



Governance Document

1 Introduction

The strapline for Healthwatch Bedford Borough is *“a strong voice for local people”*. It is registered as a Community Interest Company (CIC) and as part of its company registration has had to satisfy the CIC Regulator by way of confirming:

- an asset lock - which in essence means the CIC is “owned” by the local community
- a Community Interest Test which means it has to dedicate its services to the benefit of the local community

2 Vision

Healthwatch Bedford Borough will be:

- a critical friend in challenging service providers to ensure that their services are person-centred and responsive to local community needs
- seeking to empower all patients with confidence to make an informed choice about their health and social care needs

3 Mission Statement

“Healthwatch Bedford Borough will consult, engage and empower the wider community in a fair, transparent and realistic way. It will:

- *provide positive influence and encourage improvements in local health and social care services, acting as a critical friend to service providers and establishing valid outcomes against which changes can be measured.*
- *act as the voice of the public, providing a bridge between the commissioners and providers of Statutory Health and Social Care”*

4 Healthwatch Bedford Borough Community Interest Company (HBBCIC) Organisational Structure

This is as follows:

- Five Directors sit on the Board of Healthwatch Bedford Borough CIC.
- Healthwatch Reference Group which consists of ten Healthwatch Advocates nominated by respective organisations from within Bedford Borough.
- Stakeholders is any person living in the Bedford Borough area who has cause to be concerned about the structure/delivery/quality of health and social care services. Stakeholders have the right to attend general meetings of HBBCIC and to comment as necessary. Whilst there is no direct right to a vote it will be possible, subject to satisfactory information being provided for a Healthwatch Advocate(s) to act on behalf of an individual(s) to ensure that the Healthwatch Reference Group discuss and resolve upon the issue in question.

5 Governance arrangements

(a) HBBCIC Board

The Governance arrangements for the Community Interest Company (CIC) are contained in the in the Articles of Association for the CIC as approved by the Registrar of Companies on the 1 February 2013.

The overall remit for the HBBCIC Board is to:

- Ensure the design/delivery of the outcomes defined in the HBBCIC Business Plan
- Ensure the delivery of outcomes as required by the Service Specification for Healthwatch Bedford Borough. Reporting back on this to Bedford Borough Council
- Ensure continuing and effective representation on the Health and Wellbeing Board is sustained
- Ensuring that the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) fully reflects the needs of the local community
- Liaison/development of relationships, joint working initiatives and development opportunities with the Care Quality Commission, Ofsted and Healthwatch England
- Governance and communications, including ensuring the need for transparency, championing diversity and ensuring that HBBCIC has a strong local identity.
- Production of the Healthwatch Bedford Borough Annual Review.
- Arrangement for the Annual General Meeting to launch the Annual Review.

(b) Healthwatch Reference Group (HRG)

The Governance arrangements for the HRG are as may be agreed by the HBBCIC Board.

The overall remit for the Healthwatch Reference Group is:

- Working to strengthen the collective voice of local people across both health and social care services.
- Using collective knowledge drawn from the needs of the local community to help the HBBCIC to bring influence to bear on local commissioning strategies and delivery plans.
- Agree which committees/working groups require representation from HBB. The Group will then, subject to agreement of the HBBCIC Board, nominate Advocate(s) to attend accordingly.
- Assist the Management Group in its strategic role with regard to the Joint Strategic Needs Analysis work and reporting back to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

6 Authorised Representatives (Qualified to Enter and View Premises)

The Enter and View process enables authorised representatives to observe and assess the nature and quality of local health and social care premises. Recommendations for service improvements based on evidence gathered from

staff, people using the service and carers can be made to those managing or commissioning those services.

Authorised representatives will at all times follow the guidance and procedures outlined in the Enter and View policy document.

7 Relationships with other local Healthwatch organisations

To avoid duplication of work programmes in some areas, Healthwatch Bedford Borough will liaise with adjoining Healthwatch organisations in the case of cross border issues. If appropriate a joint working group may be set up to carry out an investigation and then be disbanded when the work is completed.

8 Code of Conduct

All members of the Management Group and the Healthwatch Reference Group will be expected to abide by the Nolan Principles as shown in Appendix 1.

9 Registering an Interest

All members of the HBBCIC Board and the Healthwatch Reference Group will be expected to sign the Annual Register of Interests and must take personal responsibility to update it should there be any changes within the twelve month period.

10 Complaints

In the case of a complaint being made against the HBBCIC Directors and/or the Healthwatch Reference Group the complaints policy is shown in Appendix 2.

11 Review

This document will be reviewed at the beginning of each financial year or as necessary when there are changes affecting the work of local Healthwatch.



Anne Bustin
Chair Healthwatch Management Group.

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“A strong voice for local people”

Nolan Principles

The 'Nolan Principles' code of practice has been written with regard to the seven principles of public life identified by the Nolan Committee in their First Report on Standards in Public Life in May 1995 and subsequently endorsed by the Government.

The Seven Nolan Principles

Selflessness

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for awards or benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.



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Complaints Procedure

Introduction

This procedure is for use where an individual or a group of individuals has reason to complain about the way in which Healthwatch Bedford Borough has been perceived to have been operating/working. Quite often this may have been caused by the actions of a person or persons who have unknowingly caused a problem as a result of their actions. This procedure works on the basis that problems should be solved as close to their source as possible.

1. The first action is for the aggrieved individual(s) to raise their complaint with the person(s) who it is believed has caused the problem. At this stage if practicable this should be conducted on a face to face basis.
It is reasonable to expect that this stage should take no more than 5 working days to complete from the date the complaint is received.
2. If there is no agreed solution after this time has elapsed. The matter must be drawn by emailing/writing to the attention of the Manager and Company Secretary (MCS). This will be followed up by the MCS, who will attempt to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant(s).
It is reasonable to expect that this stage should not exceed 10 working days to complete from the date that Stage 1 has been exhausted.
3. If the complainant is not resolved at Stage 2, the complaint must be made in writing to the Chair person and it will then be considered by the Healthwatch Bedford Borough Board of Directors. If necessary the Chair may arrange for an independent investigation of the complaint.
It is reasonable to expect that this stage should be completed within 20 working days from the date Stage 2 has been exhausted.
4. If there is a complaint about the Chair person, this must be made in writing to another Director. It will be considered by the Board of Directors (excluding the Chair) If necessary the Board will arrange an independent investigation of the complaint.
It is likely that Stages 1 - 3 will be excluded and it is reasonable to expect that this Stage will then be completed in 20 working days from the time the complaint has been received by the Healthwatch Bedford Borough Board.

Notes:

1. Every effort will be made to keep the Complainant(s) advised of progress towards a satisfactory outcome
2. The timescales indicated is a maximum target and if possible efforts will be made to minimise the overall response times
3. If and when the Healthwatch Bedford Borough Board has agreed its response to the complaint the matter is closed so far as Healthwatch Bedford Borough CIC is concerned

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“A strong voice for local people”

