



Holding board Meetings in Public

Reviewed: 10/11/2022

Next Review: November 2024

Holding Board Meetings in Public

This policy sets out the way people are able to contribute to the Healthwatch Shropshire Board meetings which are held in public.

Board meetings in public

Healthwatch Shropshire (HWS) is committed to openness, transparency and accountability to the people of Shropshire. The Healthwatch Shropshire Board has agreed to hold quarterly Board meetings in public at which members of the public can raise questions with HWS. During the 2020-22 Covid 19 pandemic, all meetings were virtual, held over MS Teams, and made available to members of the public to attend on request. It is intended that when appropriate meetings will be held at different locations across the county to facilitate access and to promote HWS.

Notification of the Board meeting in public

Notice of Board meetings will be given via the website and social media accounts and through the e-newsletter and hard copy newsletter (where timely). Notification will be given a minimum 10 working days in advance of the meeting.

Agendas will be publicly available and placed on the HWS website at least five working days before the meeting. Minutes of the HWS Board meetings, once approved by the Board as an accurate record of the meeting, will be publicly available and placed on the HWS website.

Participation by the public

The public are invited to attend as observers. If one plans to attend a Board meeting as an observer, it would be helpful to inform HWS in advance. Observers will be seated separately from the main Board table.

At the start of each Board meeting in Public, there will be a public session for questions from members of the public.

Submitting a question

Questions do not need to be submitted in advance, but it would be helpful in preparation of the response.

Questions can be sent by emailing enquiries@healthwatchshropshire.co.uk or in writing to:

Healthwatch Shropshire
4 The Creative Quarter
Shrewsbury Business Park
Shrewsbury, SY2 6LG

HWS requests the questioner's:

- Name and contact details (in line with our Data Protection Policy)

- The name of the organisation/group represented (if applicable)
- The question to be put to the HWS Board

Normally only one question may be asked by any one person or organisation at any one meeting. Questions should be succinct and to the point.

The Board reserves the right to not respond to a question if it:

- Is defamatory, frivolous or offensive
- Requires the disclosure of exempt or confidential information or
- It is a statement rather than a genuine enquiry to obtain information.

If a member of the public does not wish to ask their question in person the question can still be put to the HWS Board which will give an answer. A written answer will also be sent to the questioner.

The minutes of the meeting will record the questions asked and summarise the answers given.

Confidential items

The HWS Board will occasionally consider that some agenda items and their minutes should remain confidential. Such items will be discussed in closed session at the start or end of each meeting and members of the public will not be permitted to attend.

Agenda items and minutes will be treated as confidential on the grounds that they:

- Contain information of a commercially sensitive nature
- Include legal or other professional advice on sensitive or confidential matters
- Involve matters concerning a named individual, an individual who can be identified or an individual who has a reasonable expectation that the matters will remain confidential, or contain an individual's personal information; or
- Are deemed as such by the Chair.

Confidential Board minutes will be recorded in a separate document to the main minutes and will not be publicly available.

Review

This policy will be reviewed biannually.