

Healthwatch Quality Framework: Questions, Prompts and Rationale

Leadership and Decision Making domain			Prompt	Rationale
1	What is your approach to strategy and business planning ?	1.1	We have a clear vision, understand our strengths and weaknesses and have set our strategic objectives for an appropriate timescale, taking into account our operating environment	<p>A well-formed strategic plan should have the following benefits: clarifies the organisation’s purpose; sets direction and objectives; helps to identify and address key issues (building on strengths, tackling weaknesses); develops commitment to the organisation’s objectives; motivates staff and volunteers; helps allocate resources</p> <p>If part of an organisation delivering non-Healthwatch activities, consideration should be given to the degree of alignment of the Healthwatch vision/strategy and that of the wider organisation</p>
		1.2	We have a business/work plan and aligned budget, linked to contractual outcomes and any other KPIs and reporting, which has been co-produced with staff and volunteers	<p>A business/work plan describes your organisation and its activities. It sets out your goals, plans, finances, and the risks you face</p> <p>Reporting against the business plan and budget is regularly scrutinised by the Board /Advisory Group</p>
2	What is your approach to the decision-making process?	2.1	We have a published decision-making/prioritisation policy that we follow to decide our work programme including Enter and View; also including, if appropriate, arrangements for delegated authority between our parent organisation and Healthwatch which is understood by the Board/Advisory Group	A decision-making policy is not only a legal requirement but sets out how you decide on where to focus your energy given the wide remit of Healthwatch and limited resources. A member of the public should be able to understand how such decisions are made in their local authority area
		2.2	Our decision-making policy describes a number of methods for involving local people and volunteers	Involvement of lay people and volunteers is a legal requirement. There are many ways to support such involvement, including regular engagement activity, focus groups, public meetings and steering groups. You can describe how you support such involvement

		2.3	When determining our priorities, we understand the context in which we are trying to effect change, triangulate our intelligence with other local, regional and national demographic and needs data/information and consider where we can have the greatest impact with outcomes in mind	Healthwatch have to take into account a number of factors when deciding priorities: what their work with the public is telling them; local data; JSNA; potential for impact etc.
3	How do you demonstrate your independence and your ability to hold health and social care services to account?	3.1	Independence is seen as important and is upheld by trustees, staff and volunteers and reflected in our values, decision making and communications	Independence is at the heart of Healthwatch - independence of purpose (why), voice (who) and action (what). A member of the public should be able to understand how they are managing potential conflicts of interest
		3.2	We have evidence of having held services to account and can describe the outcomes	
4	How would you describe your governance processes?	4.1	The Board/Advisory Group works effectively offering constructive challenge and clear purpose. Members feel safe to express differences of view; they work cohesively, conduct themselves appropriately and operate with integrity	Good governance is more than structures and policies. The behaviours of the Board/Advisory Group members and how it operates are an essential part in organisations being successful
		4.2	The Board/Advisory Group maintains and regularly reviews a risk register with clear mitigations or action plans in place	
		4.3	We plan, manage and control our activities and measure if they are on track. Regular reports are received by the Board/Advisory Group enabling it to assure our performance and contract compliance	
		4.4	We have a clear process for recruiting, inducting and supporting a skilled and diverse Board/Advisory Group	Skills of Healthwatch Boards/Advisory Group members may be needed for governance purposes, but they may also be needed to represent Healthwatch. Having a Board/Advisory group drawn from range of backgrounds and experience can help bring in different perspectives and challenge the status quo
		4.5	The CEO/Chair (or Manager/Chair/parent organisation CEO) relationship is clearly defined and effective	A balance needs to be struck between the Chair holding the Chief Officer to account while allowing creative space for open and regular dialogue
		4.6	Our Board/Advisory Group appraises its own effectiveness	

5	How does the Board/Advisory group oversee your effectiveness and management of resources?	5.1	Clear policies and procedures are set, reviewed regularly and implemented by staff and volunteers, including through induction. External advice is requested when needed	
		5.2	The Board/Advisory Group monitors compliance with its legal and regulatory requirements	The Board/Advisory Group is aware of their Healthwatch legal responsibilities
		5.3	The Board/Advisory Group has considered and addressed its exposure to liability through insurance provision (e.g. employer, public indemnity, cyber security) and has a business continuity plan in place	
6	How does your Healthwatch approach safeguarding, confidentiality and data security?	6.1	We have a safeguarding policy in place and/or adopt the local authority policy and ensure staff and volunteers have the knowledge and skills to deal with safeguarding issues	
		6.2	We are careful to balance requests from our stakeholders to maintain confidentiality with ensuring we act in the public interest	Healthwatch may be privy to confidential information which public bodies do not want in the public domain. Healthwatch need to balance this with their responsibility to act in the best interests of the public
		6.3	We use secure email and digital systems which are regularly maintained	Healthwatch hold confidential and sensitive information from the public, their staff and volunteers; email, website, databases and other digital platforms need to be secure and maintained with protocols in place
		6.4	We are aware of our responsibilities under GDPR, have appointed a Data Protection Officer and have staff with the knowledge and skills to prevent data infringements and meet best practice	
7	What is your approach to your equality duty?	7.1	We consider the specific needs of/disadvantages experienced by people with protected characteristics when designing, delivering and evaluating our services and have identified SMART objectives	

	People domain		Prompt	Rationale
1	How do you ensure staff and volunteers understand your approach and what people should expect from you?	1.1	We have jointly discussed and decided our culture, values and behaviours and can evidence how these are employed by our staff, volunteers and Board/Advisory Group	<p>Independence and putting people first are central to Healthwatch. As social enterprises delivering public functions our credibility relies on upholding values and behaviours such as integrity, transparency, accountability and inclusion</p> <p>Organisations providing other services as well as Healthwatch may need to consider whether such values and behaviours apply across the organisation or if Healthwatch needs a particular approach</p>
2	To what extent do people understand their roles and responsibilities in the organisation and feel supported and valued?	2.1	Roles, competencies, policies and procedures, lines of accountability and decision-making levels are clearly outlined and understood throughout the organisation, including between the parent organisation and Healthwatch (if relevant)	
		2.2	We actively promote diversity and equality of opportunity, treat everyone with dignity and respect and are compliant with relevant legislation around employing staff and supporting volunteers	
3	How do you recruit, induct, support and develop your staff?	3.1	Recruitment and selection processes are values-based, clear and fair and follow equality and diversity requirements	
		3.2	All new people receive a thorough induction to the statutory functions, duties and responsibilities of Healthwatch and the organisation, including information about Healthwatch England, local Healthwatch and its work and how their roles relate to other roles and the business plan. They are also given enough information to be safe and effective	
		3.3	The organisation supports a learning culture and enables staff to develop their skills and knowledge through a variety of means such as training, mentoring, accredited qualifications, peer support from other Healthwatch and are given opportunities to share information and good practice	
		3.4	There is sufficient management capacity for staff to receive individual, regular support and supervision to carry out their work	People feel they are working towards a shared purpose and common goals and working effectively as a team; there is

		effectively. Staff are clear about expected individual and joint performance levels and targets and work effectively as a team	mutual support and learning, and a sense of belonging and commitment.
4	To what extent do volunteers feel supported, valued and involved in your work?	4.1 We have dedicated staff capacity or a specific role for recruiting, inducting and supporting volunteers	Involvement of volunteers in the governance and work of Healthwatch is a legal requirement. Supervision of volunteers requires staff with relevant knowledge and experience. Support is essential for good volunteer experience and retention and so that they can work effectively and feel involved in and valued by the organisation.
		4.2 Volunteers understand what is expected of them and who supports and manages them	
		4.3 Volunteers get enough individual regular support and supervision to carry out their work effectively	
		4.4 We show we value our volunteers in a variety of ways	

Sustainability and Resilience domain			Prompt	Rationale
1	Healthwatch Core Contract or grant: To what extent do you understand and feel engaged with the procurement/grant making process for core Healthwatch activities?	1.1	We understand the procurement/grant making process; we have the right relationships with key people; we are involved in and can inform decisions made by commissioners about our contract or grant; we have a clear case for support (evidenced)	With competitive tendering, organisations need to be bid ready; show good governance and accountability; often the established provider is in a weaker position; key decision-makers, not just commissioners, need to understand and value what you do; you need to be assertive about what you do and why, with clear evidence; organisations e.g. VCSE will advocate your value..
		1.2	Our core funding allows us to plan effectively, respond to changes in priorities or opportunities. and supports us having a stable workforce with the skillset to deliver our strategy	Multi year funding enables Healthwatch to plan their work effectively and achieve medium and long term outcomes which can take two or three years. Multi year funding also gives stability to the Board/Advisory Group staff and volunteers, skill development and greater likelihood of retention.
	How effectively do you report on your contract or grant targets/outcomes and demonstrate your impact?	1.3	We are able to deliver the outcomes of the contract and deliver value for money with the financial resources provided	Business planning should identify whether the contract outcomes can be met within the available resources; commissioners need to understand that Healthwatch may initiate work without being fully clear what change they are seeking to achieve until they have begun the process of investigation. Only then can they begin to identify what changes they are seeking to achieve.
	How do you develop and sustain relationships with key individuals?	1.4	We have good evaluation and reporting mechanisms in place to support contract monitoring; we have a constructive relationship with our commissioners; we are able to have honest and productive conversations with our commissioners about challenges in our contract or grant delivery	

2	How do you monitor your finances?	2.1	We have a budget set by our Board/Advisory Group/parent organisation; we forecast and manage our finances; we are accountable; we have robust financial procedures and systems; we have a minimum of 3 months' reserves to cover our liabilities and are aware of cashflow	<p>Healthwatch are required to publish decisions about how they spend their money. Sound financial management is essential for sustainability. Accountability is needed for receipt of public funding and to allow requirement of local authorities to understand value for money.</p> <p>Reserves are needed to see through rough patches, or to act as a cushion should there be a need to wind down. Each organisation should set its own reserves policy. Good practice is to hold several months' operating costs in reserve.</p>
3	How do you consider potential changes in relation to your sustainability?	3.1	We carry out horizon-scanning including future policy, legislation and infrastructure changes e.g. pension auto enrolment	Healthwatch need to be able to be flexible to adapt to their changing environment whether relating to health and care or running a social enterprise e.g. pension auto enrolment.
4	How do you provide a suitable working environment for staff and volunteers?	4.1	Our premises and working environment are fit for purpose and enable good and safe working practices, e.g. Disability Discrimination Act compliance; health and safety legislation; equipment is regularly maintained and safe	
5	If you generate additional income, how do you plan, manage and account for it?	5.1	We have a policy which supports us to make decisions to ensure income generation opportunities add value and do not conflict with or dilute our organisational objectives/mission, compromise our independence or undermine the reputation of the Healthwatch brand	The core contract must allow Healthwatch to act independently; Healthwatch need to be able to demonstrate transparency when they decide to take on commissioned work. Such work needs to fall within Section 221 activities to operate under the Healthwatch brand
		5.2	Activity delivered as a result of income from other sources is used to fund additional capacity (i.e. capacity to deliver that activity is not taken from core Healthwatch resource) and is accounted for separately	

	Collaboration domain		Prompt	Rationale
1	How do you prioritise and work with key local and regional partners?	1.1	We have identified partners to help us deliver our strategy and business/work plan. The staff and volunteer team at all levels build effective and collaborative relationships with partners	
		1.2	We develop relationships and collaborate with other organisations such as universities, Academic Health Science Network, voluntary and community groups etc., where this will lead to better outcomes	
		1.3	We are sought out by statutory and voluntary sector organisations for joint working and/or guidance or support	
2	How do you collaborate with other Healthwatch?	2.1	We set joint priorities and work with other Healthwatch where this will produce better outcomes.	Healthwatch may need to collaborate with each other if provision for local people occurs outside their local authority area. STPs/ICSs may require collaborative working between Healthwatch which will benefit the people you serve
		2.2	We work with other local Healthwatch to manage our collective resource to engage effectively with wider partnerships	
		2.3	We play an active role in the Healthwatch network, learning from and sharing good practice and impact with partners	
3	How do you work with Healthwatch England and CQC?	3.1	We have effective methods of sharing information and collaborating with Healthwatch England	
		3.2	We contribute to Healthwatch England national initiatives when this adds value locally as well as nationally, and make maximum use of the support offered by Healthwatch England	
		3.2	We share our intelligence with CQC to inform their activities	

	Engagement, Involvement and Reach domain		Prompt	Rationale
1	How do you understand, prioritise and reach different sections of your community?	1.1	We know our district/area and its key demographics and health inequalities and know where we can make the biggest impact - triangulating e.g. Rightcare data, Health and Wellbeing plan, own intelligence etc to inform Joint Strategic Needs Assessment	Healthwatch need to decide who to target and their approach to engaging the local population, taking into account resources and skillset needed
		1.2	We meet our public duties under the Equality Act and are effective at reaching and working with protected characteristic groups and other seldom heard sections of our community as set out in a strategy or plan and using a variety of methods	
		1.3	Our communications strategy/plan includes specific reference and methods to reach local communities as well as other stakeholders, including through digital means	
2	How do you gather the views of local people?	2.1	We have a clear strategy/plan for listening to and gathering views from local people, including allocating sufficient resource for such activity with people with protected characteristics and seldom heard groups	
		2.2	We are committed to achieving excellence by using robust methodology and operating ethically when gathering views and undertaking research.	
3	How do you involve local people in the work of Healthwatch and support partners to involve local people?	3.1	We have carefully considered our volunteer programme and opportunities against our strategy and business plan and have developed roles accordingly	
		3.2	We have clear processes to involve local people in the design and delivery of our work, including those people within protected characteristics and from other seldom heard groups.	
		3.3	We encourage and support statutory stakeholders to involve local people effectively in their decision making, planning and service design and capture the difference we make through our support	

		3.4	We share opportunities and support people, including those with protected characteristics, to be involved in improving health and care, e.g. PLACE, NICE panels, CCG patient safety walkabouts, patient panel/forum	
		3.5	Children and young people are actively involved in our work, with effective safeguarding in place	
4	How do you provide local people with the Healthwatch statutory advice and information they need to navigate and access health and social care services?	4.1	We provide effective and accessible information and empower people to take their own actions where possible	
		4.2	People using our advice and information service get the information they need	
		4.3	We have a plan for increasing our reach and take up of the service, including with those from protected characteristic groups, and for measuring its effectiveness	Awareness of Healthwatch is relatively low. Certain parts of the population experience barriers to accessing services/reluctance to approach services
		4.4	We ask people how accessible and helpful we have been	Feedback will help you understand where you need to improve. Your customers will promote your service by word of mouth; they are potential volunteers and advocates

	Influence and Impact domain		Prompt	Rationale
1	To what extent are you known and trusted as a credible voice on behalf of local people?	1.1	Local people see Healthwatch as an organisation that represents their views and experiences to achieve positive change, and as a champion for patient/public voice	
2	To what extent would stakeholders in the local health and care system recognise Healthwatch as a system leader and credible partner?	2.1	We have a strategic approach to managing relationships locally, regionally and nationally, aligned to our priorities and resources	We've mapped our stakeholders with each of our priorities and strategy; we're proactive in cultivating and managing relationships; we think about tactics to improve relationships and tackle barriers
		2.2	Local stakeholders (providers, commissioners, regulators and other bodies) including senior leaders (e.g. DASS, Heads of Policy etc.) are clear about our role and involve us appropriately and effectively in their decisions and their work	Healthwatch have a difficult balance to strike between acting as a critical friend, holding organisations to account while being seen as adding value to the system; stakeholders understand the specific contribution of Healthwatch - important to understand and articulate your role and value
		2.3	We develop key political relationships locally, e.g. portfolio holders, elected members, MPs	Politicians are often key decision-makers or influencers, including in relation to Healthwatch funding. Cultivating and managing such relationships, given the requirement for Healthwatch to be politically neutral, requires skill, judgement and diplomacy
		2.4	We fully utilise our statutory role on the Health and Wellbeing Board, proactively feed in issues and insight and can demonstrate how the Board values our contribution	Healthwatch's role on the Health and Wellbeing Board is not limited to reporting on your work. You can also ensure that the public voice is appropriately reflected in all areas of its work
		2.5	Our CEO/Manager/Chair is recognised as a system leader and champion of public voice across our local health and social care system	Leadership is a key ingredient of Healthwatch with the ability to take the evidence generated by Healthwatch, secure buy-in from senior leaders and effect positive change
3	How do you know whether you've had an impact?	3.1	We understand how we bring about change such as through a Theory of Change and know what outcomes we want to see from our work	As part of your credibility you can explain how your chosen approach works and how your various work priorities link through to the changes or outcomes you are seeking to achieve

		3.2	We have a clear influencing plan linked to our strategy and business plan which uses the most effective methods, approaches and relationships to challenge at various levels e.g. individual, service and system	Stakeholder mapping and analysis enables exploration of the different voices that need to be considered when thinking about strategic direction, priorities, plans and tactics.
		3.3	We have a well-developed methodology for reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of our work	Outcome indicators are aligned to your projects and allow you to measure the difference you make; you reflect on the learning from your work to improve
		3.4	We follow up responses to our recommendations, including holding organisations to account; we have a clear and fair escalation process locally, regionally and nationally to support ongoing challenge when necessary	You have outcomes in mind when thinking about the tactics you employ to secure change; you know how to respond when an issue requires escalation
4	How do you help local people and stakeholders understand what Healthwatch does and the value you bring?	4.1	We ask people if they think we make a difference	
		4.2	We write our reports and other materials so they are easy to understand and accessible	
		4.3	We communicate the difference we make effectively to the public and stakeholders	Healthwatch need to have the confidence to claim and report on outcomes. Showing the difference we make is critical to our work.