

Policies and procedures

Engagement

Reviewed:	May 2022
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Introduction

Healthwatch was established to be the “voice of the consumer” of health and social care services, to ensure that the needs of the patient or resident are not overlooked in the development of health and social care policy by local authorities and NHS Trusts and commissioners.

In Havering, this is achieved through both an active Enter & View programme that is aimed at monitoring standards of care at residential and nursing homes, hospitals and primary care facilities, and a developing Engagement programme.

This policy sets a framework within which Engagement activity will be undertaken, applying to the following forms of engagement with the public:

- Consultations with the public
- Surveys of opinion
- “Have Your Say” events
- “Tell Us What You Think” cards
- Items on the website

Engagement activities will be undertaken using a variety of methods, selected according to the needs of the particular activity, including:

- Online surveys using SurveyMonkey software
- Face-to-face interviews, using paper-based or electronic forms
- Public meetings

- Private meetings, attended by invitation
- Telephone surveys, including “mystery shopping” enquiries
- Dedicated pages on the website
- Videoconference and group telephone facilities
- Covid precautions

More than one method may be used for any particular engagement activity.

Ethical considerations

It is essential that all engagement activity is undertaken in accordance with all relevant ethical considerations. In the event of doubt, the Governance Committee will consider any ethical issues that arise in relation to the particular engagement activity.

Personal data will only be collected where absolutely essential and will be treated as confidential (except where there is an over-riding legal obligation to disclose it, or where it is necessary to disclose it in the interests of the safeguarding of a vulnerable adult or a child).

Demographic data will only be collected where necessary in the context of the specific engagement activity being undertaken and in response to the requirements of an equality impact statement.

All data collected will, at all times, be subject to the requirements of the law relating to data protection¹.

¹ Data Protection Act 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation and subordinate legislation thereunder

Where, for the purposes of the specific engagement activity it is essential to make public some details that would otherwise be held confidentially, the specific consent of the relevant data subject will be obtained in advance of publication. If such permission is declined, the data in question will not be used.

Commissioned consultations

Commissions to carry out engagement activity on behalf of other organisations may be accepted. In such cases, the Engagement Policy will apply so far as possible but it is acknowledged that the terms of the commission may contain provisions that over-ride the requirements of this policy. Where that applies, it is the responsibility of the organisation commissioning the activity to justify the reasons for over-riding this policy.

Using SurveyMonkey

Where a survey is carried out as part of engagement activity, SurveyMonkey will be used unless there is a specific reason for using another approach.

“Have Your Say”

Have Your Say events will be arranged as and when necessary. They may either be fully open to the public or only to an invited audience.

“Tell Us What You Think” cards

Tell Us What You Think (TUWYT) cards are available to enable service users, carers or their relatives to make observations on specific health or social care services. Where information on a card enables an individual to be identified, the card will be treated as confidential and processed in accordance with data protection requirements.

“Keeping You In Touch”

Keeping You In Touch (KYIT) will generally be issued weekly to all members to keep them abreast of forthcoming activities and events, and general advice relevant to Healthwatch activity. KYIT will be published by email (except to those members unable to receive email, to whom a hard copy will be sent by Royal Mail).

KYIT is issued on a confidential basis only to Healthwatch members and probationary members and should not be shared with other people.

Conduct of face-to-face interviews

Where engagement activity includes face-to-face interviews, the following considerations will apply.

Members undertaking interviews will always work in pairs. It is not necessary for both to interview an individual at the same time but, while one carries out the interview the other should remain close by (though not so close as to breach any applicable requirement of confidentiality).

Use of videoconference and group telephone facilities

Where engagement in person is not practicable, whether because of restrictions on public gatherings imposed by government authority or suitable facilities for meeting in person are not available, videoconference or group telephone call facilities may be used and subscriptions to appropriate such services will be maintained for the purpose.

Covid-19 precautions

During the Covid-19 pandemic, special precautions apply to Enter & View and other Engagement activities.

Enter & View

It is essential to comply with all statutory restrictions and, where relevant, to individual service providers' own requirements. In general, this means that:

- A thorough risk assessment **MUST** be carried out prior to the visit and, in general, the scope and duration of the visit agreed with the proprietor beforehand
- Visiting teams will comprise no more than two people
- Team members **MUST**:
 - Be fully vaccinated and produce confirmation of that by either the NHS app or producing an NHS certificate

- Take a Lateral Flow Test (LFT) no more than two days before the visit and, if the test proves positive, withdraw from the visit
- Wear suitable Personal Protective Equipment throughout the visit (this will include a clinical grade face mask), including disposable gloves if the provider so requires
- Maintain social distancing at all times
- Wash their hands regularly during the visit
- Team Members will be expected to exercise caution when speaking to residents and staff in order to avoid any possibility of spreading Covid

Engagement

So far as possible, engagement activity will be undertaken by telephone or videoconference facility. Face-to-face meetings will be held when it is safe to do so.

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*

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