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Chair's welcome

Thank you for your interest in joining Healthwatch Gateshead as a member of our committee. I hope that the information in this pack will give you a feel for the organisation and how you can play an important part.

We are looking to recruit people who are passionate about health and social care services in our local area. You will have a desire to 'make a difference' and the ability to work with people from a wide range of backgrounds. You will need drive, energy, enthusiasm, and the ability to play a leading role in maintaining and implementing our vision and objectives.

We welcome applications from people with a wide range of backgrounds who can represent the diversity amongst the communities of Gateshead. It would be beneficial to have experience (this could be personal or professional) in health or social care, though this is not essential. However, you should be able to demonstrate that you have the knowledge, skills and the abilities required to operate as a 'critical friend' in an objective professional way.

An important and central part of our work is engaging with the local community and listening to their views and experiences of health and social care services. An awareness of and commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion is essential to ensure our continuing commitment in giving everyone a voice, especially those who are seldom heard.

Michael Brown

Chair, Healthwatch Gateshead

What is Healthwatch Gateshead?

Healthwatch Gateshead is an independent not-for-profit service with powers given by the government to represent the views of the people of Gateshead.

We actively listen to people's experiences, feedback, and views on local health and social care services (e.g. GPs, dentists, pharmacies, hospitals, care homes).

We engage the public in their community and use people's feedback to influence organisations to make changes and improve services.

“When people's voices are heard we can make positive changes to health and social care services”.

How we work

By law, Healthwatch Gateshead is independent of both central and local government and sets its work plan based on the concerns of the local community and wider national issues. Healthwatch is unique in having some statutory powers whilst maintaining its independence.



Healthwatch Gateshead is delivered under contract by Tell Us North CIC a local not for profit company. TUN is legally responsible for managing the contract and the work of both employed and volunteer staff. Most of the work is delivered by employees of TUN supported by partner organisations and volunteers, to the priorities set by the Healthwatch Committee.

Role and Purpose of the Healthwatch Gateshead Committee

Every Healthwatch has a committee which is responsible for setting the agenda and work plan for the year. The Committee works with the Chair to fulfil the vision, values, principles, and priorities of Healthwatch Gateshead.

The main purpose of the Gateshead Healthwatch Committee is to:

- act as an advisor to deliver the Healthwatch contract.
- set the strategic direction of Healthwatch Gateshead
- prioritise work to be undertaken through various activities, based on issues raised and requests received from a wide variety of commissioning agents; agree on a workplan to deliver the outcomes.
- provide scrutiny and oversight, monitoring and reviewing progress against stated priorities and aims.
- use influence to improve and change services following feedback from patients and service users.



- provide information and signposting to health and social care services to the public.

Role of a Committee Member

The main role of a Committee Member falls into three categories.

1. Providing leadership and strategic direction to Healthwatch
 - To continue to fulfil the vision and priorities for Healthwatch.
 - To oversee Healthwatch activities
 - To ensure effective working relationships and clear accountability
 - To ensure that appropriate standards of behaviour are maintained in line with the agreed Code of Conduct
2. Acting as an Individual Ambassador for Healthwatch Gateshead
 - Promoting the vision and uphold the reputation of Healthwatch Gateshead
 - Building and maintaining good relationships to influence change and service improvements.
 - Networking and promoting the purposes and achievements of Healthwatch Gateshead
3. Promoting good governance
 - Undertake an annual survey to inform the priorities and direction of Healthwatch Gateshead.
 - Review, contribute to, and agree an annual report for Healthwatch Gateshead and present an annual report at the annual Healthwatch public meeting.
 - To abide by and uphold the Code of Conduct.

About you

We encourage applications from individuals from across the diverse communities in Gateshead and are keen to encourage diversity.

Experience and personal attributes are more important than qualifications. Your experience and knowledge could be gained through voluntary or professional experience, or both, or may result from your experiences as a service user.

The sort of applicant we are looking for will have the following values and personal qualities and be able to demonstrate a range of key competencies.

Values and personal qualities

- Able to demonstrate a strong commitment to equality and diversity.
- Co-operative supportive approach
- Passionate about promoting better outcomes in health and social care.
- Committed to high standards in customer care.
- Commitment to upholding the Nolan principles of public life.
- Personal credibility and integrity.

Key competencies (examples only - we do not expect applicants to demonstrate all of these).

- Ability to help develop and deliver a clear vision and formulate clear strategies and plans for action to achieve the vision.
- Ability to grasp complex issues, think creatively and problem solve.
- Ability to inspire others.
- Ability to work as part of a strong team and work collaboratively.
- Effective communication and influencing skills.
- Ability to support organisational change and improvement.
- Negotiation and influencing skills.
- Understanding of financial statements and budgets
- Ability to participate in discussions and represent service users'/carers' views, professionally, effectively, and objectively.
- Competent in the use of basic Internet technology.
- Strong connections with, and knowledge of, local communities, networks, and services
- Demonstrable experience in representing the 'voice' of others.
- Understanding of the challenges facing the NHS and Local Government which may impact on community health and well-being.

How to apply.

If you are interested in serving on our committee, please send us a completed Committee member application form. If you require the form in a different format, please let us know. If you would like to have an informal discussion with the Healthwatch Gateshead Chair or Tell Us North CIC CEO then please call or email us.

Tel: 0191 338 5721 / 0800 038 5116

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