

Complaints Policy & 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, affiliates and active affiliates (hereafter 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 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

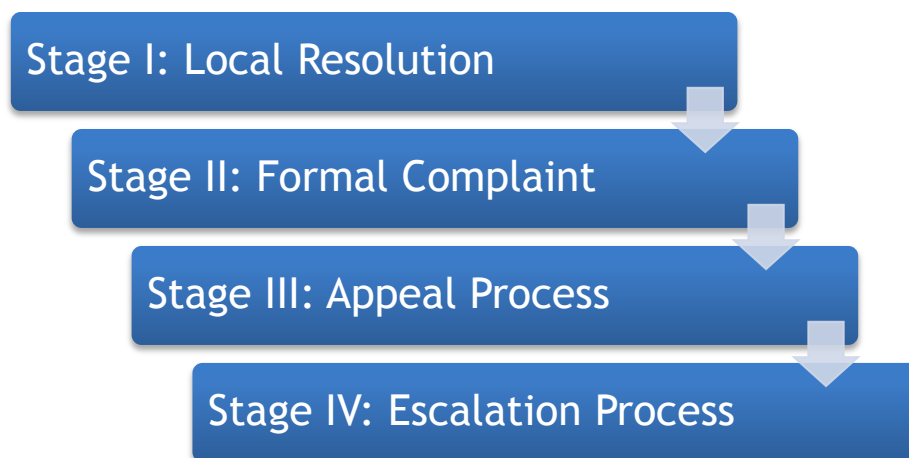
There are four stages to HWK's Complaints Procedure (see figure 1 below) and wherever possible an emphasis is placed on resolving any concerns as quickly as possible:

- I. Individuals are encouraged to contact the office in the first instance and ask to speak to the Manager. 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 Manager will be provided.
- II. If the concern is not resolved to an individual's satisfaction, then they should notify HWK in writing by email or letter and state that they wish to make a formal complaint and provide details of the nature of their concern(s). HWK will acknowledge the complaint in writing (or in the complainant's preferred method of communication) within 3 working days. 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 Manager of HWK 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.
- III. If an individual is not happy with the outcome of their formal complaint they will be able to appeal. HWK's 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.

- 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 Healthwatch Kingston 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 Healthwatch Kingston are:

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

Tel: 0208 974 6629

Email: info@healthwatchkingstonuponthames.org.uk

6. References

- 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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