

'Signposting' Policy

1. Healthwatch Worcestershire is contracted to provide the statutory local Healthwatch function to provide advice and information about access to local care services and about choices that may be made with respect to aspects of those services, referred to as 'signposting'.
2. Healthwatch Worcestershire will undertake signposting by:
 - Access to the service - Consumers can contact Healthwatch Worcestershire on the telephone (number 01386 550264), by email at info@healthwatchworcestershire.co.uk, through the website at www.healthwatchworcestershire.co.uk or by post at the Civic Centre, Queen Elizabeth Drive, Pershore WR10 1PT. Healthwatch Worcestershire has explored the use of a free phone telephone number but due to the cost discounted it on the advice of the former Stakeholder Group. However to minimise the cost of telephone contact to the consumer Healthwatch Worcestershire will always return calls once the initial contact has been made.
 - Availability of the service - The sign posting service is provided during office hours on weekdays. At times that a member of the Healthwatch Team is unavailable to answer the telephone a voice mail facility will be available.

Healthwatch Worcestershire undertakes to return contact by the end of the working day following the day on which contact was made.

(NB 'Signposting' is not an emergency service and Healthwatch Worcestershire does not have the resource to commit to a team member answering the telephone in person).

- Providing Advice & Information - Commissioners and Providers of services have a responsibility to provide information about their services. Therefore Healthwatch Worcestershire does not intend to establish its own service directory. Healthwatch Worcestershire will 'signpost' consumers to the appropriate Commission or Provider for the information they require. This approach will enable Healthwatch Worcestershire to monitor the accessibility and accuracy of information provided to consumers by Commissioners and Providers of services.
- The extent of the service - providing advice and information does not extend to undertaking case work on behalf of individual consumers. Healthwatch Worcestershire does not have any function in the process of investigating consumers' complaints about Commissioners or

Providers of services. However, it will 'signpost' consumers to the appropriate body to make a complaint.

- The responsibility for 'signposting' is included in the Job Descriptions of all the Healthwatch Worcestershire team members. Specialist training in telephone skills will be provided to all team members and the COO will review delivery of the service with each team member during appraisal.
- Healthwatch Worcestershire will obtain feedback from those consumers who use the 'signposting' service and use that feedback to improve it.
- Healthwatch Worcestershire is required to monitor the 'protected characteristics' of the consumers that contact it for advice and information. This information will be collected retrospectively by email or post at the time the feedback form is dispatched to the consumer.
- To enable it to fulfil its statutory functions in relation to improving services Healthwatch Worcestershire will make a digital record of any request for advice and/or information. In doing so Healthwatch Worcestershire complies with the provisions of the relevant Data Protection legislation.