

## Complaints Process

### Problem solving procedure

While we hope that your contact with Healthwatch Islington will be a positive experience, we are aware that sometimes things can go wrong.

As an organisation, Healthwatch Islington is committed to ensuring that staff, volunteers and beneficiaries alike are treated fairly and not discriminated against.

This procedure will ensure consistency in our response to problems and resolving them, and will set out what should happen if a problem arises or if you have a complaint to make, or if someone makes a complaint against you.

Please note that any complaints will be treated confidentially, and will only be discussed amongst those who are directly involved in trying to resolve the issue. Healthwatch Islington will keep confidential records of what happens and who is involved at each stage.

You are entitled to ask for copies of these records at any stage.

### PART A - What to do if you need to make a complaint/ raise a concern

#### Stage 1 | Informal Complaint

Initial complaints, whether concerning a member of staff, the organisation or a volunteer, should first be discussed informally as soon as possible. Many issues can be resolved this way.

Informal complaints should initially be raised with the person you are not satisfied with. Alternatively, you should contact the Chief Executive: Emma Whitby.

[emma.whitby@healthwatchislington.co.uk](mailto:emma.whitby@healthwatchislington.co.uk)

You do not need to explain the issue in writing. An informal meeting or call will then be arranged to discuss the complaint.

Ideally this stage will result in mutually agreed actions to resolve the issue.

#### Stage 2 | Formal Complaint

If you are not satisfied with the outcome at Stage 1, you should make a formal complaint in writing within 7 days following the informal discussion to the Chief Executive: Emma Whitby (as above).

If you have already spoken to Emma Whitby in Stage 1, you should address your formal complaint to the Chair of Healthwatch Islington at this stage:

[chair@healthwatchislington.co.uk](mailto:chair@healthwatchislington.co.uk)

The organisation is committed to acknowledging this complaint within 7 days, and to investigating it and providing a response within 28 days. As part of this process you will be offered an opportunity for a meeting with the Chief Executive (or Chair of Healthwatch Islington). You will have the option to bring a friend or another volunteer with you (not a legal representative or lawyer).

## **PART B - What will happen if someone complains about you, or an issue arises that concerns you. This may include concerns about your performance or suitability for your particular volunteer role.**

### **Stage 1 | Informal discussion**

The first step will be an informal discussion about the complaint /issue. This is an opportunity for you to talk about the complaint/issue and offer your comment. It may also seek to identify some solutions, if required and appropriate.

### **Stage 2 | Written Statement**

If the issue hasn't been or cannot be resolved at Stage 1, you may be issued with a written statement outlining the reason for the complaint/ the concerns that have been raised, and offering you the opportunity to attend a formal meeting.

Depending on the nature of the complaint or the concerns, further objectives may be set or offered.

### **Stage 3 | Opportunity to Appeal**

If you are not satisfied with the outcome you have the right to appeal to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive will respond within 28 days, and their decision will be final. At this stage the evidence and processes followed will be reviewed. No further representations/evidence will be considered. A final decision will be made and communicated to you in writing.

Note:

In any case where the complaint results in a volunteer being asked to discontinue their volunteering, and the volunteer feels they have been treated unfairly they have the right to initiate a complaint as in Part A of this procedure. For staff they can follow the Grievance Procedure.

Reviewed and agreed: June 2019    Next review: June 2021