

Healthwatch Wandsworth Representative - Role Description

Healthwatch Wandsworth is looking for volunteers with a keen interest in local Health and Social Care issues.

Usually our Representatives are Wandsworth residents, but exceptions can be considered for example working in the borough.

About us:

There is a local Healthwatch in every area of England. Healthwatch Wandsworth is the independent champion for people using local health and social care services in Wandsworth.

We listen to what people like about services and what could be improved and share their views with those with the power to make change happen. Healthwatch was given significant statutory powers in the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to ensure that the voice of local people is strengthened because those who pay for, deliver and regulate health and social care services have to respond to what we tell them local people think.

We also share them with Healthwatch England, the national body, to help improve the quality of services across the country. Healthwatch is operated by Wandsworth Care Alliance (WCA) a local charity and is a member-led organisation.

Representative Description:

The purpose of the role is to represent Healthwatch Wandsworth on specified committees, boards and working groups hosted by other organisation to make sure the collective voice of local people is heard and that their needs and interests are considered, by sharing our understanding of the experiences of local people and intelligence about local health and social care services and by feeding back important information to Healthwatch Wandsworth staff and volunteers. A Representative is not usually involved in making decisions directly or a full voting member of meetings. The role includes:

- Preparing for meetings - reading minutes and supporting papers, keeping up to date with the relevant topics and communicating with staff and volunteers.
- Recording relevant information during meetings and regularly feedback a summary of important information, issues and outcomes of meetings, identifying topics for further investigation or promotion by Healthwatch, including highlighting information about services that local people should know about.
- Represent the knowledge Healthwatch Wandsworth has gained about the views of local people and their experiences. Present the voice of local people and encourage commissioners and providers to address issues of concern or

highlight areas of good practice. It is not our role to tell services what to do, but offer commissioners and providers of services the perspective of the local community in discussions about developments as a critical friend.

- Support or promote engagement activities of other organisations, making sure local people's priorities and concerns have been considered or highlighting when it is important to hear what local people think.
- Maintain knowledge of Healthwatch Wandsworth priorities, its work and reports to hold commissioners and providers to account and ensure changes are implemented. To be familiar with the Healthwatch Wandsworth understanding of topics and issues.
- Share and promote information about Healthwatch Wandsworth work, including encouraging people to sign up as a member and take part in our surveys.
- To notify Healthwatch Wandsworth in advance if you are unable to attend meetings.
- To observe Healthwatch Wandsworth's Code of Conduct.

Skills, experience and knowledge:

- A keen interest in health and social care issues affecting local residents.
- Excellent written and verbal communication and listening skills.
- Pro-active approach to seeking and sharing information.
- Can communicate information about health and social care issues in clearly, simply and concisely, highlighting key points for information or action.
- Follows instructions and guidance, with work independently when necessary.
- Experience of participation on a committee or board in any context is desirable.
- Some experience and knowledge of topic area, although this will develop in role.
- Recognises that a Representative is not expected to know the most up-to-date information and can confidently manage expectations of others and proactively consult other Healthwatch team members when needed.
- Reliability, diplomacy and tact in discussions.

Attitudes and Values:

- Understands that experiences and views expressed at meetings are based on knowledge of collective public views and not personal experiences or opinions.
- Upholds impartiality and credibility of Healthwatch Wandsworth's independence.
- Handles information sensitively with care, respect and discretion and observes principles of data protection.
- Commitment to promoting equal opportunities and a non-judgemental approach.
- Respectful approach to others.

What you will get from volunteering with us?

- Acquire new skills, refine old ones and increase your confidence working with a range of people from NHS and council and community organisations.
- Use and develop experience in health and social care.
- Help make sure that local people can have a voice in health and social care locally.
- Help Healthwatch Wandsworth make a difference in the community.

Support provided:

- Induction and support from a supervisor.
- Where available training or events will be offered to help with the role or learning on the specified topic.
- Reasonable travel and out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed in accordance with the Healthwatch Expenses Policy.
- Supervision will be proportionate to the volunteers' time commitment.

Duration: One year's commitment as a minimum, as required and dependent on volunteer's preference. Typically there will be 4-6 meetings to attend plus 5 team meetings in a year. This would work out to around an hour a week.

Some representatives attend more but this will be worked out with you. Dependent on the level of interest a volunteer might have in a topic and the amount of time they might want to commit we have defined the roles described in Appendix A to flexibly allow people to take part as much or as little as they want.

The time of day that you would be required will depend on the timings of the meetings you are due to attend, which are often organised by other organisations.

Accountable to: Healthwatch Manager and Healthwatch Wandsworth Executive

To apply contact: healthwatch@wandcareall.org.uk, or call 020 8516 7767 with your CV and cover letter.

Please note: this is an **unpaid**, voluntary post.

Appendix A

Representative team member

- To attend one of more regular meetings as a representative and as described in the role description above.

Representative Convenor Role

To provide a focal point for sharing information and ensure there is a strong overview of key areas, Healthwatch Wandsworth Representatives may also have a 'Convenor' Role:

- To be the point of co-ordination for other Representatives and a network of contacts attending meetings around their topic of interest.
- To pull together information and produce regular summaries on the topic of interest tailored for Healthwatch Wandsworth colleagues, particularly the Healthwatch Executive Board or the public.
- To help the Healthwatch Wandsworth network of representatives prioritise meeting attendance with an oversight of local structures, meetings and opportunities.
- To encourage and support newer Representatives, for example via shadowing.

Observer contacts

To help Healthwatch Wandsworth maximise its knowledge of local health and social care services and developments Healthwatch Convenor Representatives would welcome regular information shared from other contacts. If someone is active and knowledgeable about the local community but does not want to volunteer as a Healthwatch Wandsworth Representative they can participate in this way. They would provide information but not speak on behalf of or represent Healthwatch Wandsworth.