

## **Decision Making: Policy and Procedure for the Board, staff and volunteers**

### **Policy Statement**

Healthwatch Bedford Borough makes its decisions in an open and transparent way and ensures the interests of the people of Bedford Borough are always put first. This policy and associated procedures outline the steps taken to ensure decisions are evidence based and lead to substantive impact in the community.

The governing regulations and standards are:

- The NHS Bodies and Local Authorities (Partnership Arrangements, Care Trusts, Public Health and Local Healthwatch) Regulations 2012 - referred to as Regulation 40 throughout this document.
- Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- Seven Principles of Public Life (Nolan Principles).

This policy applies to all relevant decisions made by Healthwatch Bedford Borough.

### **Relevant decisions**

Regulation 40 requires Healthwatch Bedford Borough to have in place, and publish procedures for making relevant decisions. Relevant decisions include:

- How to undertake our activities.
- Which health and care services we are covering with our activities.
- The amounts we will spend on our activities.
- Whether to request information.
- Whether to make a report or a recommendation.
- Which premises to enter and view and when those premises are to be visited.
- Whether to refer a matter to overview and scrutiny committee.
- Whether to report a matter concerning our activities to another person.
- Any decisions about sub-contracting.

Relevant decisions do not include

- day to day activities that may be required to carry out exploratory work prior to making a relevant decision.
- matters relating to staff issues.

### **Who may make such decisions**

The Healthwatch Bedford Borough Board will be responsible for making relevant decisions. The Board will have the power to delegate some of the relevant decision making to the Lead Officer of Healthwatch Bedford Borough for example, small pieces of work which do not have a substantive impact on staff or financial resources.

All relevant decisions, including those delegated to the Lead Officer, will be recorded in the minutes of the Board meeting at which the decision was made. The relevant minutes of all Board meetings are published on the Healthwatch Bedford Borough website once they have been agreed by the Board as being a correct record of the meeting concerned. Once a decision has been made, the staff team is responsible for implementation and delivery, with an agreed reporting process to the Board.

The Board of Healthwatch Bedford Borough will reconsider a decision where new data has become available, or if circumstances change, which might prompt it to reach a different decision, or where there is evidence that this decision-making process was not followed.

As a Community Interest Company limited by guarantee, decision making within Healthwatch Bedford Borough is also covered in the Articles of Association.

### **Involving lay persons or volunteers in such decisions**

The Healthwatch Bedford Borough Board is composed mainly of lay persons (a person who is not a health or social care professional) and volunteers (a person who is not a paid employee of Healthwatch Bedford Borough). Healthwatch Bedford Borough intends to secure broad based views on its activities wherever possible, and involve others, particularly lay people and volunteers in its decision making.

### **How are decisions made?**

The potential scope for the work of Healthwatch Bedford Borough is very wide - it has a responsibility for health and social care services for all adults, children and young people in Bedford Borough with particular reference to those who are most vulnerable or may be excluded. The one exception is that Healthwatch Bedford Borough does not have the power to visit premises, using Enter and View powers, if the service relates to the local authority's social services functions for people under the age of 18.

This wide range of work means the organisation has to prioritise the issues it focuses on. The main sources to inform the work programme are likely to come from:

- People's experiences of health and social care services that they share with Healthwatch Bedford Borough
- Evidence that Healthwatch Bedford Borough proactively collects about specific areas of concern through the stories and enquiries it hears directly, including deliberative research, public surveys and polls
- National and local data sets that evidence issues affecting large numbers of the local population and/or the most excluded.

This list is not exhaustive and other relevant sources of data will be considered.

In order to prioritise, the Healthwatch Bedford Borough Board will carefully consider all sources of information and decide where the organisation can add most value.

Areas to be taken into account will include:

- That the issues fit with our organisational role and responsibilities, ensuring that Healthwatch Bedford Borough delivers its statutory remit.
- How much the issue matters to local people, it must be something they care

about as Healthwatch Bedford Borough is here to be the voice of people on health and social care issues.

- How much change can Healthwatch Bedford Borough bring about. This enables the organisation to make sure it is choosing areas where it can have the greatest impact.
- Does the change need to come from Healthwatch Bedford Borough - could it be done by other organisations more easily and effectively.
- The Board of Healthwatch Bedford Borough will always seek to ensure that taken together, the identified priorities will have the greatest impact for people using health and social care services.

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***“A strong voice for local people”***