

Freedom of Information Policy

1. Scope of this policy

This policy sets out:

- (a) How to make a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to Healthwatch Kingston (HWK); and
- (b) Details of HWK's 'Publication Scheme' (as required under the FOIA).

2. How to make a FOIA request to HWK

Background

Local Healthwatch are listed under Schedule 1 of the FOIA and are subject to the requirements of FOIA. Local Healthwatch are only subject to the Act in relation to their functions under section 221(1) of the **Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007**, which relates to local Healthwatch statutory activities.

FOIA is not the only law under which local Healthwatch may have to provide information to the public. For example, local Healthwatch are subject to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in relation to personal information (please see [XXXXXX](#) for more details).

Process

Please email your request to info@healthwatchkingstonuponthames.org.uk. You can also write to:

Healthwatch Kingston
Kingston Quaker Centre
Fairfield East
Kingston upon Thames
KT1 2PT

We will usually respond to your request within 20 working days following receipt of your request. However, this deadline may be extended if we need to seek clarification of your request from you, or if we need to consider complex issues of public interest in deciding whether to provide certain information. We will tell you if we need to extend the deadline and will explain the reason why.

Some information might be exempt from disclosure under the FOIA; however we will usually tell you if we are withholding information. If we do so, we will explain why we feel that it is appropriate to apply the exemption. In some cases, the FOIA allows us to refuse to confirm or deny holding certain information.

For example, we can use exemptions under FOI to refuse to disclose confidential personal information, or to refuse to make disclosures that would make it difficult for us to carry out our role.

We may need to consult with other people or organisations before providing you with requested information. This usually happens where you have requested information that was provided to HWK by another organisation.

If you are unhappy with the response you received from us relating to your FOIA request please let us know, giving your reasons. We will respond to you in writing. If you remain

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dissatisfied following your appeal, you can contact the Information Commissioner (please see www.ico.org.uk for more information).

3. HWK’s Publication Scheme

Background

Under the FOIA, Local Healthwatch are required to have a publication scheme, approved by the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO), and to publish information covered by the scheme.

HWK Publication Scheme

HWK has adopted the ICO’s ‘Model Publication Scheme’ (please see: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-freedom-of-information/publication-scheme/>).

Under the scheme, Healthwatch Kingston is committed to:

- Proactively publish, or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information that falls within the ‘classes of information’ listed below
- Specify the information that it holds, and which falls within those ‘classes of information’
- Publish guidance on how this information is made available, so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public
- Review and update, on a regular basis, the types of information it makes available
- Publish information on any fees that may be charged for this information, and
- Make this publication scheme available to the public

Healthwatch Kingston uses its website as the principal means of disseminating information about itself and its activities.

We routinely publish information within the following classifications:

- Who we are and what we do (including information on our Board of Trustees)
- The services we provide
- ~~Information on our finances in our board meeting papers and our reports to the Charity Commission, Companies House and Healthwatch England. Information on our finances (annually, via our Annual Report)~~
- ~~Our Board meeting papers, with the exception of confidential items. Materials relating to our Trustee Meetings (HWK usually meets bi-monthly and we publish the agenda, papers and minutes in relation to [insert description of Part A matters])~~
- Periodic reports and research (for example, Enter and View reports)
- Our policies and procedures
- Information on our formal governance arrangements

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Commented [SN5]: I suggest this is simplified to “Our Board meeting papers, with the exception of confidential items”.

Commented [JW6R5]: Agreed. Change made.

4. Document Control

Title of Document: Freedom of Information Policy & Procedure	
Board Approval Date: May 2019	Review Date: May 2021