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# Local Healthwatch Specification Template

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**Guidance Note: We aim to help ensure consistency across different local authorities whilst allowing for customisation. This template is a standardised framework which should be customised for your local authority area. Text in square brackets [example] indicates where local information should be inserted. It contains placeholder sections with guidance on what information needs to be included. Guidance notes are provided throughout with example language and suggested content areas.**

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# 1.Introduction

Service Name

[Insert name of Local Healthwatch service, e.g., "Healthwatch {Local Authority Name}"]

Commissioning Authority

[Insert name of commissioning local authority]

Contract Period

Contract Length: [Insert duration]

Contract Value: [Insert annual value]

# 2. Strategic Objectives

[Guidance Note: These core objectives should be retained but can be expanded based on local priorities]

* Maintain focus on outcomes for local residents
* Address and tackle health inequalities
* Demonstrate transparency, accountability, and value for money

# 3. Service Overview

This specification outlines the requirements for managing and delivering [Local Healthwatch Name] covering the administrative area of [Local Authority Name] and all age groups.

*See Commissioning Guidance* [Commissioning an effective local Healthwatch | Healthwatch Network](https://network.healthwatch.co.uk/guidance/2023-02-27/commissioning-effective-local-healthwatch)

*See A guide to Running a Local Healthwatch* [20200212 - A guide to running Healthwatch\_0.pdf](https://network.healthwatch.co.uk/sites/network.healthwatch.co.uk/files/20200212%20-%20A%20guide%20to%20running%20Healthwatch_0.pdf)

# 4. Local Context

[Guidance Note: Insert local authority-specific information including:]

* Local demographic profile
* Key health and social care challenges
* JSNA priorities
* Strategic objectives
* Local health inequalities data
* Relevant local strategies and plans
* ICS footprint and arrangements

# 5. Legal Framework

5.1 Statutory Basis

[Guidance Note: This section should be retained as standard]

The service is governed by:

- Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 Local authorities must ensure that Healthwatch duties are fulfilled, and the provider is accountable to the public, [Local Authority Name], and the Integrated Care Board (ICB) if the ICB is the joint commissioner.

- As amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2012

- As amended by the Health and Care Act 2022

[Section 221 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 as amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2012](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/28/section/22)

The law refers to the roles of:

* Local authorities, who are required to make provision for Healthwatch.
* Providers of Healthwatch services
* Healthwatch England, whose main role is to provide advice and support to every local Healthwatch and to provide general recommendations to local authorities on making contractual arrangements for the delivery of Healthwatch activities.
* It is important to consider what legislation states about Healthwatch, local authorities and Healthwatch England. It says:

What they must do (duties)

What they may do (powers)

What is prohibited

5.2 Corporate Requirements

Legislation requires the contract is with a social enterprise. Most Healthwatch providers are companies limited by guarantee with charitable status, Community Interest Companies or Charitable Incorporated Organisations. There should be clear procedures in place for governance related to the carrying out of statutory activities.

Requirement for provider to state legal entity on Healthwatch website (e.g. Company name, number and registered address).

The provider must comply with:

  - Equality Act 2010

  - Human Rights Act 1998

  - GDPR requirements- Local Healthwatch have GDPR obligations, including appointment of a Data Protection Officer. The provider is also required to register with the ICO and notify about Healthwatch functions.

  - Freedom of Information Act obligations- Local Healthwatch themselves can be subject to FOI requests. Local Healthwatch meets obligations for Information Commissioner’s publication scheme in relation to their statutory activities.

# 6. Statutory Duties and Functions

**6.1 Core Functions**

[Guidance Note: These statutory functions must be retained as standard]

Statutory Duties, Functions and Powers- Section 221 statutory activities

The Provider will have responsibility for carrying out the statutory activities of local Healthwatch. (see A guide to running Healthwatch) LINK. These statutory activities apply to all groups, including children, young people, adults and carers.

1. Promote and support the involvement of people, in the monitoring, commissioning and provision of local care services.
2. Enable people to monitor the standard of provision of local care services to determine whether and how local care services could and ought to be improved.
3. Obtain the views of people regarding their need for, and experiences of, local care services and importantly to make these views known to those responsible for commissioning, providing, managing or scrutinising local care services and to Healthwatch England.
4. Make reports and recommendations about how local care services could or ought to be improved. These should be directed to commissioners and providers of care services, and people responsible for managing or scrutinising local care services and shared with Healthwatch England.
5. Provide information and advice to the public about accessing local health and social care services and choice in relation to aspects of those services
6. Formulate views from people on the standard of provision and whether and how the local care services could and ought to be improved and sharing these views with Healthwatch England, to help it carry out its role as national champion.
7. Making recommendations to Healthwatch England to advise the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to conduct special reviews or investigations (or, where the circumstances justify doing so, making recommendations direct to CQC); and to make recommendations to Healthwatch England to publish reports about issues.
8. Giving Healthwatch England such assistance as it may require to enable it to carry out its functions effectively, efficiently and economically.

**6.2 Enter and View Powers**

[Guidance Note: This statutory power must be retained as standard]

Local Healthwatch may use their discretionary power of entry with certain requirements. Enter and View is a method for gathering information. Healthwatch should use their decision-making process to determine whether they deploy their Enter and View powers.

Link Guide to Enter and View Guidance

# 7. Service Requirements

[Guidance Note: This section should be retained as standard]

Local Healthwatch's core purpose of making sure the views of the public shape the health and care services they need, requires them to be:

* **Independent in purpose** - amplifying the voice and experiences of the most pressing and difficult issues in health and social care.
* **Independent in voice** - speaking up on behalf of sometimes unpopular causes or groups who are marginalised and/or face disadvantages or discrimination.
* **Independent in action** - designing and delivering activities that best meet the needs of the people they service.

If Healthwatch are to hold others to account, they themselves must operate with integrity, accountability and transparency to have credibility with the communities they serve. The provider should operate to Nolan principles.

**7.1 Governance and Decision-Making**

The provider must demonstrate:

- Clear priority-setting processes complying with HWE guidance [Helping you with your decision making process | Healthwatch Network](https://network.healthwatch.co.uk/guidance/2020-11-19/helping-you-your-decision-making-process)

- Conflict of interest management

- Independence and transparency

- Public involvement mechanisms

- [Add any local governance requirements]

- HWE Shared values and behaviours

The provider is expected to align to these set of Healthwatch shared values and behaviours

1. **Equity**: Embracing inclusivity and compassion, establishing profound connections with the communities we serve, and empowering them.
2. **Collaboration**: Nurturing both internal and external relationships, fostering transparent communication, and partnering to amplify our impact.
3. **Independence**: Championing the public's agenda, serving as purposeful and critical allies to decision-makers.
4. **Truth**: Operating with unyielding integrity and honesty, fearlessly advocating truth to those in power.
5. **Impact**: Pursuing ambitious endeavours to effect meaningful change for individuals and communities while remaining accountable and holding others accountable.
	1. **Policies and Procedures**

The Provider will develop, maintain and regularly review version controlled and dated policies and guidance in all relevant areas of activity and practice, including, but not limited to the following areas. These will be made available to the public.

a) Code of Conduct for Board members

b) Complaints Policy

c) Equality & Diversity Policy

d) Expenses Policy

e) Safeguarding Adults & Children Policies

f) Business Continuity Policy

g) Decision making Process

h) Annual Strategic Plan

I) Whistle blowing policy

j) Guidance and protocols for escalating concerns

k) Roles and recruitment of staff and Exec Board Policy

l) Volunteer Policy

m) Information management Policy

n) Data protection Policy

o) Confidentiality Policy

p) Accountability, including financial accountability & risk management

The Provider will also produce and make publicly available the following:

a) Annual report

By law, every local Healthwatch must prepare its annual report by 30 June each year. The report should outline how the Provider has met statutory responsibilities for the financial year that ended 31 March. These reports must include how Healthwatch:

* Engage with diverse communities
* Use volunteers and lay people to support their governance and activities
* Share their data and insight to improve services. For example, with Healthwatch England, CQC or local health and social care services
* Have made an impact as a result of their activities
* Have spent their funding (or a subcontractor delivering Healthwatch activities)

Healthwatch England produce an annual report template and checklist to ensure providers meet egal requirements.

b) Reports and findings of engagement work

c) Regular Newsletter / bulletins which include progress made, future plans and opportunities for involvement

**7.3 Operational Requirements**

[See Guide for Running a Local Healthwatch [A guide to running Healthwatch | Healthwatch Network](https://network.healthwatch.co.uk/guidance/2020-02-12/guide-running-healthwatch)

Resources

[Guidance Note: Specify minimum requirements for:]

- Staff competencies

- Office facilities

- IT infrastructure

- Insurance requirements

- [Add other local requirements]

Service Delivery

 The Provider is expected to-

1. Hold to account health and care bodies for how they make decisions and provide services
2. Engage with health and social care senior leaders, and hold membership of Health and Wellbeing Board and other forums
3. Gather and analyse public feedback on health and care services.
4. Provide an accessible information and signposting service for residents of [LA area] to a reasonable extent given level of funding provided and as agreed with the service commissioner

- Operating hours: [Specify requirements]

1. Collaborate with other Healthwatch (including those within an ICS footprint), other stakeholders and Healthwatch England, including involvement in national projects
2. Connect into local community networks, including people facing health inequalities
3. Apply equity, diversity and inclusion across the work of Healthwatch
4. Develop key relationships and act as a critical friend to stakeholders to help bring public insight to inform decisions drive improvements
5. Have robust methodology for research and engagement in line with Healthwatch England guidance, including collection and analysis of demographic data to inform reports and recommendations
6. Produce evidence-based reports and recommendations
7. Have a good approach to connecting with community networks and involving local people
8. Share data and reports with HWE using the HWE taxonomy and data sharing systems provided

**7.4 Partnership Working**

[Guidance Note: Specify requirements for:]

- Health and Wellbeing Board representation. Healthwatch have a statutory place on the Health and Wellbeing Board

-Collaborate with other local Healthwatch both regionally and nationally

-Collaborate with Healthwatch England

- ICS engagement

- Stakeholder collaboration

- [Add local partnership requirements]

# 8. Performance Monitoring

**8.1 Reporting Requirements (Examples of these are included below)**

[Guidance Note: Specify:]

- Reporting frequency

- Required metrics

- Report format

- [Add local reporting requirements]

**8.2 Key Performance Indicators**

[Guidance Note: Insert locally agreed KPIs, suggested areas include:]

- Public engagement levels

- Service user satisfaction

- Report quality and impact

- Stakeholder feedback

- [Add local KPIs]

# 9. Budget and Resources

**9.1 Annual Budget**

[Insert total annual budget]

# 10. Contract Management

**10.1 Review Meetings**

[Specify frequency and format of contract review meetings]

**10.2 Quality Assurance**

Quality framework

The Healthwatch [Quality Framework](https://network.healthwatch.co.uk/guidance/2022-08-22/quality-framework) aims to provide a shared understanding of the key ingredients for running an effective Healthwatch. The tool has been designed to be used on a self-assessment basis, with an expectation that it is fully completed on a triannual basis as a minimum. The Quality Framework is made up of six domains. Each domain is accompanied by a series of questions and prompts Healthwatch can use to understand and evidence their effectiveness.

[Insert local quality assurance requirements]

# 11. Data Management and Security

**11.1 Data Protection**

[Guidance Note: Retain standard requirements plus any local additions]

- GDPR compliance

- Information governance

- Data sharing agreements

- [Add local requirements]

# 12. Branding and Communications

**12.1 Brand Guidelines**

\*[Guidance Note: Reference Healthwatch England requirements plus:]

What is the Healthwatch trademark licence?

As Healthwatch England is an independent statutory committee of the Care Quality Commission (CQC), legally CQC owns the trademark for the Healthwatch logo and text. Section 45D of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 gives Healthwatch England the discretion to grant a licence to Healthwatch providers to use the Healthwatch name and logo when carrying out its statutory functions. The Healthwatch logo and text are both trademarked in the UK. To operate under the Healthwatch brand, the Healthwatch provider must sign and abide by a trademark licence issued by Healthwatch England.

How to apply for a trademark licence

To apply for a Healthwatch licence the provider organisation should email licenceenquiries@healthwatch.co.uk or speak to the HWE Regional Manager that covers their region.

If the provider organisation holds contracts for multiple Local Healthwatch, then they will need to sign one agreement for each local authority area. They will need to have a separate contract and use separate logos for each Local Healthwatch that they manage.

What can the Healthwatch brand be used for?

The Healthwatch brand must only be used when carrying out activities prescribed in s.221 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (the “statutory activities”). The Healthwatch brand cannot be used for any additional work which is not classed as a statutory function or power. Healthwatch should carefully consider their trading name and associated branding if they want to carry out activities which fall outside of s221 activities. Healthwatch providers must contact Healthwatch England to discuss such circumstances.

- Local branding requirements

- Communications protocols

- [Add local requirements]

# 13. Contract Terms

[Guidance Note: Insert standard local authority contract terms or reference separately]

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[Final Guidance Note: This template should be customised to reflect local priorities, requirements, and circumstances while maintaining core statutory functions and requirements. Ensure all square bracketed text is replaced with specific local information before finalising.]