



Complaints Policy

Reviewed: 08/04/19

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COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. Purpose of this document

Individuals and organisations have the right to express their views about the performance of Healthwatch Shropshire and the way in which it conducts its business.

Anyone who is dissatisfied with any aspect of the service received from Healthwatch Shropshire, including the Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service, can make a complaint under Healthwatch Shropshire's complaints policy. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Whistle Blowing policy.

Healthwatch Shropshire will treat both concerns and complaints in the same way.

This Policy does not cover:

- 1) Complaints or concerns about the NHS, which should be dealt with through the NHS complaints procedure.
- 2) Complaints about the provision of social care services which should be dealt with by Shropshire Council's complaints procedure.

Healthwatch Shropshire will inform the Commissioning Manager at Shropshire Council of any complaints received about Healthwatch Shropshire.

This policy is available on the Healthwatch Shropshire web site or by contacting Healthwatch Shropshire.

2. How to raise a concern or make a complaint about Healthwatch Shropshire

- 1) In the first instance Healthwatch Shropshire would encourage people to raise a concern, or complaint, or to provide feedback on its services informally with the Chief Officer or in his/her absence the Chair of the Board. Providing information or correcting misunderstandings or misconceptions at this early stage may enable the issue to be successfully resolved. Initial concerns or complaints can be made in any format.
- 2) If the concern or complaint is not resolved satisfactorily, then the Chief Officer of Healthwatch Shropshire should be notified formally via email or letter. If the concern or complaint involves the Chief Officer then the complainant would be referred to the Chair of Healthwatch Shropshire.

- 3) Healthwatch Shropshire will acknowledge the concern/complaint in writing (or in the complainant's preferred method of communication) within three working days and will confirm that it is dealing with the complaint.
- 4) Attempts to resolve the concern/complaint will be completed within 10 working days of establishing the nature of the concern/complaint, by someone not involved in the complaint. Under no circumstances is a complaint investigated by a member of staff who may be part of the complaint. The findings will be communicated in writing. Exceptionally, if further time is needed, where possible this will be agreed with the complainant.
- 5) If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome they will be able to appeal. The concern/complaint will then be reviewed by Healthwatch Shropshire Board members who have not previously been involved in the matter.
- 6) If the complainant is still not happy with the outcome, or the process of investigation, they can take their complaint to the Commissioning Manager (People), Commissioning & Procurement Group, Shropshire Council, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND. When the Council is investigating a complaint Healthwatch Shropshire is required to participate fully in all investigations within the timescales requested by the Council.
- 7) If a complaint is made to Shropshire Council about the services or works provided by Healthwatch Shropshire, the Council will investigate this and require Healthwatch Shropshire to fully co-operate in the investigation.

If the complainant is not satisfied, they have the right to apply to the Local Government Ombudsman, who has the power to investigate such a complaint.

- 8) Where a complaint is received by Healthwatch Shropshire relating to the decisions of Shropshire Council, Healthwatch Shropshire will promptly, and within two Working Days, refer the complaint to the Council for investigation.
- 9) Healthwatch Shropshire will keep accurate and complete written records of all complaints received the investigation and the responses to them, in accordance with Healthwatch Shropshire

policies on Confidentiality, Data Protection and Record Retention. Healthwatch Shropshire will make these records available to Shropshire Council within 5 Working Days of being requested or at 12 monthly intervals in any event.

10) Healthwatch Shropshire will provide information as a result of a complaint to the Board and staff team so that there is learning from each investigation, appropriate action is taken and services can be improved.

11) This Complaints Policy will be reviewed bi-annually and will take into account any feedback received from the Complainant and / or Shropshire Council.