

Wigan Borough Healthwatch CIC

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# Decision Making Policy

July 2021

# Decision making: policy and procedures for all staff, board and volunteers

## Policy Statement

Healthwatch Wigan and Leigh makes its decisions in an open and transparent way and ensures the interests of the people of the Borough will always come first. This policy and associated procedures outline the steps taken to ensure decisions are based on evidence and result in the greatest 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 Wigan and Leigh

## Relevant decisions

Regulation 40 requires Healthwatch 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 looking at 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 activity that may be required to carry out fact finding work prior to making a relevant decision.

## Who may make such decisions?

The Wigan Borough Healthwatch CIC Board, have overall responsibility for making relevant decisions. The Board have utilized their power to delegate the responsibility of making most relevant decisions to the Healthwatch Wigan and Leigh Advisory Committee. The two exceptions are:

* Whether to make a report or a recommendation.
* Any decisions about sub-contracting.

Any decisions made will be reported at the full board on a quarterly basis. In addition, the Board have delegated some of the relevant decision making to the Chief Officer, 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 Chief Officer, are recorded in the minutes of the meeting at which the decision was made. The minutes of all Board meetings are published on Healthwatch Wigan and Leigh’s website once they have been agreed by the members 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 Board.

The Advisory Committee 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, decision making within Healthwatch Wigan and Leigh is also covered in our governing document.

## Involving lay persons or volunteers in such decisions

Healthwatch Wigan and Leigh Advisory Committee and Board is composed solely of lay persons and volunteers. We intend to secure broad based views on its activities wherever possible, and involves others, particularly lay people and volunteers in its decision making.

## How are decisions made?

The potential scope of the work of Healthwatch is vast – it has a responsibility for health and social care services for all adults, children and young people: in the Wigan Borough, including those who are most vulnerable or may be excluded. This means we must prioritise the issues we focus on. The main sources to inform our work programme are likely to come from:

* People’s experiences of health and social care services that they share with us.
* Evidence we proactively collect about specific areas of concern through the stories and enquiries we hear directly, including deliberative research, public surveys and polls.
* Annual public consultation on our work plan.
* National and local data sets that evidence issues affecting large numbers of the local population and the most excluded.

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

In order to prioritise, the Advisory Committee, will carefully consider all sources of information and decide where it can add most value. Areas to be considered include but are not limited to:

* That the issues fit with our organisational role and responsibilities, ensuring we deliver to our statutory remit.
* That the issues fit with our organisational strategic plan.
* How much the issue matters to local people: it must be something they care about as we are here to be the voice of people in health and social care.
* How much change Healthwatch Wigan and Leigh can bring about. This enables us to make sure we are choosing areas where we can have the greatest impact. This is important to deliver the greatest return for our budget, maintain our independence and ensure we bring issues to the attention of the health and care system.
* Does the change need to come from us - so we are not focusing on things that others can do more easily and effectively?
* Consideration by the Board and Advisory Committee of our work to be viewed holistically and seen as a set of priorities which will have the greatest impact for people using health and social care services.

Advisory Committee minutes and decisions are available on our website. Board meetings are open to the public and live streamed via our You Tube Channel. All minutes and decisions made will be available via our website. Questions can be sent, in advance, to the Wigan Borough Healthwatch Board specifically relating to our work programme.

## Dealing with breaches of any procedure referred to in this policy document, including circumstances in which a breach would be referred to the local authority.

If a decision is taken in the name of Healthwatch Wigan and Leigh without authorisation in the manner set out in this policy document, the Board will determine what action is needed. This may be to either approve the decision retrospectively, or to reverse the decision.

If the breach of the agreed procedure is considered to have also breached the contract between Wigan Borough Healthwatch CIC and Wigan Borough Council, it will be reported to the Local Authority and further action agreed between the Local Authority and Healthwatch.

In each eventuality, actions will be recorded and published on Healthwatch Wigan and Leigh website.

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion statement

Healthwatch Wigan and Leigh is committed to ensuring all decisions made are free from any form of discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

We will monitor this policy in order to identify whether it is having an adverse impact on any group of individuals and act accordingly.

## Review of policy document

The Board of Wigan Borough Healthwatch CIC will review the effectiveness of the decision making policy and procedures set out in this document every three years. Any amendments to this policy and the procedures governing the making of relevant decisions will require a simple majority of board members voting in favour.

Any amended policy document will be published on the website as soon as is practicable.

## Procedures

Wigan Borough Healthwatch CIC undertakes to carry out the following procedures:

* Publish the most up to date policy document on the website.
* Review and obtain Board approval to Healthwatch Wigan and Leigh decision making policy every three years.
* Ensure all staff are familiar with the policy and refresh their understanding and awareness of the need for open and transparent decision making by reading the policy on a regular basis, at a minimum after review by the Board.
* Publish minutes from Board meetings where decisions are made in a timely manner on the website. Where decisions are made outside of board meetings, they will be ratified at the subsequent Board meeting.
* **When to Act**

Based on the evidence and Healthwatch Wigan and Leigh prioritisation process, the Advisory Committee and Board will approve the work plan and the team will then implement it with any necessary support from the Advisory Committee and Board.

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| **Decision making policy and procedures** |
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