

# Board member Recruitment pack

September 2021



# 1. Our organisation

Healthwatch Islington works to improve care in and around Islington. Our Board, staff and volunteers are passionate about working collaboratively to co-design services that reflect local need. As such, we've improved access to social workers, influenced the introduction of annual health checks for people with a Learning Disability, improved access to gardens in care homes, increased the amount of mother-tongue counselling in the borough and are influencing the borough's digital inclusion strategy and leading on a range of borough-wide inequalities work.

## Key projects

Our current focus is on general access to health care services as this has been so greatly impacted by the pandemic. We are talking to people about accessing their GP and a dentist as we receive most queries about these areas. We are also talking to residents about access to Long Covid services with our Healthwatch partners across North Central London as the patients currently accessing these services are not representative of the wider community. We continue to campaign for greater clarity and fairness around patient transport.

We provide local residents with information about local services and their rights to access those. Over 95% find that information helpful and over 90% are able to act on that information. During the height of the pandemic we ran vital workshops on how to stay healthy, and at the start of the vaccine roll-out co-produced a factsheet that has been used by statutory and community partners to combat widespread misinformation.

We are part of a national network of Healthwatch organisations. Our Islington Theory of Change for measuring impact informed the national model. Healthwatch England invited us to develop a training session for the national network on engaging residents who are off-line with colleagues at Healthwatch Brighton.

We are a small organisation, but we are ambitious about reaching the residents who are least likely to have a voice. We set up and lead a partnership of minority-led organisations and partners say that by working together we have made an impact for the communities they work with. <https://www.healthwatchislington.co.uk/our-partners>

Our Digital Inclusion work has reached over 700 excluded residents and counting since we started delivery in 2015. This work is supporting people to connect with others and stay safe on-line whilst accessing information and services they would otherwise be excluded from. Our safe processes for remote working are cited as good practice by Digital Unite and the Good Things Foundation. We were one of the first to move to remote delivery and are now leading the return to safe face-to-face digital training.

In recognition of the quality of our evaluation work, local Trust-funder [Cloudesley](#) recommend us to local organisations in need of independent evaluations and we have been commissioned to take on a number of evaluations for Cloudesley and Lottery funded projects.

## Our vision and values

Healthwatch Islington is working for improved health and social care outcomes for local residents.

We collect knowledge that reflects the diversity of needs and experiences within the borough and encourage people to feedback their honest views on services; use the evidence we gather to influence service delivery, provision and commissioning for the benefit of local people to improve their experience; reach out to and empower our local community to be informed about and involved in local services and exercise choice in taking up services; support the independent assessment and audit of local services.

### We will work in ways which are:

- **Inclusive:** encouraging participation from people across the borough,
- **Influential:** using evidence from our community and knowledge of key policy to inform commissioning and delivery of services,
- **Responsive:** rooted in empathy and compassion, and up-to-date with policy so that our work is relevant,
- **Professional:** with integrity, treating everyone with respect,
- **Collaborative:** working with others to maximise the impact of our work.

## 2. Healthwatch Islington's Board

Healthwatch Islington is a Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee, set up in February 2013. It is led by a Board, has a staff team of five people and a volunteer team of around 20. Staff, trustees and volunteers say we are a great organisation to be part of, that they feel valued and that they can see the difference we are making.

The Board make sure the organisation does what it is set up to do, safely and within the law. You don't need to know all about the legal frameworks as training can be provided. Some experience of volunteering or working in a charity might be helpful background but is not essential. The Board must always act in the best interests of Healthwatch Islington, as a group, taking decisions collectively.

Our current Board has a truly collaborative approach, so you'd be joining a great team. However, the demographics of the Board do not reflect those of the borough and we are actively seeking participation from people from Black and Asian backgrounds. We are also looking for people who may have experience as a family carer or use health services regularly. The people who use our services are Islington residents from a wide range of backgrounds including people experiencing poor mental health, disability discrimination, racism, homophobia, transphobia and poverty. We welcome applicants with lived experience and a passion for social justice.

We would welcome experience of the following (though not essential as all Board members bring something different to the collective whole):

- experience of using or working/ volunteering in health and care services,
- understanding of the legal duties of trustees and charities,
- knowledge of financial management of charities,
- experience of measuring and promoting impact.

The Chief Executive provides the Board with information to help them make decisions about what work the organisation should undertake, how to raise funds and warn them of risks that the organisation faces so that the Board can collectively think through how to reduce these.

## 3. Duties of Board members

- Ensure that Healthwatch Islington complies with our Articles of Association (our own rules), charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations,
- Ensure we use our resources in the ways set out in our Articles of Association,
- Contribute actively to the Board, giving clear strategic direction to defining goals and evaluating performance.
- Ensure the financial stability of Healthwatch Islington, and that our accounts are a true and fair representation of the organisation's finances,

- Make decisions for the benefit of the organisation, exercising independent judgement and declaring any interests, exercising reasonable skill, care and diligence in carrying out activities,
- Safeguard the good name and values of Healthwatch Islington,
- Adhere to Healthwatch Islington's policies and procedures including our Code of Conduct, Safeguarding and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Appoint the Chief Executive and monitor their performance.

## Other Trustee responsibilities

In addition to the above statutory duties, each trustee should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they have to help Healthwatch Islington's Board reach sound decisions and ensure the organisation fulfils its objects. This could involve:

- Leading discussions and providing guidance on new initiatives, particularly in areas where the Trustee has specific skills, knowledge or expertise
- Acting as a signatory on behalf of Healthwatch Islington, when mandated by the Board to do so
- Participate in activities to promote Healthwatch Islington to our beneficiaries, funders and the wider public
- Contributing on other issues or areas of special expertise

## 4. The time commitment

The Board meets six evenings a year, usually the last Tuesday of alternate months. Board members are expected to attend all board meetings. Meetings are held at Healthwatch Islington's offices in Islington (though are currently virtual). Papers are distributed two weeks in advance of meetings and Board members commit to read these in advance.

Board members may be expected to attend an away day or AGM and may be invited to additional activities and meetings representing Healthwatch Islington in the borough.

All Board members are expected to attend an induction session at Healthwatch Islington prior to their first board meeting. This will be tailored to the specific skills/ needs of new trustees.

This is an unpaid role but expenses for travelling to meetings will be covered if agreed in advance, upon presentation of receipts and completion of an expenses claim form.

## Conclusions

The Charity Commission require that you are at least 18 years old and must not be disqualified for any of the following reasons:

- having an unspent conviction for an offence involving dishonesty or deception (such as fraud)
- being bankrupt, or entering into a formal arrangement (for example an individual voluntary arrangement) with a creditor
- removal as a company director or charity trustee because of wrongdoing

## To apply:

Please send your CV and a covering letter (no more than two pages), outlining your interest in the role and any relevant experiences relating to the person specification. Feel free to speak to the Chief Executive about applying if you have any questions: Emma Whitby, 07984 445 668.