

Decision Making Procedure

Background

The Healthwatch regulations require Healthwatch Shropshire to have and publish a policy for how it makes its decisions. They also require it to publish in a timely manner the decisions made and the rationale behind them.

In Healthwatch Shropshire accountability rests with the Board. This makes it essential that the Board are able to take a high level view and maintain control of all work in pursuit of the Healthwatch Shropshire contract for which they are responsible.

This Decision Making Procedure allows the HWS Board to take decisions based on evidence in a consistent and fair way and allows them to comply with their requirements to make both these decisions and the process and rationale behind them public. Healthwatch Shropshire will routinely review the effectiveness of this process.

Scope

This procedure relates to any decisions using resources, powers or property (e.g. logo) attached to the Healthwatch Shropshire contract:

- Planning and agreeing the work programme
- The scope of the work programme in terms of health and care services to be covered
- Committing resources (e.g. spending money or committing staff time)
- Requesting information
- Referring a report or recommendation to a service provider or commissioner of services
- Selecting premises for Healthwatch Shropshire to undertake enter and view visits (a separate procedure exists for authorising personnel for the purposes of Enter and View)
- When and what to refer to Overview and Scrutiny
- When to report a matter to another person (perhaps a regulator)

Procedure

HWS will take its decisions based on:

- Evidence of the importance of the activities to the community
- Intelligence received on current issues relating to health and social care services for the people of Shropshire
- The resource cost and risk/reward of undertaking/not undertaking the activity
- Healthwatch Shropshire's strategic intention and the local priorities of the Health and Wellbeing Board, Clinical Commissioning Group, NHS Outcomes framework, Adult Social care framework (and the equivalent for children and young people) in Shropshire.

The HWS Board has delegated some of its powers to Committees of the Board to facilitate its effectiveness. Three committees have been established: Enter & View, Intelligence Assessment and Action and the Business Committee. These committees are chaired by a Board Member of HWS and membership includes staff and board members and also includes volunteers and external representation, depending on the business of the meeting. The Committees enable the business of HWS to be taken forward in a timely manner; minutes of Committee meetings are available to all Board members. The Committees have the power to make decisions as specified in their Terms of Reference and when specifically requested to do so by the Board. The Terms of Reference of each Committee clarifies the circumstances in which Committees may make decisions on behalf of the Board or refer to the Board. Operational decisions relating to decision making will be added to the report.

Decisions relating to referral to a Scrutiny or escalation are made in accordance with Healthwatch Shropshire's Escalation Procedure.

Appeals against Decisions

The HWS Board will reconsider an issue when new evidence or if circumstances change which might prompt it to reach a different decision, or where there is evidence that this process was not followed.