

**Our Complaints Policy**

**Purpose**

This policy is for members of the public and unpaid volunteers and Trustees of Healthwatch Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire. (Healthwatch BNSSG)

Individuals have the right to express their views about the performance of Healthwatch BNSSG or the way in which it conducts its business.

It is important that if you feel dissatisfied with any matter relating to your treatment, or experience while volunteering or in a Trustee role that you should have an effective means to raise an issue so that it can be resolved.

If any member of the Public, Trustee or volunteer has a question or concern, or feels that an employee, volunteer, or the organisation is not meeting the commitment outlined in our Code of Conduct or Equality, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy do not stay silent.

Anyone who is dissatisfied with any aspect of the service received by Healthwatch BNSSG can make a complaint under Healthwatch Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire’s complaints policy.

We will treat both concerns and complaints in the same way.

This Policy does not cover:

1) Complaints or concerns about the NHS, which should be dealt with through the NHS complaints procedure.

2) Complaints about the provision of social care services which should be dealt with by Bristol City, North Somerset or South Gloucestershire Council’s complaints procedure.

**Raising a concern**

In the first instance we would encourage you to raise a concern, or complaint, or to provide feedback on our service informally. Volunteers can raise any concerns with the Volunteer Co-ordinator, or other staff member.

Providing information or correcting misunderstandings or misconceptions at an early stage may enable the issue to be successfully resolved.

We recognise that complaints of personal harassment, and particularly of sexual harassment, can be of a sensitive or intimate nature and that it may not be appropriate for you to raise the issue through this procedure. In these circumstances you are encouraged to raise such issues with a senior staff member of your choice, as a confidential helper. This person cannot be a Board Trustee, or the Board Chair, as they are responsible for investigating appeals if they become a formal complaint. (see below)

**Complaints**

If a concern remains unresolved, the public, Trustees or volunteers follow the following process:

1) If the concern or complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction, you should notify us via email, letter or via a telephone conversation with a member of staff.

2) Healthwatch BNSSG will acknowledge the concern or complaint in writing (or in the complainants preferred method of communication) within 3 working days.

3) Attempts to resolve the concern or complaint will be completed within 15 working days of establishing the nature of the concern or complaint. Exceptionally, if further time is needed, where possible this will be agreed with you.

4) The Chief Officer of Healthwatch BNSSG will review all concerns/complaints. If you are not happy with the outcome you can ask to appeal, and the Chief Officer will pass the concern/complaint to a named Healthwatch BNSSG Board of Trustees member who has not previously been involved in the matter. Once the appeal process has been completed the concern or complaint will be closed.

5) If you are still not satisfied, your concern will go to our Chair of the Board of Trustees.

**Review** Tuesday 13th Feb 2024: Approved

Signed…………………………………........................

(Chair of the Healthwatch Board of Trustees)

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| **Previous Review date** | **Date carried out?** | **2yr review expected** | **notes** |
| 11th Jan 2022 | 13th Feb 2024 | 13th Feb 2026 |  |
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