# Citizens’ Assembly Member Information Pack



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1. Introduction

Thank you very much for your interest in becoming a member of the South West Citizens’ Assembly (CA), and for taking the time to read this guidance pack.

The South West Clinical Senate is committed to ensuring that patients, carers and family members, of all ages and backgrounds, are an integral part of our vision and will be active partners in our programmes of improvement work.

As part of this aim we have developed a South West Citizens’ Assembly. This body comprises lay members with a strong interest in improving regional NHS services. It will help us to bring the public voice right to the heart of our work. For a wider understanding of the Citizens’ Assembly, please read this pack in association with the [South West Clinical Senate Operating Principles](https://www.swsenate.nhs.uk/south-west-clinical-senate-operating-principles/).

Membership of the CA is made up of two nominations from each of the fourteen Healthwatch branches in the South West plus co-opted members as per the [Terms of Reference](https://www.swsenate.nhs.uk/south-west-citizens-assembly-terms-of-reference/).

Membership of the CA offers a real opportunity to bring the patient, carer and public perspective to the strategic vision for health services across South West England. You can find more information on the Clinical Senates in this document titled [The Way Forward for Clinical Senates’](https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/way-forward-cs.pdf). You may like to look at our website South West Clinical Senate [www.swsenate.nhs.uk](http://www.swsenate.nhs.uk)

2. Overview of the Citizens’ Assembly (South West England)

The CA provides a strong patient and public voice to support the work of the Clinical Senate and Strategic Clinical Networks in the South West. It is an integral part of the infrastructure enabling it to deliver its advice to commissioners with the full involvement of patient members.

The CA may also be available to other bodies nationally, or within the South West as and when they require regional patient and public participation.

The role of the CA is:

* To provide the wider Citizen voice (patient/carer/service user) to the Clinical Senate and Strategic Clinical Network. It will also form part of the Senate Assembly, which is a reference body supporting the Clinical Senate Council
* To consider issues of strategic importance raised by Commissioners
* To act as a peer support body for Citizen Members of the Clinical Senate Council
* To link to the NHS Citizen, a national organisation, locally, regionally and nationally

3. Definitions

3.1 NHS England

Our [NHS England Operating Framework](https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/operating-framework/) sets out how we are supporting systems and providers to lead locally to improve the health of the population, improve the quality of patient care, tackle inequalities and deliver care more efficiently. It describes our six longer-term aims:

1. Longer healthy life expectancy.
2. Excellent quality, safety, and outcomes.
3. Excellent access and experience.
4. Equity of healthy life expectancy, quality, safety, outcomes, access, and experience.
5. Value for taxpayers’ money.
6. Support to society, the economy and environment.

[NHS England » What we do](https://www.england.nhs.uk/about/what-we-do/)

There is a useful animation video about the NHS in England, please follow this link to view:

[How Does The NHS in England Work? | The King's Fund (kingsfund.org.uk)](https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/insight-and-analysis/animations/how-does-nhs-england-work)

3.2 Clinical Senate Council

This is a ‘steering group’ of the Senate, led by the Senate Chair and consisting of a core membership of senior health and social care leaders, clinical experts and patient and public representatives. As far as possible, the selection of Senate Council members is geographically and professionally distributed. The Senate Council takes an overview of the strategic direction and business of the Clinical Senate by;

* Agreeing the Terms of Reference for the Clinical Senate
* Developing and publishing a set of principles and values that guide the Clinical Senate
* Being responsible for the formulation and provision of independent advice to commissioners
* Agreeing the key priorities for the Clinical Senate in consultation with the health and social care system

The Chair of the CA will attend each Senate Council meeting, Deputised by the Deputy CA Chair. One other CA member will attend the Senate Council meetings with the CA Chair – chosen according to subject content for each meeting.

### 3.3 Citizens’ Assembly

A CA provides a strong patient and public voice to support the work of the Clinical Senate. This will be a core membership of two members from each of the fourteen Healthwatch organisations in the South West region but may include nominations from other health and social care organisations, where required. It primarily supports the Clinical Senate in the provision of advice that supports patients’ needs but also provides a perspective to the Strategic Clinical Networks, plus national and regional projects.

### 3.4 Clinical Senate Assembly

This is a multi-disciplinary collective providing the Clinical Senate Council with access to professionals with a wide range of experience and ability from across the South West. Membership encompasses the ‘pre-conception to death’ spectrum of care across all health and social care settings. Members are expected to decouple any institutional obligations from their advisory role on the Clinical Senate. To be effective and credible the Clinical Senate aims to be geographically representative, multi professional and span a variety of different organisation types.

4. Providing a regional patient voice for the South West of England

A core function of NHS England is to promote collective engagement by patients, carers and the public in decisions affecting health services in their local area or region. It is written into [the government’s 2023 mandate to NHS England](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nhs-mandate-2023/the-governments-2023-mandate-to-nhs-england) that they should continue to consult as required with staff and the public on service changes or reconfigurations.

The ambition for the Citizens’ Assembly is that it provides the Clinical Senate with a perspective about services and proposed redesign or service change from the viewpoint patients and carers and the public. This will help ensure that proposals for service change or improvement will deliver the kind of experience and outcomes that local communities want.

5. Responsibilities of Citizens’ Assembly members

* To attend at least 50% of Citizens’ Assembly meetings per year
* To stay engaged with health and social care issues either via their local Healthwatch or other appropriate channels.
* To bring patient, carer and public perspectives and appropriate challenge to the development of Clinical Senate recommendations and advice. This may include suggesting topics or questions to Commissioners or the Senate Council, to go forward to deliberative Senate Council meetings.
* To read papers and proposals, which may be circulated via email, and give a service user or carer perspective on the contents
* To consider issues being discussed from a wide perspective (not only representing a personal experience
* To champion the diversity of patient and public views (not only represent their personal experience)
* To communicate with, and seek feedback from, Healthwatch and other appropriate organisations and sources as well as wider patient networks regarding plans and proposals.
* Circulating recommendations from Senate Council meetings to Healthwatch and relevant patient /carer networks.
* From time to time, to join workshops or events across South West England, where participation would support the patient voice in regional decision-making.
* To join workshops or events across South West England, where participation would support the patient voice in regional decision-making
* To comply with [The Seven Principles of Public Life](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life) and respect the confidential nature of discussions and business when it is made clear by the Chair that this is required
* To champion and advocate for increasing patient and public awareness of the Citizens’ Assembly and their outcomes
* To identify their own support, training, and development needs, and seek appropriate support from the Senate Management Team
* Agree the Terms of Reference for the CA and reviewing on an annual basis.

6. Citizen Members

We are looking for Citizen Members who:

* Are passionate about helping to develop and shape strategic health services across South West England
* Are willing to provide objective input about the needs of the local community, patients and carers
* Have experience of giving a patient or carer perspective on health services
* Can display sound judgment and an ability to be objective
* Have the ability to understand and evaluate a range of information and evidence, including potentially complex strategic documents and data
* Can operate effectively as members of a team but are willing to challenge where appropriate
* Have the ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of people
* Have an awareness of, and commitment to, equality and diversity
* Have some awareness of health and social care issues
* Understand the need for confidentiality where appropriate
* Are able to participate in meetings during the working day and occasionally at other times
* Can commit to around one to two days a month (will vary according to role - see separate role descriptions for more information)
* Are willing to commit to a two-year term in this role initially (recognising that circumstances may change for individuals, and this will be accommodated). Further iterations of the Citizens’ Assembly will be made through its membership and the terms of service will change accordingly
* Are willing to complete a declaration of interests, and to declare relevant interests as appropriate during group deliberations
* Can attend meetings within the South West region (usually Taunton)

NB – We are looking for a broad range of individuals. If you have any questions about joining the Citizens Assembly, please contact the Clinical Senate team at [england.swclinicalsenate@nhs.net](mailto:england.swclinicalsenate@nhs.net) for an informal chat with a member of the team.

7. Diversity, inclusion and equality of opportunity

We value and promote diversity and inclusion and are committed to equality of opportunity for all. We also ask you to let us know if you have special requirements or adjustments to enable you to participate fully.

8. Eligibility

Current NHS employees/contractors are not eligible for consideration. This includes honorary or unpaid medical or dental posts and practicing healthcare professionals within the wider NHS, including practicing GPs, general dental practitioners and their employees. If you have a query about your eligibility in relation to other positions held, please contact us via [england.swclinicalsenate@nhs.net](mailto:england.swclinicalsenate@nhs.net)

9. Becoming a member of the Citizens’ Assembly

9.1 Nomination process

Each Healthwatch organisation in the South West region has been allocated two places on the Citizens’ Assembly. Once you have been nominated by your local Healthwatch organisation, you will be contacted and provided with an information pack and role description. There will not be an interview for this role unless there are more nominees than required. Where there are vacancies, nominations from other health and care organisations may be received.

Whilst the majority of the membership of the Citizens' Assembly is provided by Healthwatch, individuals from other health and social care related organisations, or independent candidates, are also eligible to apply and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

* 1. Expenses

Membership of the Citizens’ Assembly is a voluntary role and will not be salaried. However, expenses incurred as part of your work for the Citizens’ Assembly will be reimbursed in line with NHS England policy. If required, long distance travel and accommodation can be booked for you.

A copy of the NHS England Policy can be viewed here; [NHS England » Working with our Patient and Public Voice Partners – Reimbursing expenses and paying involvement payments](https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/working-with-our-patient-and-public-voice-partners-reimbursing-expenses-and-paying-involvement-payments/)

Details of how to claim can be obtained by contacting the team; [england.swclinicalsenate@nhs.net](mailto:england.swclinicalsenate@nhs.net)

* 1. Time commitment

Overall, the time commitment is expected to amount to approximately one day a month.

* 1. Meeting format, location, and timing

Due to the geography of the South West region, members of the Citizens’ Assembly need to be prepared to communicate via email, telephone, and Microsoft Teams. Individuals who find this difficult should contact the Senate management team to discuss what adjustments can be made to facilitate full participation.

We hold bi-monthly formal meeting and bi-monthly informal development meetings throughout the year. We aim to hold one formal meeting face to face per year. Members can find meeting information on the FutureNHS workspace here: [Clinical Senate Citizens’ Assembly South West - FutureNHS Collaboration Platform](https://future.nhs.uk/SWClinicalSenateCitizensAssembly)

10. Standards of conduct and conflict of interest

All Citizen Members (Assembly and Council) will be asked to subscribe to the [The Seven Principles of Public Life](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life) and to declare any potential conflicts of interest. Examples of conflict of interest might include:

* Membership of a patient group campaigning on a single issue, such as against closure of a local service
* A charity or health trust that provides services that may come under discussion at the Citizens’ Assembly.

11. Support for you

Citizen Members will be offered support for their role. This will include:

* A copy of this Information pack for all members
* Support of a named person (Senate Support Officer)
* Effectively facilitated meetings where all have the opportunity to speak and be heard
* Every effort will be made to avoid jargon at meetings and glossaries to be made available for use when reviewing documents
* Assurance that members will be able to influence meeting agendas
* Regular feedback
* Opportunities for training and development
* Annual networking – Senate Assembly annual conference

12. Questions and answers

Q. As an individual patient or carer, how can I be expected to represent the views of all patients and carers across the South West England?

A. Patient and carer members join the Citizens’ Assembly to ensure that discussions, work programmes and service reviews include a patient and carer ‘perspective’. They are not expected to represent the views of all service users and carers, although they should have wider concerns than that of their own individual experience. Members will also be encouraged to connect with patient and public networks to assist with the gathering of wider patient and carer insights and to help communicate the work of the Citizens’ Assembly to the wider public.

Q. Do I need to supply a reference for any of these roles?

A. We request the name of someone who can confirm that you meet the qualities required for the role. This could be a chair of a patient or carer group that you have been on, a charity, NHS or social care manager or a clinician you have worked with as a volunteer.

If you would like to find out more about the Citizens Assembly or have any other queries, please contact: [england.swclinicalsenate@nhs.net](mailto:england.swclinicalsenate@nhs.net)

13. Document management

Document last updated June 2024

Next update due June 2025