

Decision Making Policy & Procedure

Why have a Decision Making Policy & Procedure?

Healthwatch Isles of Scilly wishes to ensure that the way it makes decisions and the outcome of any decisions made is transparent. We also wish to ensure that we always put the interests of the people of the Isles of Scilly first. As part of our approach to good governance it is essential that there are in place clear, effective, transparent decision making processes. This policy will provide clarity of where and what decisions are taken, by whom and whose responsibility it is to action. Healthwatch Isles of Scilly has therefore adopted the following decision-making policy, which also aims to ensure that all decisions are evidence-based and are made in a consistent and fair way.

Our Decision Making Policy

Priorities and decisions for use of Healthwatch Isles of Scilly resources are made by the Healthwatch Isles of Scilly Board and are evidence based. This evidence is gathered from the public and other stakeholders in relation to health and social care issues arising in the communities of the islands. All activities and actions are focused on the primary aim of Healthwatch Isles of Scilly being to make sure the consumer's voice is always heard and helps shape the provision of health and social care services in Scilly.

Our Decision Making Procedure

Identification of issues

Evidence of issues comes into Healthwatch Isles of Scilly through a number of routes:

- Telephone
- Face to face
- Community Engagement and Events
- Social Media
- Contact us Form on our website
- Data from other organisations
- Patient and Service User Feedback

All direct contacts with members of the public are recorded in our database.

What is the definition of relevant decisions?

Relevant decisions include:

- when to escalate issues to Healthwatch England and/or the Care Quality Commission and other regulators;
- which health and social care services HWIOS is looking at covering with its activities;
- the resources HWIOS will commit to these activities whether financial or staff time;
- whether to request information from commissioners and providers;

- whether to make a report or a recommendation to a service provider;
- which premises to Enter and View and when those premises are to be visited;
- whether to refer a matter to an overview and scrutiny committee;
- whether to report a matter concerning HWL's activities to another person;
- any decisions about subcontracting.

Relevant decisions do NOT include day to day administrative activity or other internal office functions that may be required to carry out exploratory work, priority assessments and/or identifying resources prior to making any of the above decisions.

What is the procedure for making relevant decisions?

Relevant decisions will be made by the Board of Directors of HWIOS or by those to whom the Directors delegate decisions. The following processes will be used by HWIOS for involving members of the public in making relevant decisions:

- board meetings in public;
- project Group /Workstreams;
- stakeholder and community engagement activities;
- focus groups Surveys, questionnaires and consultations.

A relevant decision will be recorded in the minutes or notes of the meeting at which the decision was made and published on HWIOS's website. The note will reflect the reasons for the decision.

Most relevant decisions will be made at HWIOS Board meetings in public. When it is necessary to make a decision at other times, they will be ratified at the subsequent Board meeting in public. If for whatever reason a decision is taken without Board approval, the Board will determine what action is needed to approve the relevant decision retrospectively or to reverse the decision.

All decisions will be based on a thorough understanding of the following:

- Whether the decision is related to the role of HWIOS
- What problem, or potential problem, the decision will address
- What evidence there is to justify making the decision
- What the decision needs to accomplish (e.g., outcomes and impact)
- What are the risks in making the decision?

Healthwatch Isles of Scilly has to be able to identify which issues to look into. Most of the decisions approved by the Board will be applicable to the work of HWIOS and will be discussed as part of the annual planning cycle and, when agreed, included in the work plan. This will include gathering evidence, research, priority setting, monitoring processes and reporting outcomes.

A key feature of this process is involving members of the public to identify which health and social care issues or areas of interest to investigate. In order to do so HWIOS will use a basic scoring tool based on the following decision making principles in order to help prioritise its workload:

- how much evidence is available about the issue? (1 being limited evidence from limited sources, 4 being well researched with a range of evidence from a range of robust sources);

- is the issue going to impact on lots of people? (1 being relatively little, 4 being community wide likely to affect large numbers);
- what is the impact on people and community groups who experience health inequalities and who feel their voice is seldom heard? (1 being relatively little, 4 likely to affect large numbers of those seldom heard);
- does the issue help HWIOS to have a positive influence on health and social care services? (1 being unlikely to, 4 being highly likely to);
- does the issue align with local strategies and needs assessments such as the Wellbeing Strategy (1 being little alignment, and 4 being significant alignment);
- is the issue already being dealt with effectively by someone else? (1 being dealt with satisfactorily by someone else, 4 not being dealt with at all);
- can we add value to the current situation? (1. being unlikely to and 4. being highly likely to).

Workplans and priorities are agreed 6 – 12 months in advance but reviewed on a rolling quarterly basis to allow for changing priorities and inclusion of urgent issues arising.

What will happen if there is a breach in the relevant decision making process?

There may be times when an extraordinary and/or urgent event necessitates that this policy is knowingly breached because there is neither time to seek wider involvement in the decision, or the matter is too sensitive to do so. In this case the following action will be taken:

- as soon as anyone identifies a possible breach, they must report it to a coordinator of HWIOS, who will immediately notify the Chair of the Board of Directors;
- the coordinators will review whether or not a breach has occurred and will report to the Chair in writing within 5 working days;
- if appropriate to do so they will notify the commissioning officer at Isles of Scilly Council once the assessment is complete and the report has been submitted to the Chair;
- the coordinators will prepare a written report for the Board of Directors explaining:
 - if a breach of the decision-making process has occurred;
 - if so, the nature of the breach/breaches and what decision(s) was/were affected;
- any remedial action to prevent a reoccurrence in circumstances where a breach has occurred;
- the Directors will approve a final report which will subsequently be published on HWIOS's website.