

Communicating Trends and Concerns Policy

1 Purpose of this policy

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate how Healthwatch Oxfordshire will act upon intelligence received and service users' feedback to ensure that individuals are not subject to poor quality health and social care services. The document sets out how Healthwatch Oxfordshire will seek to work with other agencies to support the development of a more comprehensive picture of care services and where necessary to identify poor care or shed light or findings on issues affecting people using health and social care services.
- 1.2 Healthwatch Oxfordshire recognises the importance of sharing relevant feedback we receive from the public with local providers and commissioners of services, Healthwatch England and other parties. The underlying aim will be to help to resolve any concerns as quickly as possible, reducing the risk of these concerns escalating into significant problems and leading to improved services.

2 Collection of data

- 2.1 There are a variety of ways in which Healthwatch Oxfordshire will collect data which include individual comments and feedback, locally commissioned surveys, others forms of qualitative and quantitative research and enter and view reports.
- 2.2 There may be occasions when Healthwatch Oxfordshire receives adult and children safeguarding alerts or alternatively concerns relating to specific safety or practice issues in respect of services providing health and social care. These are dealt with in sections 5 and 6 of this policy.

3 Elevation of issues to Healthwatch England

- 3.1 Data collected by Healthwatch Oxfordshire will be regularly reviewed by the Board to determine whether any further action should be taken to elevate the issues raised.
- 3.2 In the event that the Board determine that any matter discussed should receive further attention this will be relayed by email to Healthwatch England. The email will make clear that Healthwatch Oxfordshire is escalating the issue for Healthwatch England to determine whether further action is required.
- 3.3 Healthwatch Oxfordshire understands that a set of principles will guide Healthwatch England in evaluating issues raised in this way. On occasion Healthwatch England may determine to compile a special report on the subject as part of its business planning cycle.

3.4 Confirmation of Healthwatch England's response to the issue(s) raised will be reported to the following meeting of the Healthwatch Oxfordshire Board for their further consideration.

4 Communicating trends and concerns to the Health and Wellbeing Board

4.1 Healthwatch Oxfordshire will prepare a quarterly review of activities undertaken in the form of a written paper for presentation to the Health and Wellbeing Board. This paper will include a summary of particular findings from individual comments and feedback, locally commissioned surveys, others forms of qualitative and quantitative research and enter and view reports. Where there are particular concerns raised from information obtained or supplied to Healthwatch Oxfordshire this will be raised in the body of the report with a recommendation for the matter to be given proper consideration by the Health and Wellbeing Board.

5 Safeguarding issues

5.1 There will be occasions when information received by Healthwatch Oxfordshire identifies a risk to the safety and wellbeing of people whose circumstances make them particularly vulnerable to abuse, neglect or harm.

5.2 Such risks will trigger a safeguarding alert where there is a reported risk of potential or actual abuse. There are a variety of types of abuse which will include the following:

5.2.1 Physical: being hurt or harmed either deliberately or through rough, careless or thoughtless behaviour;

5.2.2 Emotional abuse or bullying: being humiliated or put down or made to feel anxious, frightened or intimidated;

5.2.3 Financial abuse or theft: someone using a vulnerable person's money or possessions in a way that they don't want or isn't in their best interest;

5.2.4 Neglect: where an individual is not being given the things they need to feel safe and comfortable or not making sure they are getting the care or treatment they need;

5.2.5 Sexual abuse: where someone is being made to do something that they don't want to, didn't or couldn't agree to.

5.3 Such situations will immediately be communicated to the local safeguarding teams.

5.4 In the case of a child this should be notified to the relevant Children's Social Care Assessment team on one of the following numbers:

5.4.1 Oxford City - 01865 3232048

5.4.2 North Oxfordshire - 01865 816670

5.4.3 South Oxfordshire - 01865 897983

5.4.4 Calls outside of normal office hours should be reported to emergency duty team on 0800 833408.

5.5 In the case of an adult concerns should be notified to Oxfordshire Social and Community Services on 0845 050 7666. Calls outside of normal office hours should again be reported to the emergency duty team on 0800 833408.

5.6 Healthwatch Oxfordshire may decide to escalate a concern where it is not satisfied by the response received with the organisation with whom the alert has been raised. In such circumstances the matter will first be raised with the organisation with which the alert was raised setting out the specific concerns to the initial response received.

5.7 In the event that Healthwatch Oxfordshire is not satisfied with the organisation's final response the matter will be logged using the respondent organisation's complaints procedure and escalated to Healthwatch England by email with confirmation that the matter is a escalation of a safeguarding concern.

6 Quality and safety issues relating to a local service

6.1 There may be occasions when Healthwatch Oxfordshire has reason to be concerned about the quality and safety of a service because of feedback which has been received from members of the public including service users, carers and/or staff.

6.2 The information received may not amount to a safeguarding issue where a risk is highlighted in respect of a vulnerable person but is of sufficient concern that it must be acted on appropriately.

6.3 In these circumstances where the service involved is providing care and support to adults Healthwatch Oxfordshire will arrange to contact the Care Quality Commission on 03000 616161 to raise the concern.

6.4 Where the service involved is providing care and support to children Healthwatch Oxfordshire will arrange to raise the concern with Ofsted on 0300 1231231

6.5 As well as raising such concerns with CQC and/or Ofsted Healthwatch Oxfordshire will also draw these concerns to the attention of Healthwatch England by email and to the meeting of the local Quality and Surveillance Group for the Thames Valley area.

Policy approved by the Board of Directors on:	
Manager responsible for monitoring implementation of the Policy:	Executive Director
Review Interval	Biennial
Last Reviewed	New policy