
CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Purpose

This Code is designed to assist Healthwatch Isles of Scilly to function effectively and responsibly, in setting out the conduct expected of individuals - directors, members and staff - who participate in or undertake any work on behalf of Healthwatch Isles of Scilly.

The key aims of this Code are:

- To be clear about how we are expected to conduct ourselves;
- To enhance opportunities for full participation;
- To value and make best use of the strengths, experience and expertise of all those who participate in and contribute to the work of Healthwatch Isles of Scilly.

This code should be read in conjunction with Healthwatch Isles of Scilly's policy on information governance, which covers confidentiality, representation and communications; along with guidance on compliance with the Equality and Human Rights Acts.

2. The seven principles of public life, known as the 'Nolan Principles' have been adopted as Healthwatch Isles of Scilly's organisational values:

- **Selflessness:** Individuals should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.
- **Integrity:** Individuals should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisation that might influence them in the performance of Healthwatch Isles of Scilly duties.
- **Objectivity:** In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits, individuals should make choices on merit.
- **Accountability:** Individuals are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate.
- **Openness:** Individuals should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
- **Honesty:** Individuals have a duty to declare any private interest relating to their participation and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
- **Leadership:** Individuals should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

3. Equality, diversity and inclusivity

All individuals will be expected to comply with the Equality and Human Rights Acts, see Equality Act 2010 Guidance for service providers (*published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission and available from Healthwatch Isles of Scilly*).

4. Conflicts of interest

Healthwatch Isles of Scilly shall carry out its responsibilities in an impartial and transparent way. Individuals shall declare any conflict of interest, or any circumstances that might be viewed by others as a conflict of interest, as soon as it arises. Individuals accept that this may result in them agreeing to withdraw from activities which could be influenced or be seen to be influenced by the conflict of interest.

Individuals will submit to the judgment of Healthwatch Isles of Scilly Board and do as required regarding potential conflicts of interest. In failing to declare a conflict of interest, individuals accept that this may be viewed as a breach of the Code of Conduct.

5. Hospitality and gifts

Individuals should be careful not to accept any gift or hospitality which might interfere with or be perceived as interfering with the impartiality of Healthwatch Isles of Scilly.

This does not include gifts of minor value such as pens or calendars, or working lunches or functions attended in an official capacity. However, any other gifts or hospitality offered should be reported to the Manager who will then determine the action to be taken.

6. Ground rules for meetings

It is very important that decisions taken in meetings are well informed by having appropriate, accurate information and debate. The principle of all meetings of Healthwatch Isles of Scilly is consensus. Effective meetings can be achieved if all individuals are committed to some simple ground rules for behaviour:

- Come on time and plan to stay to the end;
- Switch off mobile phones;
- Listen attentively and respect others views;
- Make contributions clear, concise, factual and to the point;
- Do not dominate discussions;
- Do not interrupt other speakers;
- Do not converse with your neighbours while others are speaking;
- Bring conflict into the open with a view to problem solving;
- Strive for consensus;
- Agree to uphold majority and collective decisions.

7. Confidentiality

Individuals shall respect the confidentiality of information relating to any individual or organisation, including personal and private information that may be shared by fellow participants in the work of Healthwatch Isles of Scilly.

See Healthwatch Isles of Scilly's policy on information governance.

8. Reputation

Individuals shall promote and protect the good reputation of Healthwatch Isles of Scilly.

They shall:

- Not speak on behalf of Healthwatch Isles of Scilly to external agencies or the media without prior knowledge and approval from the Manager or Board;
- Not make statements in the name of Healthwatch Isles of Scilly unless they reflect the agreed collective opinion of Healthwatch Isles of Scilly even when this may not agree with their own personal views;
- When speaking or writing in a public forum and/or in their role as a representative of another organisation, make it clear that their opinions are their own or that of the other organisation;
- Be mindful that they may be seen as representative of Healthwatch Isles of Scilly and its views in a number of other circumstances and arenas;
- Strive to establish respectful and courteous relationships with all they come into contact with in carrying out the activities of Healthwatch Isles of Scilly.

9. Breaches of this code of conduct

- a) A breach of this code of conduct by any individual will be reported and attended to by the Chair of Healthwatch Isles of Scilly, in the first instance. The Chair will endeavour to respond in a timely manner and deal with the matter sensitively.
- b) If the matter concerns the Chair, it will be reported and attended to by another Director.
- c) If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the individual or the Director dealing with it, it may be referred for further consideration and action by the full Board.