

Complaints Policy

Purpose of this document

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

Anyone directly affected by the way in which Healthwatch Durham has carried out its functions may express their concern or make a complaint under Healthwatch Durham's Complaints Policy.

If the complaint or concern is about Healthwatch England's functions or responsibilities then the complaint should be made directly to Healthwatch England using their Complaints Policy see www.healthwatch.co.uk.

How to raise a concern or make a complaint about Healthwatch County Durham

- 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 misunderstandings or misconceptions at this 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 the Healthwatch staff. If this conversation takes place over the telephone, we will also need it to be confirmed in writing.
- 3) Healthwatch County Durham will acknowledge the concern/complaint in writing (or in the complainants preferred method of communication) within 3 working days of receipt.
- 4) Attempts to resolve the concern/complaint will be completed within 21 working days of establishing the nature of the concern/complaint. Exceptionally, if further time is needed, where possible this will be agreed with you.
- 5) The Healthwatch Programme Manager and the Healthwatch Chair will review all concerns/complaints and agree a response. If the complaint or concern relates to PCP's contracted responsibilities as Healthwatch provider it will be referred to the PCP Chief Executive for a response.

If you are not happy with the outcome you will be able to appeal. The concern/complaint will then either be reviewed by a designated Healthwatch Board member who has not previously been involved in the matter or PCP Chair as appropriate. Once the appeal process has been completed the concern/ complaint will closed.

- 6) If you are not satisfied by Healthwatch County Durham's response to your Complaint you can ask the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman to investigate. The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman is a free, independent service: Tel 0345 015 4033; email phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London SW1P 4QP

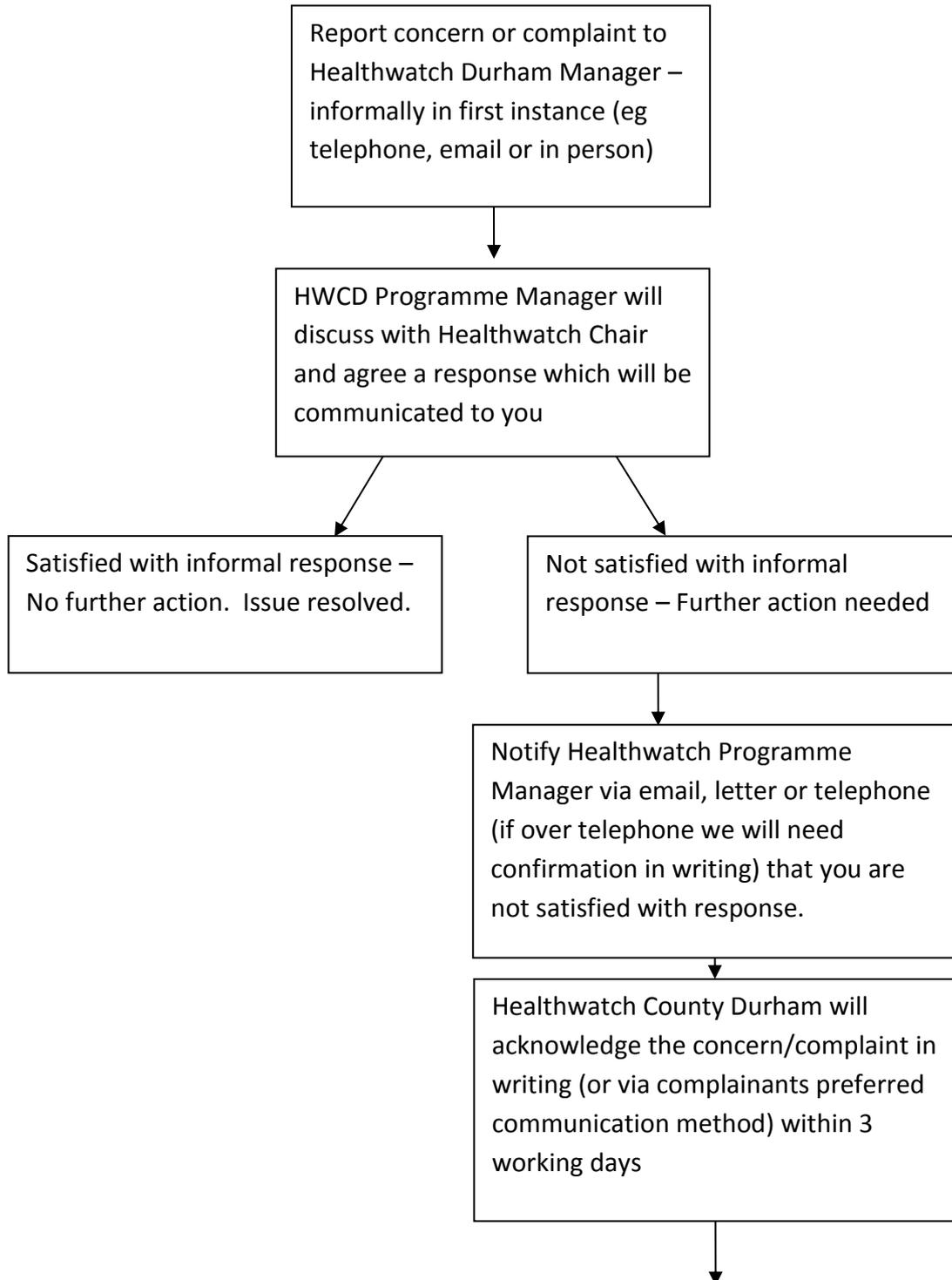
Date approved:

Review Date:

Complaints Policy

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Complaint or concern about Healthwatch County Durham?



Attempts to resolve the concern/complaint will be completed within 21 working days of establishing the full nature of the concern/complaint. Exceptionally if further time is needed this will be agreed with complainant.

Healthwatch Programme Manager and Chair will agree a formal response which will be communicated in writing. If the complaint relates to PCP's contracted responsibilities it will be referred to the PCP Chief Executive for formal response.

Satisfied with formal response –
No further action as issue resolved

Not satisfied with formal response – Further action needed

Right to appeal

Appeal will be heard by designated Healthwatch Executive Board Member not previously involved or PCP Chair as appropriate.

After appeal process final outcome will be communicated to complainant and case will be closed.

If complainant is not satisfied at this final appeal stage, they can contact the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman to investigate .Tel: 0345 015 4033; email phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk or write to Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London SW1P 4QP.