



Come on board!

Information Pack
for Healthwatch Northumberland Chair applicants

This is a brief outline of Healthwatch Northumberland. You will find more information, including our current board members, on our [website](#).

If you would like a copy of this document in an alternative format, please call: 03332 408468 or email: derryn@healthwatchnorthumberland.co.uk.

What is Healthwatch Northumberland?

Healthwatch Northumberland is your local health and social care champion.

Healthwatch was introduced under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and is part of a network of 152 local Healthwatch, supported at the national level by Healthwatch England. As an independent statutory body, we have the power to make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers listen to public feedback and improve standards of care. Last year we helped over 4000 people to have their say and get the information and advice they needed.

[Find out more about Healthwatch England.](#)

Who runs Healthwatch Northumberland?

Adapt (NE) has been commissioned by Northumberland County Council ('the commissioner') to provide the local Healthwatch function for Northumberland. Adapt (NE) is a community-based organisation that works to improve the quality of life for those with sensory, physical or learning disabilities, mental health problems, and people who are disadvantaged by living in a rural area.

All legal liability including employment responsibilities sit with the Adapt (NE) Board. Healthwatch Northumberland board members have no personal liability for Healthwatch Northumberland and are not trustees or directors.

A separate agreement sets out the respective responsibilities and working protocols between the Adapt (NE) Board and the Healthwatch Northumberland Board.

Most importantly, we are independent. We are not part of the NHS or Northumberland County Council. We are not part of any health or social care providers or any political party.



How does it work in practice?

Healthwatch Northumberland's day to day work is to listen to communities and individuals across the county, gathering evidence on people's experiences and views of services. We are also a member of the Northumberland Health and Wellbeing Board.

Yes that's a big job! We have a team of six people (4.6 FTE) based in Hexham and led by Project Coordinator Derry Nugent. You can find out more about the team and what we are doing at our website.

What does the Healthwatch Northumberland Board do?

The Healthwatch Northumberland Board guides how Healthwatch Northumberland works and decides what issues it works on each year.

To do this it:

Sets and monitors a Strategic Plan and an Operational Plan

Receives and responds to reports from Northumberland Health and Wellbeing Board.

Stays informed regarding strategic developments in health and social care at both a county and a national level.

More details about the role and function of the Healthwatch Northumberland Board are covered in the Terms of Reference.

What would I be expected to do?

The Healthwatch Northumberland Board Chair has three key priorities:

- To lead the board in setting and overseeing the Healthwatch Northumberland strategy, including chairing all board meetings.
- To attend high-level external strategic meetings (such as the Health and Wellbeing Board) and to relay the relevant information to the delivery team.
- To act as an ambassador for Healthwatch Northumberland. The Project Coordinator and the staff team (the delivery team) are responsible for day to day activities which deliver the strategy.

What type of people are we looking for?

Healthwatch Northumberland has 15 board members who are a mixture of people chosen for their individual knowledge, and representatives of organisations working with patients and service users.

All board members are lay persons and volunteers as defined by Regulation 34 (Healthwatch Regulations explained, LGA and Department of Health, 2012).

We need people from all of our communities and with a range of experiences. No one has all the knowledge or experiences we need, so the board operates as a team, and the chair's job is to blend together what individuals bring.

Exclusions

The following circumstances make a person ineligible to be Chair of the Healthwatch Board:

The candidate is employed in a senior management capacity by the NHS or Northumberland County Council

The candidate is or becomes bankrupt or fails to make any arrangements with their creditors

The candidate does not live within Northumberland

The candidate is incapable by reason of medical disorder, illness or injury of managing and administering their property and/or affairs

The candidate is subjected to a court order disqualifying them from serving as a board member; and/or
The candidate has, or is convicted of, a serious criminal offence (in particular any offence involving dishonesty or any other in relation to promotion, formation, management or liquidation of a company)

Note that the chair may be dismissed if they fail to declare circumstances which make them ineligible to be on the board and these subsequently come to light

Responsibilities

1. Oversee the performance of the Healthwatch Northumberland Board

Chair Healthwatch Northumberland Board meetings, including agreeing agendas in collaboration with the Project Coordinator

Ensure the board's business is conducted efficiently and effectively

Enable members to express their views and ensure that appropriate standards of behaviour are maintained in line with an agreed code of conduct

Decisions are taken as delegated through the appropriate procedures

With the Project Coordinator, carry out an annual board effectiveness review

2. Work effectively with the delivery team

Build and maintain effective working relationships with the Project Coordinator and delivery team

Work in a way that the strategic (board) and operational (delivery) arms of Healthwatch Northumberland are well-connected and working together

Ensure relevant information from high-level meetings attended in the role of chair is fed back to the board and delivery team in a regular and systematic way

Working with the Project Coordinator to provide support where appropriate to the Healthwatch Northumberland staff in relation to operational activity

3. Represent Healthwatch Northumberland at national and county-level committees and groups

Represent Healthwatch Northumberland on the Northumberland Health and Wellbeing Board to ensure that Healthwatch plays a leading role in decisions relating to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, planning, commissioning and delivery of health and social care

Act as an ambassador and representative for Healthwatch Northumberland

Promote the work, achievements and purpose of Healthwatch Northumberland

Contribute to building and maintaining good relationships with key stakeholders, including Northumberland County Council, the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) at 'Place' level and above as agreed

Participate in the North East and North Cumbria Healthwatch Network as determined by the agreed Working Protocol

Engage with Healthwatch England through its activities for chairs and board members

4. Promote good governance

Work with Adapt (NE) to ensure good governance is maintained including:

Compliance with all regulations, delegated authorities and agreed codes of governance

The board consists of suitably skilled, experienced and diverse members who understand and execute their roles and responsibilities

Demonstrate a commitment to own learning and development in the role

Key issues are discussed by the board in a timely manner with appropriate information

Reporting

The Healthwatch Northumberland Board is accountable to Adapt (NE) as the commissioned organisation. As such, the Healthwatch Northumberland Chair is required to report to the Adapt (NE) Board at Adapt (NE) Board meetings quarterly as a minimum, and by exception when required.

Time commitment

It is anticipated the duties of the chair will take a minimum of three days per month and may involve some evening and/or weekend working.

The Healthwatch Northumberland Board Chair is appointed for a period of three years. A chair may stand for reselection and can serve for a maximum of two terms (i.e. six consecutive years).

Remuneration

In acknowledgement of the roles and responsibilities associated with the position of Healthwatch Northumberland Chair, the position is remunerated at £9,000 per annum plus approved out of pocket expenses.

Person Specification

Minimum skills, knowledge, experience and behaviour required in the role:

Knowledge

1. Good understanding of health, social care and wellbeing policy, as well as issues/ challenges facing the NHS and local authorities
2. An understanding of how inequalities affects the health and wellbeing of Northumberland communities and how Healthwatch Northumberland can help to address these

Skills

3. Strong communication and interpersonal skills
4. Effective public speaker able to influence a wide range of stakeholders and audiences
5. Skilled at bringing people together to generate a strong team spirit, work collaboratively, build consensus and encourage good decision making
6. Confident IT user for communication and managing workload
7. Strategic thinking, able to analyse complex information, demonstrate clear analytical thinking and guide rational decision-making

Experience

8. Experience of leading an organisation as a member of a management board, committee or senior management team
9. Chairing meetings in person, remotely or blended
10. Creating greater diversity in organisations or services
11. Using personal and professional networks to promote an organisation to key stakeholders locally and wider

Behaviours

12. Listens to others, leads by example and provides decisive leadership when it is required
13. Open to learning and development, for self, staff and the board
14. Acts to encourage diversity and inclusion in activities and services
15. Able to challenge and influence appropriately, internally and externally
16. Commitment to the objectives of Healthwatch Northumberland and to promoting better outcomes in health and social care for all

How do I apply and what happens then?

Complete the [online application form](#) addressing the person specification but really say why you want to join us. Applications will be shortlisted based on these criteria.

All applications must be received by 9.00am on 6 March 2023.

If a written application is not appropriate for you, an interview-only assessment may be carried out. Please contact Derry Nugent: derryn@healthwatchnorthumberland.co.uk to arrange.

Invitations to interview will be emailed to shortlisted candidates. Interviews will be held Friday 31 March 2023.

The interviews will be in person at the Adapt (NE) offices in Hexham.



Contact us

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