



**Come on  
board!**

**Information pack for  
Healthwatch Northumberland  
board member applicants**

**healthwatch**  
Northumberland

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

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

## What is Healthwatch Northumberland?

Healthwatch Northumberland is your local health and social care champion. 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 provider or any political party.

From each village and town in the county, we use your feedback to improve care by making sure NHS leaders and other decision makers hear your voice. If you live in Northumberland and you've recently visited your GP, or local hospital, or live in a care home, or used any health and care services, whether you've had a good or bad experience, we can use your feedback to improve services for everyone.

We have the power to make NHS leaders and other care providers listen to what you have to say. We're completely independent and impartial and anything you say is confidential.

We also offer information and advice to help you to get the support you need. Our Signposting and Information Service is free, simple to use and can make a real difference to people in Northumberland and beyond.

## Who runs Healthwatch Northumberland?

Northumberland County Council commissioned Adapt (NE) to provide the Healthwatch function in 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. The Adapt (NE) Board has all legal liability including employment responsibilities for Healthwatch Northumberland. Healthwatch Northumberland board members are not trustees or directors. They have no personal liability for Healthwatch Northumberland.

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

## How does it work in practice?

Healthwatch Northumberland's day to day work is meeting communities and individuals across the county, gathering evidence on people's experiences and views the care they have received.

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. You can find out more about the team and what we are doing on our [website](#).

## What does the Healthwatch Northumberland Board do?

The Healthwatch Northumberland Board decides what issues we work on each year. The board agrees a plan, the staff and volunteers carry it out, and the board ensures it is done.

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

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 main thing you would do is to prepare for and attend four board meetings per year plus a review day. Meetings take place during the working day (although this may change), and last approximately 2.5 hours. Healthwatch Northumberland meetings are held 'in public' and, when we can, at different locations across the county. We meet on Zoom if necessary.

Board positions of Healthwatch Northumberland are voluntary and unpaid and reasonable travel expenses are paid.

You would attend an induction session to explain the role more fully.

You would be expected to do these things:

- Contribute positively to the strategic direction and oversight of the work of Healthwatch Northumberland to ensure its activities reflect the views of residents within the county
- Represent Healthwatch Northumberland, as and when appropriate, at meetings which will serve the best interests of Healthwatch Northumberland
- Become involved, as and when appropriate, in thematic issues and task groups which contribute to the strategic direction of Healthwatch Northumberland
- Reflect the views of patients, families and carers within Northumberland and/or the views of the partner organisations
- Report on any activity or meetings attended
- Undertake relevant training and development

You can be a board member for three years and can apply for reappointment for a further three years (i.e. six consecutive years).

## What type of people are you looking for?

Healthwatch Northumberland needs people from all of our communities and with different skills and experiences.

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

Board members will normally be required to live in Northumberland.

Not everyone will have all the knowledge or experiences listed here, so the board operates as a team, blending together what individuals bring.

If you have a skill or knowledge you think is important then apply and tell us about it.

### Person Specification

- ✓ Awareness of current health and social care policy and issues, particularly for people with mental ill health, learning disabilities or people who aren't being listened to
- ✓ Ability to be genuine, positive and fair with people from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences
- ✓ Good communication skills with the ability to listen in different ways with different groups and individuals
- ✓ Ability to use evidence from patients and service users and trustworthy research to make impartial, practical judgements when presented with complex problems, considering all implications
- ✓ Experience in or ability to set goals and monitor how Healthwatch Northumberland achieves them
- ✓ Relevant experience of working effectively in a collective decision-making group, board or committee
- ✓ Committed to working in an impartial and independent way to achieve improvements in health and social care services for service users, carers and the public
- ✓ Ability to treat people with respect, engage in constructive non-adversarial debate and to articulate balanced, objective views

## How do I apply and what happens then?

Please complete the application form using the Person Specification to tell us about you and why you want to join us. We will use this to decide who to offer an interview to.

Complete your application [online](#).

All applications must be received by **9am on 7 February 2024**.

Please note that we may close submissions earlier than this date if we receive a large number of applications.

If a written application is not appropriate for you, an interview-only assessment may be carried out. Please contact Derry Nugent at [derryn@healthwatchnorthumberland.co.uk](mailto:derryn@healthwatchnorthumberland.co.uk).

Invitations to interview will be emailed to shortlisted candidates.

The interviews will be held during February/March 2024.

### Important information

We will not be able to consider your application if you are disqualified from appointment for any of the following reasons:

You have an unspent conviction for an offence involving deception or dishonesty;

You are an un-discharged bankrupt;

You have been removed from trusteeship of a charity by the Court or the Charity Commission for misconduct or mismanagement; and

You are under a disqualification order under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986.

You have entered into a composition or arrangement with their creditors which includes an individual voluntary arrangement, and is currently on the Insolvency Service Register

### Contact us

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