

Board - job (role) description, person specification and appraisal

Board members are responsible for the governance and strategic direction of Healthwatch Hackney (HWH). The board is made up of people who want to influence and challenge how health and social care services are provided within their locality. The board must reflect the diversity of Hackney and should include young adults, people with disabilities and those from key black and minority ethnic backgrounds whenever possible.

Role description

Board members are expected to:

- Attend all scheduled meetings of the governing board, including allocating time for reading papers and preparing
- Uphold the objectives and policies agreed by the board, and to contribute to and share responsibility for decisions of the board. They will be expected to work constructively with other board members and staff of HWH.
- Follow the Nolan principles of standards in public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
- Present a positive image of the board and HWH at external events.
- Identify personal training and development needs, and seek opportunities for development, attending training events as required.
- Participate in various committee meetings of the board and periodic working groups.
- Attend occasional events and associated meetings linked to supporting, developing or promoting HWH and its objectives.
- Ensure that HWH complies with its governing document, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations
- Ensure that HWH pursues its objects as defined in its governing document
- Ensure HWH uses its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects
- Contribute actively to the board's role in giving firm strategic direction to HWH, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets
- Ensure the effective and efficient administration of HWH
- Ensure the financial stability of HWH
- Protect and manage any HWH property and to ensure the proper investment of any HWH funds
- Appoint the Executive Director and monitor his/her performance.

In addition, each board member should use any specific skills knowledge or experience they have to help the board reach sound decisions. This may involve:

- Leading discussions
- Focusing on key issues
- Providing guidance on new initiatives
- Other issues in which the member has special expertise

Person specification

Some or all of the following qualities, experience and understanding are required:

1. Leadership

- Ability to support the organisation
- Self-motivated, and able to inspire others
- Willing to take on personal responsibility and challenge
- Understand and accept the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of a board member
- Ability to influence on behalf of the organisation and gain the support of others

2. Clear analytical thinking and flexibility

- Clear analytical strategic thinking and flexibility
- Ability to think creatively, grasp complex issues and problem solve

3. Team working

- Ability to weigh up arguments and understand the point of view of others
- Ability to work with a co-operative approach
- Good listening and communication skills

4. Holding to account

- Understand the fundamentals of good governance and accept the legal duties and liabilities of the role
- Commitment to continuously improving outcomes, challenging inequalities and delivering best value for money
- Ability to maintain focus on the organisation's vision, values and strategy and to ensure that these are embedded in the working of the board.

Knowledge and experience

5. Experience and understanding of health and social care, including knowledge of the issues affecting marginalised social groups:

- Experience of promoting equality within diverse communities, including marginalised communities
- Experience of community engagement
- Experience of working with customer focussed organisations
- Patient and/or social care service user experience
- Involvement in public health programmes and campaigns.

Commitment and requirements:

We anticipate the time commitment will be approximately 3-4 hours every quarter for board meeting (this includes preparation, reading papers and attendance) plus attending the AGM (2 hours) and an annual away day (usually held on a Saturday from 10-4). Positions are voluntary and unpaid but reasonable expenses will be considered as outlined in an agreed remuneration policy.

Eligibility and exclusions:

Applications will be considered from anyone over the age of 18, who lives or works in Hackney or uses health and care services in the borough. Applications from the following will not be considered:

- Employees of organisations with a statutory role to commission health or social care services for people in Hackney.
- Hackney Councillors or MPs.

Individual circumstances will be considered by the panel, but generally applications will also be excluded if:

- They have been dismissed as a trustee, board member or a director of an organisation of any kind
- They are the subject of bankruptcy restrictions order or similar order.
- They have been dismissed as an employee for a reason other than redundancy.
- Anyone who is under a disqualification order under the Company Directors Disqualification Act.
- People who have received a prison sentence or suspended sentence of three months or more in the last five years.

Support provided

HWH will provide training and support for Board Members in exchange for a strong commitment to improving local health and social care services for all. HWH is committed to equality and diversity and we recognise that some people may need additional support to fulfil this role. The need for support should not preclude anyone and we ask you to identify any support needs you have to help us plan.

Appraisal

The aim of the appraisal is to ensure Healthwatch Hackney (HWH) is functioning as well as it can to provide leadership to the organisation. Appraisal is as much about the functioning of HWH and its relationship with staff, as it is about the performance of individual board members.

Procedure

Appraisal will be by way of a conversation with the Chair based on the NCVO's **12 Essential Roles of a Board**. You are not required to fill in any forms. However, please think about the questions below in advance of the appraisal discussion, and make your own notes so that we can have an efficient and effective conversation. Following the meeting, a summary will be sent to you to check for accuracy before being stored on HWH's files.

Examples of questions/discussion points could include

- *Do you feel you have contributed to HWH's vision, mission and values?*
- *Have you had the opportunity to influence HWH's strategy?*
- *How happy are you with HWH's policies? Is there anything you would like to change? Do you know what HWH's policies are?*
- *Are you familiar with the governing document?*
- *Do you have all the financial information you need?*
- *How comfortable are you being an ambassador for the organisation?*

NCVO 12 Essential Roles of a Board

1. Set and maintain vision, mission and values

2. Develop strategy

The board is responsible for establishing the essential purpose or mission of the organisation. They are also responsible for guarding its vision and values. Together, the board and Executive Director develop long-term strategy. Meeting agendas reflect the key points of the strategy to keep the organisation on track.

3. Establish and monitor policies

The board creates policies to govern organisational activity. These cover:

- Guidance for staff
- Systems for reporting and monitoring
- An ethical framework for everyone connected with the organisation
- Conduct of board members and board business

4. Set up employment procedures

The board creates comprehensive, fair and legal personnel policies.

These protect the organisation and those who work for it. They cover:

- Recruitment
- Support
- Appraisal
- Remuneration
- Discipline

5. Ensure compliance with governing document

The governing document is the rulebook for the organisation. The board makes sure it is followed. In particular, the organisation's activities must comply with its objectives as a CIC (Community Interest Company).

6. Ensure accountability

The board should ensure that the organisation is accountable as required by law to:

- The Inland Revenue
- Customs and Excise
- The Registrar of Companies (if it is a company limited by guarantee).

The board also needs to make certain that the organisation is accountable to donors, beneficiaries, staff, volunteers, and the general public. This means publishing annual reports and accounts and communicating effectively.

7. Ensure compliance with the law

The board is responsible for making sure that all the organisation's activities are legal.

8. Maintain proper fiscal oversight

The board is responsible for effectively managing the organisation's resources so it can meet its charitable objects. It:

- Secures sufficient resources to fulfil the mission
- Monitors spending
- Approves the annual financial statement and budget
- Provides insurance to protect the organisation from liability
- Seeks to minimise risk
- Participates in fundraising (in some organisations)
- Ensures legal compliance

9. Select, manage and support the Executive Director

The board creates policy covering the employment of the Executive Director, selects and supports him/her and reviews his/her performance.

10. Respect the role of staff

The board recognises and respects the domain of staff responsibility. At the same time, it creates policy to guide staff activities and safeguard the interests of the organisation.

11. Maintain effective board performance

The board keeps its own house in order. It takes steps to establish:

- Productive meetings
- High standards of board member conduct
- Effective committees with adequate resources
- Development activities
- Recruitment and induction processes
- Regular performance reviews
- Partnership with consultants where necessary

12. Promote the organisation

Through its own behaviour, governance oversight and activities on behalf of the organisation the governing board enhances and protects the reputation of its organisation. Board members are good ambassadors for the organisation.

APPRAISAL FORM

NAME OF BOARD MEMBER:

DATE OF APPRAISAL:

Question	Comments	Any reflections after appraisal meeting?
Vision Mission Values		
Strategy		
Policies		
Employment Procedures		
Compliance with governing document		
Accountability		
Ensure compliance with the law		

Maintain proper fiscal oversight		
Select, manage and support the Executive Director		
Respect the role of staff		
Maintain effective board performance		
Promote the organisation		
Any other comments		