

## COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

### POLICY STATEMENT

Healthwatch Wirral is committed to the provision of high-quality services in accordance with the needs and expectations of Wirral residents and local stakeholders.

Healthwatch Wirral wholeheartedly keeps at its core the value of local opinion and its contribution to the continuous improvement processes of policy formulation and service delivery. Healthwatch Wirral ensure that comments, compliments and complaints are fed into monitoring reports. It is equally important to feedback compliments and complaints regarding the service to relevant organisations including Local Authority and Healthwatch England.

This Policy does not cover:

- 1) Complaints or concerns about the NHS, which should be dealt with through the NHS complaints procedure and can be supported by the NHS Complaints Advocate:

#### **NHS Complaints Advocacy Support**

Central Office Number: 0151 230 8957

[info@healthwatchwirral.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchwirral.co.uk)

[Download our Self-Help Pack](#)

[NHS Complaints Advocacy Referral Form](#)

- 2) Complaints about the provision of social care services which should be dealt with by the Local Authority complaints procedure.

Any complaint about any aspect of the organisation will be taken seriously and processed according to the agreed procedures. Healthwatch Wirral will provide information about how to make a complaint.

Healthwatch Wirral also wishes to encourage suggestions as to how its services could be improved and welcomes feedback from users and stakeholders\*. This can be done through a variety of mechanisms and by using the Healthwatch Wirral online Feedback Centre:

<https://speakout.healthwatchwirral.co.uk/> for further information you can also call the Healthwatch Wirral office on: 0151 230 8957 or email [info@healthwatchwirral.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchwirral.co.uk)

\*A user or stakeholder may be a voluntary, community and faith sector organisation, service user, a delivery partner, a member organisation, a partner organisation or a member of the community.

## OBJECTIVES

Healthwatch Wirral aims to:

- ✓ Provide public and stakeholders with the best possible service
- ✓ Support the resolution of complaints within a specified time scale
- ✓ Provide all public and stakeholders with an effective and efficient means of resolving dissatisfaction with services provided by Healthwatch Wirral
- ✓ Provide a clear procedure for dealing with complaints
- ✓ Communicate effectively with a complainant throughout the Complaints Procedure
- ✓ Provide a way of rectifying injustice whenever possible
- ✓ Monitor information on complaints and wider feedback and use this to ascertain ways to improve our services to meet the needs of our whole Wirral population and stakeholders.

## DEFINING THE COMPLAINT

A complaint is simply defined as follows: "An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, from a member of the public claiming to have suffered injustice as a result of action taken, (or not taken), by or on behalf of Healthwatch Wirral in carrying out its roles and responsibilities."

In practice, complaints should be dealt with under our Complaints Procedure when we are notified that Healthwatch Wirral has:

- Done something in the wrong way
- Done something we should not have done
- Failed to do something we should have done
- Treated a member of the public, or group, unfairly or discourteously
- Acted contrary to the Healthwatch Wirral's policies and procedures.

## **SCOPE OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

Healthwatch Wirral aims to establish an effective Complaints Procedure which:

- ✓ Will be easily accessible and available on our website, and on request
- ✓ Will be easy to understand and use – in line with information accessibility standards
- ✓ Will operate promptly within a specific timetable established to deal with complaints
- ✓ Will ensure that the complainant is kept informed about what is happening to his/her complaint
- ✓ Will be fair, with a full and unbiased enquiry
- ✓ Will be confidential, in order to ensure fairness to complainants and staff
- ✓ Will produce information which will help managers & Board to learn how to improve the service
- ✓ Will ensure that it is possible to take relevant steps to eradicate shortcomings in the service.

### What is not a Complaint?

Most of the contacts we have with members of the public are enquires rather than complaints.

### The Complaints Procedure does not cover

- ✓ Requests for information.
- ✓ Requests for an explanation of a decision made in line with Healthwatch Wirral Policy.

- ✓ Provision of information about an issue or problem.
- ✓ Investigating matters of employee discipline.
- ✓ Complaints which need to be referred to the Healthwatch Wirral's insurers (e.g. where the complainant seeks payment of compensation for personal injury etc.)

## Discrimination Complaint

Separate to the Complaint Procedure, if you feel that you have been a subject of discrimination in any form please contact the Healthwatch Manager for a full investigation.

This covers discrimination in any form which you feel is based on:-

- race
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- sex

## **MECHANISM FOR MAKING A COMPLAINT**

1. In the first instance, you can contact us with a comment, compliment or complaint:
  - in person by engagement with a Healthwatch Wirral member of staff or volunteer
  - by telephone on 0151 230 8957 (open Monday to Friday 9am – 4.30pm)
  - by email to [info@healthwatchwirral.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchwirral.co.uk)
  - through our website – <https://speakout.healthwatchwirral.co.uk/>

If a decision is made to make a formal complaint, complaints should be set out in writing and addressed to:

CEO of Healthwatch Wirral, Healthwatch Wirral,  
Liscard Business Centre, 188 Liscard Road, Wallasey, Wirral, CH44 5TN.

If concerns are in relation to management, you should address concerns to:

C/O Chair of Healthwatch Wirral, Healthwatch Wirral,  
Liscard Business Centre, 188 Liscard Road, Wallasey, Wirral, CH44 5TN.

The identity of the person making a complaint will be made known only to those who need to consider the complaint, it will not be revealed to any other person or made public. We will take care to maintain confidentiality where particular circumstances demand (for example, information about third parties). Please note, It may not be possible to preserve confidentiality in some circumstances, for example where relevant legislation applies, safeguarding or allegations are made which involve the conduct of third parties.

2. The letter will be acknowledged by the CEO, normally within five working days of receiving it.
3. The Manager will investigate the circumstances outlined in the complaint, and will reach a decision regarding it. A response will be sent to the complainant within 28 working days of first receiving the letter of complaint in the most appropriate method of communication identified by the individual or person supporting.
4. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response and decision (or, because the complaint involves the Manager, feels unable to address it to them in the first instance) they may write to the Chair of the Board of Directors of Healthwatch Wirral.
5. The Chair will acknowledge receipt of the letter within eight working days where possible.
6. Where the complainant has appealed to the Chair for a review of the response to the complaint (or where the complaint involves the CEO) an investigation will be carried out by the Chair or another Member of the Board of Directors acting on their behalf.

7. The Chair will aim to produce a decision, and to notify the complainant of their conclusions within 15 working days of receiving the letter, together with a clear explanation of the reasons for reaching them.
8. If the complainant remains unsatisfied with the decision, it will be referred to a competent independent person who will review the decision and make recommendations, if appropriate.
9. All complaints received, together with a copy of the response to the complainant, will be notified to the Chair of the Board of Directors. This will be the final stage in the Healthwatch Wirral Complaints Procedure.
10. Ombudsman- If the complainant is still dissatisfied with the outcome from Healthwatch Wirral the complaint can be referred to the Ombudsman, who will carry out an independent investigation of the complaint.
11. Complaints will be monitored, and information from this will be fed into the planning process as appropriate.

Feedback about services working well, or particularly good service from staff, is also useful. Healthwatch Wirral truly welcomes any comments regarding our services.

Healthwatch Wirral will invite compliments and comments through this procedure and will monitor and use this to spread good practice and help to improve our services.

Please send any comments or suggestions through our feedback centre:  
<https://speakout.healthwatchwirral.co.uk/>

Or by calling 0151 230 8957, or by emailing [info@healthwatchwirral.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchwirral.co.uk)

## **MONITORING AND LEARNING**

The Healthwatch Wirral Board of Directors will be responsible for reviewing and amending the procedure, as necessary.

The Healthwatch Wirral Board will monitor the effectiveness of its Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policies and Procedures by collating all relevant information and statistics and will use these when it undertakes reviews of this policy and service delivery.

This information will include: the number of complaints received, response times, if they were resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant and if the complaint was justified, partially justified or not justified.

It will use the information to:

- Identify areas of dissatisfaction
- Highlight areas for improvement
- Monitor the success of improvements based on the number of complaints subsequently received.

**Date of Review of this Policy: October 2023**