

## **Healthwatch Staffordshire Complaints Procedure**

Engaging Communities Staffordshire (ECS) is contracted to deliver Healthwatch Staffordshire. We always strive to provide the best possible service in everything that we do. However, we recognise that from time to time there may be occasions when users of our services feel that the quality or level of service provided falls short of what they could reasonably expect.

Your continued goodwill is greatly valued by us and we would expect to resolve any day to day difficulties or complaints informally and as quickly as possible. In the first instance we would expect you to raise any complaint directly with the member of staff concerned.

The more formal procedure outlined below is intended for use by any person who use ECS Healthwatch services, where informal communication has not resolved the problem.

Individuals and organisations have the right to express their views about the performance of Healthwatch Staffordshire and the way in which it conducts its business.

Healthwatch Staffordshire welcomes feedback and encourages informal resolution. Anyone who is dissatisfied with any aspect of the service received by Healthwatch can make a complaint under the Healthwatch Staffordshire complaints policy. We will treat both concerns and complaints in the same way.

### **This Policy does not cover:**

- 1) Complaints or concerns about the NHS, which should be dealt with through the NHS complaints procedure.
- 2) Complaints about the provision of social care services which should be dealt with by Staffordshire County Council's complaint procedure.

**Confidentiality:** All information regarding the concern/complaint will be kept secure and confidential according to the standards set out in the Healthwatch Staffordshire Confidentiality Policy.

### **How to raise a concern or make a complaint about Healthwatch Staffordshire**

- 1) In the first instance we would encourage you to raise a concern, or complaint, or to provide feedback on our service informally to the appropriate member of staff. Providing information or correcting misunderstandings or misconceptions at this early stage may enable the issue to be successfully resolved.
- 2) If the concern or complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction, then you should notify us via email, letter or via a telephone conversation with a member of staff or a volunteer, indicating that you wish to raise a formal concern or make a formal complaint.

- 3) Healthwatch Staffordshire will acknowledge the concern/complaint in writing by letter or email (or in the complainants preferred method of communication) within 5 working days.
- 4) The Healthwatch Manager will attempt to resolve the concern/complaint. This will be completed within 28 days of receipt of the formal concern/complaint. Exceptionally, if further time is needed, where possible this will be agreed with you.
- 5) You will be notified in writing by letter or email of any conclusions or steps to be taken by Healthwatch Staffordshire to resolve the concern/complaint.
- 6) The Healthwatch Manager will review all concerns/complaints. If you are not happy with the outcome you will be able to appeal. Appeals If you wish to appeal the outcome of any concern/complaint a request for an appeal must be made in writing by letter or email to the ECS Executive Director within ten working days of written notification of the outcome.
- 7) The Executive Director will convene a panel of at least two Non-Executive Directors who have not previously been involved in the matter, who will review the concern/complaint and respond to you in writing within 15 working days. The decision of the panel will be final.

#### **Complaints against an Advisory Board member (remunerated or not) of Healthwatch Staffordshire.**

**1) When the complaint is about the Chair of the Advisory Board for Healthwatch Staffordshire.** A complaint should be raised with the Healthwatch Manager who will undertake an initial investigation and seek to resolve the concern in an informal fashion. If this is not possible or if the complainant is not satisfied, the Manager will convene a panel involving an Executive Director and a Non-Executive Director. The decision of the panel will be final.

**2) When the complaint is about a member of the Advisory Board.** The complaint should be raised with the Chair of the Advisory Board who with the Healthwatch Manager, will undertake an initial investigation and seek to resolve the concern in an informal fashion. If this is not possible or if the complainant is not satisfied, the Chair will convene a panel involving one of the Executive Directors. The decision of the panel will be final.

**Approved by:** Engaging Communities Staffordshire (ECS) (CIC) Board. May 2018

This document is a statement of the relevant law where appropriate together with the Company's policies on the subject. The Company reserves the right to amend any non-statutory parts of this policy.

This document was current as at 06/07/2018. New Employment legislation and case law means that this document will become out of date and will need reviewing and amending, preferably every 12 months.