

Policies and procedures

Discipline

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Discipline policy

Introduction

Although Healthwatch is entirely dependent upon the efforts of volunteers, there will be occasions when a volunteer member or paid member of staff behaves inappropriately. The object of this policy is to ensure that any such inappropriate behaviour is dealt with fairly and impartially. Healthwatch deals with many people vulnerable by age, infirmity or illness and must ensure that they are at all times treated with respect and dignity, and that they can have confidence that they will be dealt with fairly by Healthwatch.

The Articles of Association of Havering Healthwatch C.I.C. provide:

“31.4 The directors may terminate the membership of any member provided that the member concerned shall have a right to be heard before any final decision is made.”

This is referred to in this document as “the Article”.

When a complaint is investigated in accordance with the Complaints Policy, several outcomes may be determined. In many cases, the complaint will be dismissed or require no further action. Often, an apology will be a sufficient response.

But occasionally, a formal disciplinary procedure will be required. This policy provides the framework for such action.

Procedure

If the person investigating a complaint determines that formal disciplinary action is required, he or she shall arrange for a Panel of three members of Healthwatch Havering to be convened for the purpose of hearing the complaint and determining an outcome.

The members of the Panel must have had no prior involvement in the complaint. They will select one of their number to act as Chairman.

The person(s) complained of and the person(s) making the complaint shall have a right to attend all meetings of the Panel.

Where more than one individual is complained of, they may opt to be dealt with individually rather than together.

One week prior to the initial meeting of the Panel, the person(s) against whom the complaint is made, the complainant(s) and the Panel members shall be provided with copies of all relevant documents.

At the hearing, the person who investigated the complaint shall outline the complaint and his/her findings in relation to it. The

Panel may invite the complainant(s) to amplify or explain any issues in relation to the complaint.

Once the complaint has been presented, the person(s) complained of shall have a right to reply. Where more than one person is present, they shall each have an opportunity to reply to the complaint.

Both sides shall have a right to ask questions once the respective cases have been presented.

Members of the Panel may ask questions at any time.

Once all cases have been presented and questions answered, the investigator, the complainant if present and the person against whom the complaint has been made, shall have opportunity to sum up their respective positions.

The Panel will then retire to consider its decision. The decision will not be announced on the day but communicated in writing in due course.

Findings

The Panel may:

- Dismiss the complaint
- Require the person(s) complained of to apologise to the complainant(s)

- Suspend the person(s) complained of for a period of up to one month from participating in Healthwatch activity
- Recommend that the membership of the person(s) complained of be terminated.

Termination of membership

Where a Panel recommends that membership be terminated, the Directors shall meet in private to consider the recommendation. The Directors shall consider the written record of the complaint hearing and the circumstances that led the Panel to recommend termination. In accordance with the Article, any person whose membership is recommended for termination shall have the right to attend the Directors' meeting and to make representations.

The Directors may dismiss or uphold the recommendation for termination and, where it is upheld, the termination shall be effective immediately.

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?



Call us on **01708 303 300**

email **enquiries@healthwatchhavering.co.uk**

Find us on Twitter at **@HWHavering**



*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*

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