

Interim Board Governance Statement

October 2022

Context

Following a July Board conversation around Board development for the forthcoming year, this paper has been prepared to set out early observations and priorities for the newly-combined Board team.

This discussion centred around making governance accessible for all and combining a balance of professional knowledge and skills with a passion for diversity and conveying the voice of the people in organisational operations.

A suite of Board member/Chair 1-2-1 meets informed the development of this paper, along with assistance from the staff team in providing current operational overviews.

PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNANCE

Quite simply defined, *“Governance is the way in which a business is managed at a high level, and the systems for doing this”*.

Probity is born from the Latin root *“probus”* meaning “good” and it means *“adherence to or compliance with the highest principles or ideals and the uprightness of character*. Probity is the mindset that underpins effective governance in organisations.

Governance systems should be effective, realistic, usable, and developed to ensure that with adequate probity, there is proper accountability of all areas of the business and transparency in the way in which it is managed and run.

The Board of Directors of Healthwatch Cornwall is committed to these principles, to ensuring their consistent application and to supporting the staff team in their development and delivery.

Successful governance and probity provide the framework in which to scaffold and monitor all business operations and ensure that they are



working optimally. Most importantly, they provide everyone in the business with this knowledge too, so that they can work within the parameters that the business expects and enjoy a sense of pride in working for a values-led organisation. Deployed correctly, governance and probity are the responsibility of everyone working in the business, and don't just become *"another thing to do"*.

As well as this business clarity, good governance can also bring:

- Business efficiency savings
- Technological advance
- Legal adherence
- PR and Communication opportunities
- Avoidance of poor reputation or negative stakeholder/press feedback

This is an inclusive, but not exhaustive list.

GOVERNANCE THEMES FOR 2022/23

The July meeting of the Board considered a paper tabled by the Chair setting out three main themes for the development of the Board and in turn, the organisation and its governance. These themes were:

- Growing, developing and delivering as a Board
- Excellence in Governance
- Organisational Effectiveness

These will be used as a structure for Board considerations of governance over the coming year.

During the subsequent Board Member/Chair 1-2-1 conversations, a clear common priority emerged for Healthwatch Cornwall to foster close relations between directors and staff members. There is a wish amongst the Board to support staff to have a happy and healthy working environment and to incorporate the strategising and oversight of this priority into its work programme.

The following recommendations are collated from these professional discussions and are included in this paper for formal consideration and adoption by the Full Board:



1. Directors to receive invites to team meetings
2. Directors to receive diary dates for engagement events to support where appropriate
3. Directors to circulate an electronic debrief from outside panels/committees where they are the nominated Healthwatch Cornwall representative to Board and staff colleagues
4. All directors to receive a copy of papers for the formal groups of the Board, namely the Organisational Development Action Group (ODAG) and the Finance and General Purposes Sub-Committee (FGPSC).
5. Training opportunities for staff to be made available to directors where relevant and appropriate and vice versa

From the operational insight gained thus far by the Chair of the Board, the following further recommendations are provided in order to further enhance the solid governance basis Healthwatch Cornwall already has:

6. A rolling 12-month calendar of Full Board and formal Board group meeting dates to be made available with the opportunity for any director to attend a Board group to gain further insight if they wish
7. The formal groups of the Board (ODAG and FGPSC) to set out their workplans at the beginning of each year so that any director or staff member may contribute to themed discussions as well as standard business, with these workplans and their quarterly progress updates being received by Full Board
8. A role profile to be drawn up for the position of Vice-Chair and circulated to directors with a view to installing a Vice-Chair at a subsequent Board meeting

In conclusion, it is also recommended that the Board affirms the commitments in this interim Governance Paper and presents further updates in conjunction with the Board Development Schedule for 2022/23 and as deemed necessary.

Anna Pascoe

Chair of Healthwatch Cornwall CIC

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