

Healthwatch Isle of Wight

## **Concerns and Complaints Policy and Procedure**

Healthwatch Isle of Wight strives to achieve a consistently high quality service for all people and welcomes constructive suggestions for improvements that could be made. However, it is recognised that occasionally things can go wrong or mistakes are made and it is important we from you when this occurs. To aid the process as system has been established to help you do so.

Our Concerns and Complaints Policy and Procedure seek to encourage early discussion of issues raised in order to achieve a quick resolution. Where this is not possible the formal procedure in our policy will be invoked.

Concerns and complaints will all be dealt with in the strictest confidence. If other parties need to be informed this will be discussed with the person involved beforehand. Where external mediation or independent advocacy might be of help, these can be sought and offered.

It is important that people feel enabled to bring their concerns and complaints to our notice and be confident that they will be dealt with consideration and courtesy. It is important that we respond in the right way for example with an explanation or apology if something has gone wrong, or with information on any action taken. Any concern or complaint raised provides us with opportunity to improve our systems and services for the benefit of all.

All concerns and complaints are recorded, with details of findings, action and outcome and the Healthwatch Isle of Wight Board monitors them. If a complaint is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction an Appeal can be made to the Chair of the Healthwatch Isle of Wight Board.

# Procedure for Dealing with Concerns and Complaints

## Part A - General Procedure

### 1. Introduction

1.1 A complaint or concern is an expression of dissatisfaction by a third party in regard to the conduct of a representative[s] of Healthwatch Isle of Wight, or the quality of service provided by us, or organisations it is contracted with to provide a service

1.2 In all cases, concerns expressed and complaints received by Healthwatch Isle of Wight will be dealt with professionally, promptly and with the aim of resolving the matter to the complete satisfaction of the other party and to ensure that the good reputation and standing of Healthwatch Isle of Wight is maintained if not enhanced through the process.

All people and other external bodies which are in regular contact with us will receive a copy of this procedure on request.

1.3 Concerns or complaints may be made verbally (including telephone) or in writing (including e-mail or text phone). They can be made direct to: Healthwatch Isle of Wight board members, to members of staff during the course of their duties or; via other persons such as a partner agency or advocate.

Where a concern or complaint is made verbally to staff members they will take down the details and ask the reporting person to confirm that they accurately represent their views. This may be done at the time or subsequently if appropriate.

1.4 All concerns and complaints will be listened to carefully with the aim of resolving them immediately. If however this is not achieved a formal procedure will be followed.

### 2. Confidentiality

It is important that strict confidentiality is maintained with regard to people's details, the nature of the concern or complaint and individuals involved. The policy and procedures are set out in accordance with the Data Protection and Confidentiality policy. This is to ensure that if a complaint is upheld and subsequent disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, are not compromised.

### **3. Procedure**

The investigation of all concerns and complaints will be undertaken in accordance with the following three stage approach.

#### **3.1 STAGE 1**

A member of staff from Healthwatch Isle of Wight or one of its partner organisations will seek to resolve the concern or complaint. Every effort will be made to resolve the issue informally to the satisfaction of the party concerned at an early stage. The details of the concern or complaint will be recorded in the Healthwatch Isle of Wight Concern and Complaint Log.

The objective is to deal with the issue immediately although staff availability may preclude this.

Timeframe: Five Working Days

#### **3.2 STAGE 2**

If the party is not satisfied with the response received or the way in which the matter has been handled at Stage 1 the concern or complaint should be formalised and escalated to the Healthwatch Isle of Wight Manager who will carry out the appropriate investigation to reach a conclusion.

The Manager on completing the investigation will send a written response. Every effort will be made to keep the complainant informed of the progress in the investigation.

Timeframe: Ten Working Days (longer with the agreement of the complainant if the issues are complex)

#### **3.3 STAGE 3**

If the complainant is still not satisfied with the response received from the Manager the matter will be referred to the Chair of the Healthwatch Isle of Wight Board or in their absence a nominated Non-Executive Director. The Chair will review the complaint independently and carry out their own investigation if necessary, to reach an agreed resolution.

Timeframe: Twenty Five Working Days

As Healthwatch Isle of Wight is contracted to provide a service by the Isle of Wight Council, it is possible for a complainant; dissatisfied about the way their complaint has been handled to lodge a complaint with them about the process and organisational failings in handling the matter.

#### **4. Recording of Concerns and Complaints**

Immediately a concern has been formalised and becomes a formal complaint a Complaint Record will be created. This record allows for all details of the complaint, its investigation and resolution to be recorded. All correspondence and information relating to the investigation will be kept with the Complaint Record.

#### **5. Contact with complainant**

The complainant will be kept informed of the progress of the investigation at all times. They will have the name and contact details of the person dealing with their complaint.

#### **6. Retention**

Records of all concerns and complaints will be retained for seven years.

#### **7. Monitoring and reporting of complaints**

The Manager should be informed immediately the formal Complaints Procedure is invoked and a complaint reference number will be issued.

The completed Complaints Record and all relevant paperwork will be forwarded to and retained by the Manager.

All complaints will be recorded in the Concern and Complaints log.

Details of all concerns and complaints received will be reported to the Healthwatch Isle of Wight Board upon resolution.

An annual report will be produced by the Manager regarding concerns and complaint investigated together with any recommendations related to the operations of the policy itself.

#### **8. Review of working systems**

When a resolution has been reached Healthwatch Isle of Wight systems and procedures will be examined to learn from the complaint and ensure there can be no repetition.

#### **9. Review of Procedure**

This procedure will be reviewed regularly (every three years or more often if required) to ensure it remains appropriate and effective.

**Part B - Practice for dealing with Concerns and Complaints made against staff members**

- 1 If, at any stage of an investigation into a concern or complaint there appears to be the potential for disciplinary action being taken against a member of staff from a partner organisation the Manager must inform the Chairman, the Executive Director appointed by the partner organisation as well as Chief Officer of that organisation.
- 2 Subsequent investigations must then be made in accordance with the parent organisation's disciplinary procedures. Where the alleged conduct is considered to require the suspension of the staff member this will be discussed with the Chairman and Executive Director involved.
- 3 The Manager will advise the complainant of any action under this part of the procedure as it could impact upon time scales within the policy.
- 4 If a complaint is made concerning the Manager Healthwatch Isle of Wight regardless of whether disciplinary action appears to be appropriate they must report it to their line manager, the Executive Director and Chairman. Subsequent action in term of the investigation of the complaint will be agreed between them.

Approved by the Healthwatch Isle of Wight Board on:	
Revision date:	