



Consultation Screening Questions

July 2026

healthwatch
Southampton

Consultation screening questions when another organisation asks Healthwatch Southampton to consult:

Purpose and relevance

- Does the proposed consultation align with Healthwatch's statutory role (e.g., representing the public voice in health and care)?
- Is the topic clearly linked to local people's experiences or outcomes in health and social care?
- Has the requesting organisation explained how the consultation will inform decision-making or service improvement?

Value and added benefit

- Is Healthwatch's involvement likely to add independent insight, reach seldom-heard groups, enhance legitimacy or provide a benefit to Healthwatch itself (for example developing staff expertise)?
- Is there evidence that the requesting organisation has already engaged with service users or carers?
- Will Healthwatch's contribution influence the scope or outcomes of the project (rather than merely endorse or rubber-stamp it)?

Practical considerations

- Are sufficient resources (time, staff, budget) available to undertake the consultation effectively?
- Is the requesting organisation willing to share data, respect independence, and acknowledge Healthwatch publicly?
- Is there enough time to design and deliver good-quality engagement before decisions are made?

Risk and governance

- Are there any reputational, ethical, or data-protection risks in being involved?
- What would be the impact on Healthwatch's independence or on other priority projects?

Consultation screening questions when Healthwatch decides to consult itself:

Strategic relevance

- Does the topic link to Healthwatch's annual priorities, intelligence from community feedback, or Board-approved work plan?
- Is there clear evidence of unmet need, disadvantage, or poor experience among service users or carers?
- Are partner organisations (NHS, local authority, VCSE) already working on this issue, or does Healthwatch fill a unique gap?

Potential impact

- Will the consultation's findings be actionable and likely to bring about real change or influence policy?
- Could outcomes be shared to leverage wider improvements across the system?

Inclusion and representation

- Does the consultation design ensure the voices of seldom-heard or marginalised groups are included?
- Will carers, families, and communities have accessible routes to participate?

Feasibility and resources

- Do we have (or can we secure) the necessary capacity, expertise, and time to deliver credible results?
- What is the most proportionate approach – e.g., small focus groups, large-scale survey, or partnership event?

Timing and risk

- Is this the right time to consult (e.g., before key policy or commissioning decisions)?
- Are there any sensitivities that could cause confusion or mistrust locally?

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