

Healthwatch Cornwall Decision-Making and Involvement Procedures (the 'Required Procedures')

Introduction

Healthwatch Cornwall wishes to secure broad-based views on its operations wherever possible. These Decision-Making and Involvement Procedures set out how the Board of Healthwatch Cornwall will involve others, particularly the public and volunteers, in its governance and decision-making on how it runs Healthwatch Cornwall.

Engagement work with local people on particular health and social issues will take place in addition to these Procedures.

To Which Decisions Will These Procedures Apply?

At least one of the key involvement mechanisms set out below will be used to feed into governance decisions made on any of the following matters, which are known in the statutory regulations as Relevant Decisions:

- how we undertake our activities (section 221 activities);
- which health and/or care services we plan to look at;
- the amounts (budget) for our activities;
- whether to make a formal request for information;
- whether to make a formal report or recommendation;
- which premises to enter and view and when to visit those premises;
- whether to refer a matter to an overview and scrutiny committee or health scrutiny authority;
- whether to report a matter concerning our activities to another person;
- whether to sub-contract any of our activities

The Required Procedures

Healthwatch Cornwall will draw on the methods below to ensure broad input into its governance and decision-making. The methods shown could each be used singly, or in combination, to help Healthwatch Cornwall gather input to enable it to make well-informed decisions. At least one of these methods will be used to help to inform any important decision-making about how we run Healthwatch Cornwall.

Annual Report to Public
Steering Group Input
Board member input
Task group input
Expert Partner input
Volunteer Involvement
Healthwatch Cornwall Organisational Network Members
Healthwatch Cornwall Network Members
Public consultation
In public meetings



Annual Report

We will hold an Annual Conference where we will share our annual report to the Department of Health, together with a financial summary and outreach and research activity reports and the plan for future work. We will do this both in the interests of transparency and openness - reporting back on our recent work; and also as an engagement exercise, inviting views on the coming period of work.

We will want to involve the Voluntary and Community Sector in the Annual Conference as much as possible, for example, by inviting groups to attend and will advertise the event and agenda in advance with opportunities for public views and questions.

Board Members will attend the Conference, and a summary of key points will also be produced for the Board.

Steering Group Input

The Healthwatch Cornwall Board has established a Steering group that consists of directors, the operational team, representatives from our expert partners, representatives from SEAP, volunteers and other representatives from local organisations that decide on our priorities with respect to planned activity for research and enter and view. This group meet bi-monthly and receive updates on progress, reports of database activity and trends, updates on other issues and feed in their own intelligence of concerns in their respective sectors. Papers are provided in advance. Members are invited to send their input by email if they are unable to attend. For intra-year issues, we may consult the Steering Group by email to secure their input on smaller or more pressing topics. To optimise how representative the Steering Group is, the membership will to be kept under review. Any feedback is summarised and reported to the Board.

Board member input

Intra-year issues may be referred directly to appropriate directors for comments or steer as they occur. This can happen by email or telephone.

In addition board meetings will be held in public to allow any members to submit questions.

Task group input

For each research activity a task group of interested parties, which should include one director and the CEO and Research Officer, will be convened to meet and decide focus and direction and contribute to the action plan. This may include expert reference participants from outside of our steering group or volunteer membership.

Expert Partner input

This can happen through steering group, through CEO 1:1 meetings and invite for comment or by direct comment from partners at any time.

Volunteer Involvement

We will seek input from our volunteers on how we run Healthwatch Cornwall. Volunteer views will be sought mostly through meetings and training events but also during 1:1 supervision sessions and



via email. These are recorded through minutes and used to inform steering group or the operational team. The board are advised of their comments and activity at Board meetings.

Healthwatch Cornwall Organisational Network Members

To try and generate broad-based contact with all communities across Cornwall, Healthwatch Cornwall will seek to build up our contacts with, in particular, the local voluntary and community sector (including faith groups, community groups, charities, residents' groups, patients' groups) to etc). We will want to:

- hear from them about the views and experiences of their members and clients;
- arrange through them to hear direct from their members and clients about their views and experiences; and,
- ensure that we co-ordinate what we do and are not duplicating effort.

Any non-statutory body operating in Enfield that is happy to interact with us is eligible to join our Organisational Network.

We are aware that some Organisational Network Members may also provide health or social care services locally, and that they may therefore be subject to review or investigation by Healthwatch Cornwall. We would of course expect to work with them in the normal way on any such process. We will work closely with Organisational Network Members to undertake engagement on particular topics (an example might be hospital discharge) and to ensure that we involve specialist interest groups on relevant engagement topics.

Organisational Network Members will be important in helping Healthwatch Cornwall to secure a broad base for our engagement work on specific topics.

We will also seek Organisational Network Members' input on issues through our newsletter and website and by invitation to the Annual Conference and "in public" board meetings.

Healthwatch Cornwall Members

To try and reach out to people across Cornwall, including those who are not necessarily linked into any specific groups or organisations, Healthwatch Cornwall encourages membership through our website and outreach events. Anyone living in Cornwall will be eligible to become a Healthwatch Cornwall Member.

We will contact interested individuals by newsletter or email or social media and invite their comments on topics or activity.

Who Makes 'Relevant Decisions'?

For all the methods outlined above for securing wider input and for work that will take more than 7 days, the final decision will rest with the Healthwatch Cornwall Steering group, which includes board representation via its members. Board meetings will have a public element that allows for



information to be shared around activity. Subsidiary decisions and in year decisions about implementation will be made by the Chief Executive.

If it should be necessary to make decisions under these Required Procedures very quickly and it is not possible to convene the Board sufficiently quickly, even by email, then decisions may be taken by the Chief Executive and/or the Chair, or, if the Chair is unavailable, another Board Member.

How Will Decisions Be Published?

To meet the statutory requirement that any 'relevant decisions' made under the Procedures must be published, we will ensure that Steering group minutes are published which set out the decisions taken and reasons for any decisions and that these are published on the website within 21 working days.

When Do These Procedures NOT Apply?

These Procedures do not apply to decisions that will result in a relatively small amount of work being undertaken, not exceeding 7 days of staff time. This is known as the de minimis rule. It will enable Healthwatch Cornwall to undertake exploratory work on matters raised with us or of which we otherwise become aware, in order to assess how serious or widespread such matters may be, before proposing to devote significant resource to any of them.

Once the amount of time spent on exploring a possible issue has reached 7 days, the Procedures will apply. This means that, at that point, external input must be sought into whether or not to continue to apply Healthwatch Cornwall resources to the topic, if this has not already happened. A summary report will normally be prepared to feed into the steering group decision on whether to pursue the topic.

Procedure for Dealing with Breaches to the Required Procedures

We are statutorily required to set out a procedure that we will follow if we should breach our Required Procedures. The following procedure will be used if, either:

- we discover that we have inadvertently breached part of our agreed Required Procedures; or,
- an extraordinary, urgent event necessitates the Board making an immediate decision that should normally follow Required Procedures, but there is either no time to seek wider involvement in the decision, or the matter is too sensitive to do so, so that a breach knowingly occurs.

As soon as anyone identifies a possible breach, they must report it to the Chief Executive, who will immediately notify the Chair.

Breaches will be recorded, reasons for them noted and appropriate action taken to ensure they comply with procedure or have a sanction to fall outside of the scope of the procedure.

Proposal for November Board Meeting

That these Decision Making procedures are Adopted by the Board as a Working Document subject to possible amendment on review in June 2015.

