

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Introduction

1. Involvement in the work of Healthwatch Kingston Upon Hull may mean that on occasions ISAB members, staff and volunteers will see or hear information of a confidential nature. This could cover:
 - Information about individuals, for example ISAB members, staff, volunteers and users of our services.
 - Information about our work, for example our plans, finances, funding bids.
 - Information about other health and social care organisations who we work with, for example their plans and decisions, finances, commissioning decisions.
2. All ISAB members, staff and volunteers are expected to use their discretion and respect the need to maintain confidentiality of information they have access to. This is expected to continue even when an ISAB member, staff member or volunteer is no longer involved with Healthwatch.
3. This policy should be read in conjunction with our Data Protection Policy.

Information about Individuals

4. Healthwatch is committed to ensuring confidential services to all individuals. The confidentiality is between the individual and Healthwatch, not the member of staff or volunteer delivering a particular service.
5. Confidential information will not be sought from a client unless expressly in the interests of that client, i.e. to enable better service delivery.
6. Information will only be passed to another agency or to other individuals outside of Healthwatch with the consent of the client,

where possible this will be with written consent. If a member of staff or volunteer intends to get information from another agency to help the client or to refer them to another agency then this must be explained to the client and their permission given.

7. No personal information about ISAB members, staff, volunteers or users of our services will be given to any third party (including a member of their family), without their consent. Information will only be divulged on a “need to know” basis.
8. Information will be treated in confidence and will not be divulged to anyone outside Healthwatch except where extenuating circumstances exist (see below). However, in order that we can provide the best possible help to our clients it may be necessary to share information with a Healthwatch ISAB member or the Delivery Manager.
9. All customers and clients are entitled to privacy and will be made aware that they can specifically request to be seen in private.

Use of Individual Information for publicity, reporting or training purposes

10. We need to be able to give information where appropriate about the impact of our services.
11. If one of our services has an outcome which would provide useful material for publicity, reporting or training purposes, then wherever possible the permission of the client will be sought in writing before the story is told to anyone else. If permission cannot be obtained then any details that would enable identification of the client to be made will be changed.

Commercially Confidential Information

12. Healthwatch may at times be required to tender competitively for contracts and work in partnership with other agencies to submit bids

for Government and other funding. All information concerning our commercial activities must remain confidential.

13. In working with health and social care bodies, Healthwatch may at times have access to information classed as confidential. Commercially sensitive information obtained from such bodies should not be publicly disclosed without first obtaining the prior permission of the organisation from where the information was obtained.

Limits to Confidentiality

14. In certain circumstances we reserve the right to break confidentiality should this be deemed necessary. These circumstances include:
 - If it is believed that a person could cause danger to themselves or to others;
 - If there is suspicion or hard evidence of abuse or a safeguarding incident;
 - If information is given which indicates that a crime has been committed;
 - If disclosure is required by law, for example, by the police;
15. The decision on whether to break confidentiality will be decided on a case by case basis by the Healthwatch Board.

Access to Data

16. This Policy operates on a “need to know” basis and apart from the Healthwatch ISAB, relevant staff and volunteers; no-one will have access to client or organisational information unless it is relevant to the service or their work.
17. All clients and customers have the right to request access to all information stored about them, and have a right to see a copy of this confidentiality policy on request.

Monitoring and Evaluation

18. All ISAB members, staff and volunteers will be given a copy of this policy when they join Healthwatch and will sign a confidentiality statement that they will abide by this policy. Breaches of this policy will be handled under Healthwatch disciplinary procedures.

19. The policy will be regularly reviewed by the contracting body Hull CVS. It will also be reviewed in response to changes in relevant legislation, contractual arrangements, good practice or in response to an identified failing in its effectiveness.

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