

Complaints Policy and Procedure

1. Background

Individuals and organisations have the right to express their views about the performance of Healthwatch Kingston (hereafter HWK) and the way in which it conducts its business. Anyone who is dissatisfied with any aspect of the service received by HWK can provide feedback, raise a concern or make a complaint. This includes complaints against the Board of Trustees (hereafter trustees), staff, volunteers and any other persons acting on behalf of HWK. This policy is a statement of intent and will be implemented as a procedure.

2. Scope

HWK is committed to learning and improving its service as a result of feedback and complaints. If HWK is perceived to have fallen short of the high standards it sets, by someone who has received a service, then it is imperative that they can provide feedback or voice their concern easily and expect a prompt response.

This policy does NOT cover:

- Complaints about other partner agencies and services that HWK works with
- Complaints or concerns about the NHS, which should be dealt with through the NHS complaints procedure
- Complaints about the provision of social care services, which should be dealt with by the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames complaints procedure

3. Procedure

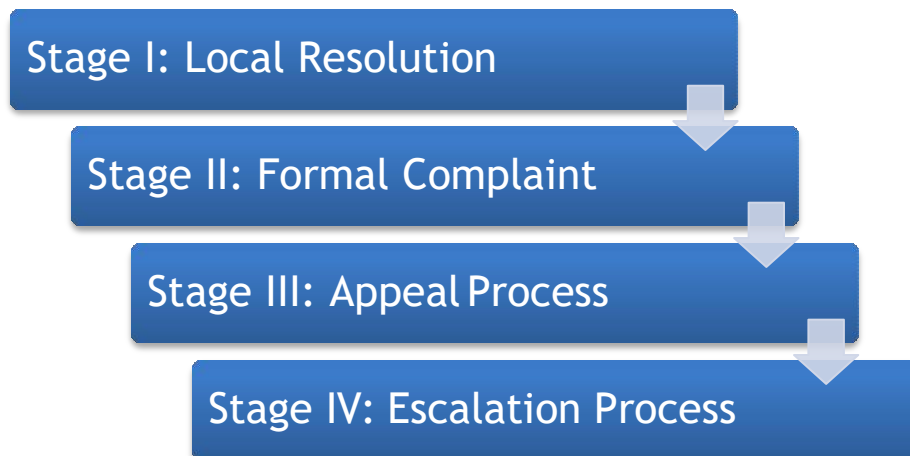
There are four stages to HWK's Complaints Procedure (see figure 1 below) and wherever possible an emphasis is placed on resolving any concerns as quickly as possible:

- I. Individuals are encouraged to contact the office in the first instance and ask to speak to the Chief Officer who will provide the complainant with the Complaints Policy and Procedure. Providing information or correcting misunderstandings or misconceptions at this early stage may enable the issue to be successfully resolved at a local level without the need for an individual to make a formal complaint. If acceptable to the individual an offer to meet

and discuss the concern with the Chief Officer will be provided.

- II. If the concern is not resolved to an individual's satisfaction, or the complaint is about the Chief Officer, then they should notify the Chair in writing to the address provided in section 5 of this policy and procedure and state that they wish to make a formal complaint and provide details of the nature of their concern(s). The Chair will acknowledge the complaint. Attempts to resolve the complaint will be completed within 15 working days of establishing the nature of the complaint. This stage will also include an offer to meet with the Chief Officer or Chair of the Board of Trustees. Exceptionally, if further time is needed, and where possible, this will be agreed with the individual. A revised timescale will be provided in writing. A written response will be provided to the complainant on conclusion of this stage of the complaints process.
- III. If an individual is not happy with the outcome of their formal complaint, they will be able to appeal to a panel of two to three trustees who have not previously been involved in the matter will then review the complaint. A timescale will be provided (within 15 working days) and once the appeal process has been completed the complaint will be closed. A written response will be provided to the complainant on conclusion of this stage of the complaints process.
- IV. If an individual remains dissatisfied they can take their complaint to the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames. The individual may also subsequently take their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman (www.lgo.org.uk).

Fig 1 Summary of Complaints Procedure



4. Compliments, Suggestions and Comments

In contrast to addressing matters of concern made by individuals HWK is keen to receive positive feedback about its services which can be provided in person, over the phone, by post or email.

5. Contact details

The contact details for HWK are:

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

Tel: 0203 326 1255

Email: info@healthwatchkingston.org.uk

6. References

- [HW England Complaints Policy dated 2017](#)
- Healthwatch England: Guidance on developing an effective complaints policy, 2013
- Healthwatch England: Template complaints policy, 2013

7. Document Control

Title of Document: Complaints Policy & Procedure	
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