

# Policies and procedures

## Complaints policy

Reviewed:	October 2024
Originally approved by:	Governance Committee, 9/4/19
Updated by:	Governance Board, 15/10/24
Next review due:	May 2026



## Why is a complaints policy important?

Whether someone gives wants to share a suggestion, feedback or make a formal complaint about the work of our Healthwatch, it provides a valuable opportunity to identify issues and to improve our work.

Having a clear complaints policy and process is our way of ensuring that we can help you by:

- Providing an appropriate, compassionate and timely resolution for all parties; and
- Promoting a positive organisational culture of learning and improvement.

Like any public service it is important that if we make a mistake, we work quickly to put things right and learn from what has happened. We know from our work with the public what people expect when it comes to making a complaint.

## Encouragement and reassurance

You should feel encouraged to give feedback and be provided with the information you need to do so. The service you get should not be unfairly affected because you shared your views. You should receive reassurance that if you needed to make a complaint, the service you get from Healthwatch will not be affected.

## Respect and involvement

You should feel listened to, respected, and involved throughout the process of making a complaint. You should also be provided with the right support to make your complaint where appropriate.

### A simple process with well trained staff

The complaints process should be clear and easy to find. Our staff helping you should have the skills to listen and understand your feedback and deal with it in an open and transparent way.

### To be taken seriously and to know what will change as a result

Feedback should be taken seriously and you should receive an explanation of the steps Healthwatch will take to address the problem. It should also be made clear how the Healthwatch uses people's feedback to improve support.

### A simple process to follow for when there's more than one organisation involved

If a complaint covers more than one organisation, you should be signposted to the right organisation, be able to make one complaint and receive a joint response from those involved.

### Clear information on what to do if you're not happy with the result

If you are unhappy with the result of your complaint, you should be given clear information about how to contact the local council or the Local Government Ombudsman.

## Healthwatch Havering's Complaints Policy

### **Purpose of this document**

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

Anyone who is dissatisfied with any aspect of the service received by Healthwatch Havering can make a complaint under Healthwatch Havering complaints policy.

We 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 London Borough of Havering's complaints procedure.

We will review this policy on a regular basis: the next due date is May 2026.

### **How to raise a concern or make a complaint about Healthwatch Havering**

- 1) In the first instance we would encourage you to raise a concern, or complaint, or to provide feedback on our service informally. Providing information or correcting misunderstandings or misconceptions at this early stage may enable the issue to be successfully resolved.
- 2) If the concern or complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction, then you should notify us via email, letter or via a telephone conversation with a member of staff or a volunteer.

- 3) Healthwatch Havering will acknowledge the concern or complaint in writing (or in the complainants preferred method of communication) within 3 working days.
- 4) Attempts to resolve the concern or complaint will be completed within 15 working days of establishing the nature of the concern or complaint. Exceptionally, if further time is needed, where possible this will be agreed with you.
- 5) The Company Secretary of Healthwatch Havering will review all concerns/complaints. If you are not happy with the outcome you will be able to appeal. The concern or complaint will then be reviewed by Governance Board members who have not previously been involved in the matter. Once the appeal process has been completed the concern or complaint will be closed.
- 6) If you are still not satisfied you can take your concern or complaint to London Borough of Havering.

The London Borough of Havering can be contacted in the following ways:

Phone number: 01708 434343

Email: [www.havering.gov.uk](http://www.havering.gov.uk)

Postal: Town Hall, Main Road, Romford RM1 3BD

- 7) Please note that the following organisations do **NOT** accept or investigate complaints about local Healthwatch organisations, including Healthwatch Havering:

- Healthwatch England

- The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
- The Parliamentary and Health Services Ombudsman

### How to make a complaint

Our complaints process outlines how to make a complaint about us and our approach to making sure complaints are resolved.

We aim to provide the best possible service, but we do not always get it right.

We welcome your feedback to help us improve our work and to make sure we are responding to your concerns as best we can.

We are committed to addressing concerns quickly and giving a full, fair and appropriate response.

Our complaints policy provides more information on our approach and process to resolving complaints about our work.

If you need our policy in a different format, please email [enquiries@healthwatchhavering.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchhavering.co.uk)

or call 01708 303300

## **What is Healthwatch Havering?**

Healthwatch Havering is the local consumer champion for both health and social care in the London Borough of Havering. Our aim is to give local citizens and communities a stronger voice to influence and challenge how health and social care services are provided for all individuals locally.

We are an independent organisation, established by the Health and Social Care Act 2012, and employ our own staff and involve lay people/volunteers so that we can become the influential and effective voice of the public.

Healthwatch Havering is a Community Interest Company Limited by Guarantee, managed by three part-time directors, including the Chairman and the Company Secretary, supported by two part-time staff, and by volunteers, both from professional health and social care backgrounds and lay people who have an interest in health or social care issues.

## **Why is this important to you and your family and friends?**

Following the public inquiry into the failings at Mid-Staffordshire Hospital, the Francis report reinforced the importance of the voices of patients and their relatives within the health and social care system.

Healthwatch England is the national organisation which enables the collective views of the people who use NHS and social services to influence national policy, advice and guidance.

Healthwatch Havering is your local organisation, enabling you on behalf of yourself, your family and your friends to ensure views and concerns about the local health and social services are understood.

Your contribution is vital in helping to build a picture of where services are doing well and where they need to be improved. This will help and support the Clinical Commissioning Groups, NHS Services and contractors, and the Local Authority to make sure their services really are designed to meet citizens' needs.

***'You make a living by what you get,  
but you make a life by what you give.'***  
***Winston Churchill***





## **Joining Healthwatch Havering**

Local people who have time to spare are welcome to join us as volunteers. We need both people who work in health or social care services, and those who are simply interested in getting the best possible health and social care services for the people of Havering.

Our aim is to develop wide, comprehensive and inclusive involvement in Healthwatch Havering, to allow every individual and organisation of the Havering Community to have a role and a voice at a level they feel appropriate to their personal circumstances.

### **We are looking for:**

#### **Members**

This is the key working role. For some, this role will provide an opportunity to help improve an area of health and social care where they, their families or friends have experienced problems or difficulties. Very often a life experience has encouraged people to think about giving something back to the local community or simply personal circumstances now allow individuals to have time to develop themselves. This role will enable people to extend their networks, and can help prepare for college, university or a change in the working life. There is no need for any prior experience in health or social care for this role.

The role provides the face to face contact with the community, listening, helping, signposting, providing advice. It also is part of ensuring the most isolated people within our community have a voice.

Some Members may wish to become **Specialists**, developing and using expertise in a particular area of social care or health services.

#### **Supporters**

Participation as a Supporter is open to every citizen and organisation that lives or operates within the London Borough of Havering. Supporters ensure that Healthwatch is rooted in the community and acts with a view to ensure that Healthwatch Havering represents and promotes community involvement in the commissioning, provision and scrutiny of health and social services.

**Interested? Want to know more?**



*Healthwatch Havering is the operating name of  
Havering Healthwatch C.I.C.  
A community interest company limited by guarantee  
Registered in England and Wales  
No. 08416383*

*Registered Office:  
Queen's Court, 9-17 Eastern Road, Romford RM1 3NH  
Telephone: 01708 303300*



Call us on **01708 303 300**

email **[enquiries@healthwatchhavering.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchhavering.co.uk)**

Find us on Twitter at **[@HWHavering](https://twitter.com/HWHavering)**