

Complaints policy

1. Purpose of this policy

Individuals and organisations have the right to express their views about Healthwatch Sutton's performance and the manner in which it discharges its responsibilities.

Anyone directly affected by the way in which HWS has carried out its functions may make a complaint under HWS's complaints policy.

We will treat both concerns and complaints in the same way.

We will review this policy on a regular basis.

2. Statement

Any person can make a complaint about the following:

- An employee or volunteer of a contracted organisation (Community Action Sutton, Citizens Advice Sutton)
- A volunteer or member/director of Healthwatch Sutton
- An independent worker commissioned by Healthwatch Sutton

The complaint may be made about the conduct of the person(s) above.

The complaint may be made about the conduct of the organisation.

3. How to raise a concern or make a complaint about Healthwatch Sutton

1. In the first instance, we would encourage you to raise a concern, or complaint, or to provide feedback on our service informally. Providing information or correcting misunderstanding 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.
3. Healthwatch Sutton will acknowledge the concern/complaint in writing (or in the complainants preferred method of communication) within 3 working days.
4. If the complaint is not resolved within a mutually agreed time, there will be a meeting with the complainant, an appointed employee/HWS Chief Executive, Chair of HWS, and/or the Chief Officer of relevant organisation) within 15 working days of establishing the nature of the concern/complaint. Exceptionally, if further time is needed, where possible this will be agreed with you.
The discussion and plans for action will be recorded and a copy given to the complainant.
5. The Chief Executive of HWS will review all concerns/complaints. If you are not happy with the outcome you will be able to appeal within 14 days of receiving the decision.

The concern/complaint will then be referred to the next Healthwatch Sutton Board meeting. If a meeting is not due within 20 days, a special Board meeting will be held within that time. You have the right to attend the meeting to give your point of view, but not be present when the decision is reached.

You will be informed of the decision after the meeting in writing. If you are dissatisfied with the decision, you may appeal within 14 days.

Once the appeal process has been completed, the concern/complaint will be closed.

6. If you are still not satisfied, you can take your concern/complaint to the Performance Manager for Healthwatch Sutton at the London Borough of Sutton. You may also subsequently take your concern/complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman (<http://www.lgo.org.uk/>).

4. Notes

- At all stages, the complainant has the right to be represented by a person of their choice, whose role must be made known to Healthwatch Sutton/Community Action Sutton in advance.
- Should the complaint involve misconduct by an employee or volunteer, then the disciplinary procedure may be started at any stage. Should this procedure begin, then the complaints procedure will wait for the outcome of the disciplinary proceedings.

Approved by Healthwatch Sutton Board of Directors: 09/03/2020

To be reviewed: 09/03/2023

Responsible Officer: Chief Executive of Healthwatch Sutton