of the elements of the code are based on legal principles. The conduct and practices recommended in this Code go beyond what the law requires in some respects, but they are nevertheless fully consistent with the law.

PURPOSE OF THE CODE

To set out the relevant standards expected by Directors of Healthwatch Hampshire in order to maintain the highest standards of integrity and stewardship; to ensure that the organisation is effective, open and accountable; and to ensure a good working relationship any officer and sub contractors.

THE CODE

General

1. Directors must act with probity, due prudence and should take and consider professional advice on anything in which the Directors do not have expertise themselves.
2. Directors must administer Healthwatch Hampshire and all its assets in the interest of current, potential and future beneficiaries.
3. Directors should hold themselves accountable to Healthwatch Hampshire's stakeholders including the public for the Board's decisions, the performance of the Board and the performance of Healthwatch Hampshire.
4. Except where legally authorised, Directors must not gain financial or other material benefit for themselves, their families or their friends. Nor must a Director attempt to use his/her status as Director to gain customer advantage within Healthwatch Hampshire or any Health or Social Services provider e.g. queue jump. The Board should ensure that there are clear written policies on claiming of expenses by Directors.
5. Director must not place him/herself under any financial or other obligation to outside organisations that might influence him/her in the performance of his/her official duties, while recognising that Executive Directors have responsibilities to the delivery partner they represent on the Healthwatch Board.

6. Directors should conduct themselves in a manner which does not damage or undermine the reputation of Healthwatch Hampshire, or its staff individually or collectively and should not take part in any activity which is in conflict with the objects or which might damage the reputation of Healthwatch Hampshire.
7. Directors must make decisions together and take joint responsibility for them. The extent to which any one Director or a small group of Directors is empowered to speak for or take action on behalf of Healthwatch Hampshire or the Board must (subject to any specific constitutional rules) be a matter for all Directors to decide together. Such decisions must be recorded.

Responsibilities

8. Directors must, with the help of any officer, formulate and review regularly Healthwatch Hampshire's vision, values and long-term strategy as well as policies for its fulfillment.
9. With the assistance of any officer and appropriate professional advisers, Directors must ensure that Healthwatch Hampshire complies with regulatory and statutory requirements and must exercise overall control over Healthwatch Hampshire's financial affairs. In addition to compliance with statutory requirements, Directors should have a commitment to the development and implementation of good practice.
10. Directors must be familiar with and keep under regular review the rules and constitution of Healthwatch Hampshire. Any changes must be made in accordance with constitutional and legal requirements.
11. In order to develop a working knowledge of Healthwatch Hampshire and to give themselves credibility, Directors should endeavor to maintain links and keep in touch with Healthwatch Hampshire by regular visits and where practicable to front line services. Unless there is a good reason to believe that any officer or sub contractor's actions are threatening the probity of Healthwatch Hampshire, visits should be arranged in advance with those to be visited.
12. Directors must aim to foresee and avoid any conflict of interest. Where one arises, a Director must at once declare the interest and absent him/herself from any discussion or vote taken on the matter by the other Directors. Any transaction under which the Director will benefit either directly or indirectly must have proper legal authority.
13. Directors will ensure a local voice on the key issues that affect people who use health and care services. They will use evidence based on real experiences to highlight issues and trends and raise these at the highest levels. They will ensure that Healthwatch Hampshire will actively seek views from all sections of the community - not just from those who shout the loudest, but especially from those who sometimes struggle to be heard.

Meetings of the Board of Directors

14. Directors must strive to attend all meetings regularly, ensuring they prepare for and contribute appropriately and effectively.
15. Directors should bring a fair and open minded view to all discussions of the

Board and should ensure that all decisions are made in the company's best interests.

16. Confidential information or material (relating to users, beneficiaries, members, staff, commercial business, etc.) provided to, or discussed at a Board meeting must remain confidential and within the confines of the Board and must not be discussed outside the Director body.

Staff

17. Directors must ensure there is a clear understanding of the scope of authority delegated to any officer.
18. Policies and strategies agreed by Directors should be expressed in unambiguous and practical terms, so that all responsible for implementing those policies are clear what they need to do. Directions given to the staff should come from the Board as a whole.
19. Directors should act fairly and in accordance with good employment and equal opportunities principles in making decisions affecting the appointment, recruitment, professional development, appraisal, remuneration and discipline of staff.
20. Directors must understand, accept and respect the difference in roles between the Board, the officers and sub contractors, and work effectively and cohesively for the benefit of the organisation, and develop a mutually supportive and loyal relationship.
21. Having given any delegated authority, Directors should be careful - individually and collectively - not to undermine it by word or action.

Acceptance of this Code

22. All Directors shall sign this Code of Conduct at the point that it is adopted by the Board, or on appointment in the case of new Directors, and on any occasion that revisions to the Code are approved by the Board.

Adopted by the Board of Healthwatch Hampshire 6 December 2013

Revised by Board 8 November 2019