

Terms of Reference for the Healthwatch Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire (BNSSG) Prioritisation Panel

Terms of Reference created following consultation questions by email and meeting notes November 2022 and updated in Jan 2024.

Purpose of Prioritisation Panel

The main purpose of the Healthwatch BNSSG Prioritisation Panels is to represent the voice of people living in BNSSG, making positive changes in health and social care.

To develop and maintain focus for setting annual organisational priorities and workplans.

The group's main duty will be to support the Healthwatch BNSSG Operational staff to prioritise work and make recommendations for which issues should be monitored or taken forward for each local Healthwatch, and to discuss what form these pieces of work can take.

The decisions made at the Prioritisation meetings will be reported to the Board of Trustees and will form part of the three Healthwatch BNSSG work plans.

Aims of Prioritisation Panel

The prime aim of the panel is to ensure that local voices are heard and that Healthwatch BNSSG priorities and direction is reflective of these views.

The composition of the panel aims to ensure shared responsibility for the decisions that will determine the focus of operational work.

The inclusion of volunteer, board and staff members and the prime significance given to the views of the local communities and individuals ensures that our work will concentrate on the key issues arising from our reports and locality intelligence.

Function of Prioritisation Panel

Prioritise issues: This will be the main task of the Panel and will involve analysing the data that Healthwatch holds to determine which themes or issues are of highest priority for patients and service users in the Local HW.

Make recommendations for work to be undertaken: The Panel will use a Prioritisation Matrix to determine which issues to recommend Healthwatch to monitor and work on. Action is an important part of the process, however monitoring and highlighting health and inequality themes will support work giving focus and direction for staff away from the panel.

Suggest how issues are taken forward.: Prioritisation Panel members will discuss and suggest what form each piece of work should take, monitoring the issue, noting the theme and with a possible use of recommended actions.

. *Possible actions include:*

- Undertake further research
- Add to the following annual workplan matrix
- Monitor a theme
- Undertake public engagement regarding a theme
- Prepare a report or Briefing
- Make recommendations
- Undertake an Enter and View visit
- Report the issue to the relevant Commissioner
- Report the issue to the Care Quality Commission
- Report the issue to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Report the issue to the relevant System Quality Group

If the Panel recommends that an issue will be 'escalated' to the Care Quality Commission, Overview and Scrutiny or the Quality Surveillance Group, this recommendation will be reviewed and signed off by the Chief Officer of Healthwatch BNSSG.

Action Log

The action or agreed monitored theme will be recorded. A report on progress will be provided at each quarterly Panel meeting. Suggested locations for future Enter & View visits will be recorded with notes and progress monitored across the list prior to undertaking a decision to action

Accountability

The Prioritisation Panel will be accountable to the Healthwatch BNSSG Board of Trustees, and ultimately to the public who use health and social care services in BNSSG.

Lines of communication between the Prioritisation Panel and the Board of Trustees are through the CEO and the Board members who attend the Prioritisation Panel.

Governance

Responsibilities of Chair of the Prioritisation Panel:

- Help to set the Agenda for each meeting.
- Ensure that agendas and supporting materials are delivered to members in advance of meetings.
- Make the purpose of each meeting clear to members and explain the agenda at the beginning of each meeting.
- Clarify and summarise discussions throughout the meeting.
- Keep the meeting moving by putting time limits on each agenda item and keep all meetings to a pre-determined time.
- Encourage broad participation from members in discussion and manage conflict of interest

- Ensure each meeting is completed with a summary of decisions and assignments.
- Follow up members after absence at two consecutive meetings.
- Work with the Volunteer Coordinator to find replacements, identify skills gaps within the group and fill new vacancies.

Membership

HW BNSSG CEO and Operational staff team who attend will be classed as members of the Prioritisation Panel. Responsibilities will include presentation of strategic and local reports, the monitoring of identified themes between meetings and the provision of other administrative or logistical support to the Prioritisation Panel.

Notes are taken by an **Admin staff member**.

The Prioritisation Panel will have the ability to co-opt ad-hoc members when additional expertise/knowledge is required.

Individual Prioritisation Panel volunteer and board members have the following responsibilities:

- To attend each meeting fully prepared, having read the agenda and papers, reviewed the data, suggested topics for discussion and raised any appropriate queries in advance.
- Actively participate in meetings through attendance, discussion, and review of minutes, papers and other Prioritisation Panel documents.
- Understand the goals, objectives, and desired outcomes of the Local Healthwatch.
- Take a genuine interest in the project's outcomes and overall success.
- Check that the Panel's activities are aligned with the organisational strategy as well as policies and directions across the health and social care sector.
- Support open discussion and debate and encourage fellow Prioritisation Panel members to voice their insights.

- Prioritisation Panel members will be expected to abide fully by Healthwatch BNSSG's [Code of Conduct](#), [Decision Making Guide](#) and maintain high standards of integrity.

Term Of Office

The term of office for volunteer and board members will be between one to three calendar years (depending on needs of the panel and agreed resignation and recruitment levels) from the date of their initial meeting attendance. After this time members will be asked to step down in a staggered succession to allow new membership participation to commence throughout the year and may only apply to be reinstated after one calendar year has elapsed. In special circumstances previous members may be asked to attend where limited attendance would render the meeting inquorate.

In practice this means that 4 members whose tenure has expired will be asked to step down every six months, if volunteers are not forthcoming then a random selection method will be applied

Working Practice

The Prioritisation Panel will meet quarterly and have an extra meeting for work planning for the following financial year in January. The meeting dates and venues will be agreed by the Prioritisation Panel at its meetings or through consultation in the period between meetings.

The Prioritisation Panel Chair will be responsible for administrating and chairing the meetings and, following review, circulating approved minutes.

Agendas, papers and data will be sent out 1 week prior to the meeting - email is the preferred method of communication.

Members should seek to print their own papers – or let the Operational team know if they need some printed. Items for consideration at the next meeting should be submitted to the Chair at least 2 weeks before the Prioritisation Panel meeting.

The Prioritisation Panel meetings will be supported by the area operational team member who will produce the notes of the meeting for their area.

The action notes/minutes will be circulated no later than two weeks after the Prioritisation Panel meeting.

Members of the public will be invited to attend the Panel meeting via social media and website promotion 10 days prior to each session. The Local Voices report will not be made available publicly in advance. Should there be public attendance the Panel members will be notified of this prior to the meeting and should endeavour to ensure that confidentiality and GDPR regulations are followed during the meeting. Public/guest requests for attendance at more than one meeting will be considered but may be limited to two meetings a year per individual. Members of the public will be observing and non-voting participants but may add to the discussion when requested to do so.

Quorum

The full membership of the panel will comprise of a **minimum** of 7 members in total at any one time, to include

- 1 x Board members
- 3 x Volunteers
- 3 X Staff

Additionally, the membership of the panel will comprise of a **maximum** of 19 members in total at any one time, to include

- 3 x Board members
- 9 x Volunteers
- 7 X Staff

To be considered quorum any one meeting must include 1 Board member, 1 volunteer and 1 staff team member.

All members of the Prioritisation Panel are required to endeavour to attend all meetings.

Members would be expected to attend $\frac{3}{4}$ of a year's cycle of meetings.

The process the Prioritisation Panel will use to make decisions will be to use the scoring matrix and then a majority vote system i.e. a course of action requires support from more than 50% members who attend the meeting if there is quorum.

The process the Prioritisation Panel will use to make workplan decisions will be to use the workplan scoring matrix (which seeks local strategic alignment) and then a majority vote system.

Reports

The following reports will be available at each meeting for members:

- Minutes and/or actions from the previous meeting
- Update by CEO on activity or BNSSG strategic work
- Update by data and insights officer on identified themes and trends
- Project Outcomes to date/ review of recommendation
- Report on soft outcomes/action log items
- Additional reports will be presented to the group as and when required. Which may include Enter & View reports from visits previously recommended by the panel (See “how issues are taken forward” above) these will then be reviewed and discussed with the panel.

Modifications to Terms of Reference

Modifications to these terms of reference may be proposed and shared prior to the Panel and adopted at any meeting by majority vote.