

Enter and View visits

Information for providers of health and social care service premises



What does “Enter and View” mean?

“Enter and View” is a power conferred by law on local Healthwatch organisations that enables them to authorise individuals to enter and view health and social care premises. This information sheet outlines the powers and how Healthwatch Havering implements them.

Please note that the fact that your premises have been selected for an Enter and View visit does not imply any fault or concern with the services you offer, the staff you employ or the standard of service provided: we are simply carrying out our role of monitoring facilities on behalf of the public.

Premises that may be entered

Authorised representatives of Healthwatch have the right to enter and view all services provided in premises in which health and social care activities are carried on that are owned or controlled by:

1. NHS Trusts
2. NHS Foundation Trusts
3. Local Authorities
4. Providers of medical services (i.e. general practitioners)
5. Providers of primary dental services
6. Providers of primary ophthalmic services
7. Providers of pharmaceutical services
8. Independent providers that deliver (or assist in delivering) services commissioned by and under contract to local authorities, NHS Trusts, and CCGs

The legal powers to Enter and View

Legislation¹ requires providers to assist by allowing Healthwatch to:

¹ **Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act, 2007, as amended: section 225, and The Local Authorities (Public Health Functions and Entry to Premises by Local Healthwatch Representatives) Regulations 2013**

- ❖ Obtain patient views about their experiences of, and perceived need for, local services and
- ❖ Make written recommendations on the standard of provision, including whether and how services could or ought to be improved.

For that purpose, providers must:

1. Allow the authorised representatives of Healthwatch to enter and view any services or premises that are providing publicly funded care (unless there are grounds to deny entry on a specific occasion: see below) and
2. Provide information about any publicly funded services or premises when requested by Healthwatch

Detailed guidance is also available from Healthwatch England and can be seen at <https://network.healthwatch.co.uk/guidance/2019-04-23/guide-to-enter-and-view>

The names of our authorised representatives will be provided to you in advance of the visit (unless there is a last minute change, e.g. because one of them has fallen ill or tested positive for Covid-19). All authorised representatives carry a Healthwatch Identity Card which includes a summary of their authorisation to enter and view.

Circumstances when an Enter and View can be refused

You may refuse our authorised representatives permission to enter and view services and premises if any of the following circumstances apply:

- The services or premises are providing social care to children
- The presence of the representatives would compromise the effective provision of a service or the privacy or dignity of any person (for example, because several residents are unwell and it is necessary to avoid spreading infection)
- The premises where the care is being provided is a person's own home (Note: this does not mean that an authorised representative cannot

enter if invited to do so by that person – it just means that they have no automatic right to enter. A representative will never enter unless invited to do so and accompanied by another representative)

- The premises (or parts of the premises) are used solely as accommodation for staff
- The premises are the non-communal parts of a care home
- The care is being provided in a penal institution or police station
- The presence of the representatives would compromise service delivery (e.g. if a major incident resulting in significant numbers of casualties occurred during a visit to a hospital accident and emergency department)
- Health and social care services are not provided at the premises (e.g. it is an office) or are not being provided at the time of the visit (e.g. when the facilities or premises are closed for refurbishment)
- The services are provided solely to people paying in full for their own care
- The premises are owned by one independent provider but controlled by another (and in this case the provider who owns the premises is exempt)

Circumstances in which a visit can be refused or terminated

You may also ask our authorised representatives to leave your premises if, in your opinion:

- The authorised representatives are not acting reasonably or are acting in such a way as to compromise the effective provision of a service or the privacy or dignity of any person (e.g. being present when someone is being washed or dressed, getting in the way of a consultation, or holding up the serving of a meal or the administration of a medicine)
- The authorised representatives are not acting proportionately (e.g. by making repeated or regular unannounced visits, or by arriving in a large group at a small facility)

- The representatives do not provide evidence that they are authorised in accordance with Regulation 12 of The Local Authorities (Public Health Functions and Entry to Premises by Local Healthwatch Representatives) Regulations 2013.

Please note, however, that any such denial of access may be reported to the relevant regulatory or commissioning agency/ies.

Covid-19 precautions

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

Healthwatch Havering and our authorised representatives will comply with all statutory restrictions and, where relevant, any specific requirements you have told us about before the visit. In general, this means that:

- A thorough risk assessment WILL be carried out prior to the visit and, in general, the scope and duration of the visit WILL be agreed with you beforehand
- No more than two authorised representatives carry out the visit
- Our authorised representatives WILL:
 - Be fully vaccinated against Covid-19 and produce confirmation of that by either the NHS app or an NHS certificate, and have received a flu vaccination within the past twelve months
 - 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 you so require
 - Maintain social distancing at all times
 - Wash or sanitise their hands regularly during the visit
- Exercise caution when speaking to residents and staff in order to avoid any possibility of spreading Covid

Exercising the right to enter and view: practical arrangements

Enter and view visits are part of our work plan priorities, with the need for each visit being assessed prior to a decision to go ahead.

The decision to enter and view a service will be made only where it is considered that the visit will add value to the information already available about the service from other sources, including CQC reports.

Visits are not arranged as a means of investigating individual complaints about particular services or premises (as such complaints are referred to and dealt with by other agencies) but in order to promote Healthwatch's agreed work plan or to obtain evidence to support a specific work stream.

Visits may be announced or unannounced.

Announced visits are documented as part of the current work plan:

- You will be notified of the intention to carry out a visit at least 6 weeks before the intended date of the visit, as outlined above.
- You will be asked to ensure that a you, or a member of your management team, is available to meet the authorised representatives at the beginning of the visit; so far as possible, that person should also be on hand at the end of the visit, to receive feedback.

Unannounced visits will be carried out where it is proportionate and reasonable to do so. Unannounced visits will generally be considered either:

- In response to a concern drawn to the attention of Healthwatch by a regulatory or commissioning agency or a service user (or user's relative) and when sufficient and robust evidence exists of a need for such a visit ², or
- In other circumstances where it is considered appropriate to do so (for example, where a neighbouring facility is subject to an unannounced visit and the objective of that visit cannot be achieved without also visiting other facilities, and announcing the additional

² Such as reports of dirty premises; following publication of statistics showing high infection rates; or when requests are formally made by a regulatory or commissioning agency to assist it by carrying out "spot checks" to review aspects of service delivery

visit in advance would compromise the purpose of the principal unannounced visit)

Conducting an unannounced visit

On arrival at the service or premises, the authorised representatives will:

- Explain the reason for the unannounced visit to you (or if you are not available, the duty manager), and
- Hand over a letter setting out the reason for the unannounced visit, and what will happen during and after the visit.

Grounds for denying entry for visits are listed earlier. You, or the duty manager on your behalf, have the right to decide whether the request to carry out an unannounced visit is proportionate and reasonable before allowing the authorised representatives to enter the premises. If access is refused, the authorised representatives will ask the duty manager to explain why and, if the reason is because the visit is on day which is inconvenient or not suitable, offer an alternative date and time.

If the authorised representatives are unreasonably denied access, the facts may be reported to the relevant regulatory or commissioning agency/ies and/or the Safeguarding Team.

Assuming that the authorised representatives are given access, before they view the premises, they will appreciate an opportunity to discuss the purpose of the visit with you or a senior member of your staff. This will be an opportunity for the team to be told about the premises in general, about any specific issues there may relating to particular residents or patients and about any issues that they need to be aware of.

Preparation for a visit

Before visiting any health or social care services or premises the authorised representatives will:

- Ensure that they have been briefed about the aim and desired outcomes of the visit

- Endeavour to find out if any other national or local agencies (e.g. the Care Quality Commission, neighbouring Healthwatch) are planning their own visits at roughly the same time so that the visits can be co-ordinated
- Agree how the objectives of the visit will be achieved (e.g. by talking to staff, service users, or patients – with their agreement – including meeting with the user forum (where one exists); observing the general interaction between staff, users and patients; noting environmental aspects of the care setting)

If, during the course of the visit, an authorised representative witnesses (or is informed of) anything that they consider may breach the standards of safeguarding of vulnerable adults or children or which jeopardises any other aspect of service user safety or care, this will be brought to the notice of the senior member of staff on duty as soon as reasonably practicable and reported forthwith to the Director of Healthwatch Havering who will consider whether the circumstances require formal report to the relevant regulatory or commissioning agency/ies and/or the Safeguarding Team.

Before the visit

The Healthwatch office will give you at least six weeks' advance notice of the intended visit to the manager of the service to be visited. We will invite you:

- To complete a questionnaire about your service
- To meet a team of Healthwatch members to discuss the circumstances of the service
- To assist us by identifying service users, relatives and/or friends of service users and members of staff who would be willing to meet Healthwatch members to discuss their views of the home service

We will ask you to complete the questionnaire online as soon as possible and, in any event, no less than three weeks before the visit. The completed questionnaire will be shared with a team comprising the two authorised representatives who will be carrying out the visit, up to two other Healthwatch members and a member of staff (the visiting team).

The service users, relatives and/or friends of service users and members of staff identified will be invited to join an online meeting(s) with the visiting team about two weeks before the visit to talk about their experience of the service.

About a week before the visit, the visiting team will hold an online meeting with you. The agenda for that meeting will include discussion of any points arising from the questionnaire and/or the meeting with service users etc. and agreeing with you the parts of the premises that will be visited.

During the visit

The authorised representatives will wear personal protective equipment and sanitise their hands regularly. Their visit will be confined to areas agreed in advance as being suitable for visiting. They will not usually engage in conversation (beyond the usual courtesies and introductions) with service users or staff.

Conclusion of visit

At the conclusion of the visit, the authorised representatives will meet informally with you or a member of your management team to give general feedback, to comment on their findings and to raise any issues of concern that they have noted.

Post-visit report and other action

Following every visit, Healthwatch will prepare a report outlining its findings and, if applicable, offer recommendations for change.

The authorised representatives will prepare a written record of the visit, outlining the scope and progress of the visit, the gist of conversations with management, staff, service users and any service users' family members, friends or carers seen in the course of the visit, their findings and any recommendations for action as a result of their observations during the course of the visit. The report will also include comment on examples of good and bad practice (if any) observed during the course of the visit.

Once agreed, Healthwatch will forward a final draft report to you with an invitation to highlight any factual inaccuracies and to respond to its comments or recommendations. We will aim to send the draft to you within 10 working days of the visit but it may not always be possible to stick to that deadline. You may also be invited to meet the authorised representatives and/or a Director of Healthwatch Havering to discuss the recommendations (if any) and to explain the action you intend to take to implement them (or any reasons why not).

Healthwatch Havering aims to publish the final report within eight weeks of the visit. The report will be sent to:

- You
- The proprietor of the premises visited
- The service commissioner
- The contract manager
- The local Overview and Scrutiny Committee (where appropriate)
- The service regulators

In addition, a copy of the report will be placed on the Healthwatch Havering website.

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.



*Healthwatch Havering is the operating name of
Havering Healthwatch C.I.C.
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