

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Our policy

Healthwatch Warwickshire (HWW) is committed to delivering a high-quality service. As a countywide organisation, HWW aims to ensure that everyone receives the same quality level of service.

Individuals and organisations have the right to express their views about the performance of HWW and the way it conducts its business. We will treat concerns and complaints in the same way.

HWW listens to the experiences of those using health and care services. We are unable to enforce change but use evidence-based experiences/intelligence to try and influence changes within the local health and care system. This policy sets out what you can expect as a member of the public/external organisation and if required the process of how to make a complaint.

It is the policy of HWW to:

- Listen carefully to your concern or complaint.
- Be polite and helpful and deal with your complaint fairly and efficiently.
- Keep you informed about how we are dealing with your complaint.
- Give you the right to appeal the decision made by the Chief Executive Officer.
- Provide reasonable adjustments to the procedure set out below to empower those who need support in making a complaint.
- Use your feedback to improve our service, where necessary.

Complaints that we cannot deal with:

1. Complaints or concerns about the NHS, these should be dealt with through the NHS complaints procedure.
2. Complaints about the provision of social care services which should be dealt with by Warwickshire County Council complaints procedure.

Our team can help you with signposting to the correct organisation that is best placed to handle your complaint.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

HWW is committed to ensuring that all complaints are handled free from any form

of discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Data protection

To help us handle your complaint we will keep a record of all the information we gather. All information held and processed shall be treated in confidence. Such information will be shared with representatives of HWW only to the extent required to resolve the complaint in accordance with this policy and procedure.

If the details of a complaint are to be used for quality improvement or training purposes, express permission will be sought from the complainant and personal details will be anonymised from all information prior to it being used.

All personal information collected by HWW shall be handled in accordance with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) as detailed in our Data Protection Policy.

How we will handle your complaint

How to raise a concern or complaint about HWW

If you need this complaints procedure in a different format such as Easy Read, large print, in another language or any other format, we will make reasonable adjustments to support you in sharing your concern or complaint with us.

1. We would encourage you to tell us as soon as possible (and within 6 months) if you are unhappy with our service so that we can understand your concerns and quickly try to put things right for you. This may allow for your concern or complaint to be successfully resolved informally.
2. If your concern or complaint cannot be resolved informally to your satisfaction, then you should submit a formal complaint in writing to the Chief Executive Officer of Healthwatch Warwickshire:
 - Name: Chris Bain
 - Telephone: 01926 422823 (asking to speak to the Chief Executive Officer)
 - Email: chris@healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk
 - Letter: FREEPOST HEALTHWATCH WARWICKSHIRE
3. If your concern or complaint relates to the Chief Executive Officer, then you can write to the Chair of HWW Board
 - Name: Elizabeth Hancock
 - Email: chair@healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk
 - Letter: FREEPOST HEALTHWATCH WARWICKSHIRE
4. The Chief Executive Officer or Chair will aim to acknowledge your complaint (using your preferred communication method) within 5 working days of receipt. They will contact you to enquire information about your complaint and explain how your complaint will be handled and the timescale for a response (usually within 28 days of receipt). If for any reason your complaint cannot be resolved within 28 days, we will contact you before then and tell you what the timescale will be.

- If the complaint is handled by the Chief Executive Officer, the complaint will be investigated, and you will be informed of the result of the findings together with any proposed course of action. If on receipt of the findings you are still unhappy you can contact the Chair (listed above) to set out the reasons why you remain dissatisfied.
- If the complaint is handled by the Chair of HWW, the Chair will convene a sub-committee, drawn from members of the HWW Board, to consider your complaint and the reasons you are dissatisfied. They will review the facts and consider all the evidence. They will decide whether your complaint or appeal will be upheld. This will normally be done within 28 days of the acknowledgment of your complaint. The decision of the sub-committee will be final and confirmed to you in a letter.

Once this process has completed your complaint will be closed.

How this policy will be reviewed

The Board of HWW will review the effectiveness of the complaints policy and procedure set out in this document every 5 years. Any amendments to this policy will require approval and a simple majority vote in favour.

This policy will be published on HWW website as soon as it is approved by the Board.

Note to policy and procedures

Expectations requested from the public in return

Members of the public are respectfully requested to treat HWW employees and volunteers with courtesy and respect. Any abusive or intimidating behaviour will not be tolerated.

Approved by the Board: July 2021