

Guidelines for Public Healthwatch Board Meetings

All Healthwatch Sunderland Board meetings are open to the public to attend as observers. Meeting dates and venues will be published in advance on the Sunderland Healthwatch website. At the discretion of the Chair, observers may be permitted to speak on certain items. Members of the public wishing to attend a Board meeting as an observer, should inform Healthwatch Sunderland in advance to enable venue arrangements to be made.

The board agenda and associated paperwork will be available on request before the meeting. Minutes of the board meeting, once approved by the board as an accurate record of the meeting, will be placed on the Healthwatch Sunderland website.

The Healthwatch Sunderland board may occasionally consider that some agenda items and their minutes remain confidential (e.g. commercially sensitive, or the right to anonymity of a member of the public). Such items will be discussed in a closed session at the end of each public board meeting.

If a member of the public who is a resident of Sunderland wishes to ask a question, there will be a public session at the start of each board – with a maximum time allocated for questions of 15 minutes. Notice of your question should be provided in writing by post or e-mail to the Healthwatch Lead Officer five working days before the day of the meeting. Please provide:

- your name
- the name of the organisation you represent (if applicable)
- the question to be put to the Healthwatch Board

Questions should relate to matters of policy or decisions which are normally made by the Healthwatch Board. A question may be rejected if:

- it is not about a matter that Healthwatch has responsibility for,
- it is defamatory, frivolous or offensive,
- it is substantially the same question which has been answered by the Healthwatch board within the last 6 months,
- it requires the disclosure of exempt or confidential information,
- It is a statement rather than a genuine enquiry to obtain information.

The Healthwatch Chair is responsible for editing / rejecting questions that have been submitted. If a question is edited / rejected the questioner will be informed of the reason why.

Board meetings are held every 3 months on the last Thursday of the month. If you would like to attend, please contact us either by emailing healthwatchesunderland@pcp.uk.net, telephoning us on 0191 514 7145 or by post at The Co-op Centre, Whitehouse Road, Hendon, Sunderland, SR2 8AH.