

Healthwatch Service Standards

These guidelines summarise what you can expect from Healthwatch when you use our services - our commitment to our customers. It also outlines what you can do to make the most of our services - what we expect from you. It is not a contract, nor is legally binding, but provides a useful basis from which we can work effectively together by identifying expectations of each other.

Our commitment to you

As a user of Healthwatch services you can expect the following:

- **To be dealt with promptly in a professional manner.** We will do our best to acknowledge your initial enquiry within three working days from receipt. If you make a complex information request we may not be able to answer it fully within three days - in which case we will let you know how quickly we expect to be able to provide the information. All telephone calls will be answered promptly and helpfully.
- **To receive a service that is independent, objective and confidential.** We will treat your enquiry in confidence and only disclose your details to people outside of Healthwatch with your knowledge and consent. We will handle personal data in line with the Data Protection Act. Our data protection statement is available on our website.
- **To receive a service that is based on the most accurate and relevant information sources.** We are committed to the professional development of our staff and to ensuring that we use and access the up-to-date information and resources to deliver a quality service.
- **To be referred to the most appropriate service to meet your needs.** If we think another organisation can help you we will signpost you to other support agencies or sources of information. We won't make these referrals without your permission.
- **To receive a service that will empower you but not do things for you.** Our services aim to assist you in confidently meeting your needs by providing relevant support, guidance and information.
- **To provide additional support if necessary to enable you to have full access to our services.** We are committed to ensuring equal opportunity to access services from Healthwatch and aim to be inclusive of all communities in Oldham. If you need extra support, whether it be information in different languages or formats, to meeting out of office hours, in different locations, we will do our best to meet your needs.
- **To be given at least 48 hours notice if we need to cancel a booked meeting/session** (unless the cancellation is due to an emergency, ill-health or inclement weather)
- **To treat you professionally with courtesy and respect and to endeavour to meet standards of good customer care.**
- **To provide you with a clear description of the services we offer and how to use them.**
- **To encourage you to feedback on your views on the service you have received to help us to evaluate and improve the quality of our services.** We will use the feedback you give us to continually improve the quality of our services to better meet the needs of local people. As part of this, you can access our complaints procedure.

Your commitment to us

To make the most from our services we expect you to:

- **Provide information necessary for Healthwatch to effectively deal with your enquiry.** For example, if you are accessing our information signposting service, we may need to ask you about your previous access to care services, to know how best to help you.
- **Book an appointment if you would like to see a staff member.** We only have a small staff team, many of whom work part-time. If you turn up unannounced we will endeavour to see you but may need to book a separate appointment to enable us to deal with your enquiry fully.
- **Attend any meetings we agree with you - or if you can't attend let us know.** Ideally, 48 hours in advance unless the cancellation is due to illness, an emergency or inclement weather. This is to help us make alternative arrangements if necessary.
- **Tell us about working with other organisations.** Let us know if you have asked any other organisations or networks for information and support so we make sure we understand and complement what they are providing.
- **Commit to undertaking agreed actions.** We have to be fair to everyone who accesses our services and may ask you to do some things before we can help you further. An example of this would be asking you to check what health or care services you have accessed in the past. If you have any problems with doing this please let us know so we can either provide additional support or alternative arrangements.
- **Politely treat Healthwatch staff and volunteers with courtesy and respect.**
- **Take the time to give us feedback on our services so we can improve them for others.**
- **Share your experiences with us.** If you have used a service that we signposted you to we would love to have your feedback about that service. This will help us to make sure we're always giving up-to-date information about how well different services are running.
- **Spread the word about Healthwatch services.** If you have found our services, please let others know. If you have any concerns or complaints about our services, please contact us so we can try to resolve these.
- **Commit to equality and diversity.** If you are looking to volunteer with Healthwatch Oldham, we expect you to be inclusive in your role and support our commitment to equal opportunities and diversity. As an organisation, we have a legal duty to positively promote equality and diversity.

Please note that sometimes there is high demand for our services. We want to be fair to everyone who accesses our services and reserve the right to refuse services to customers who are unable to make this commitment. If you are unable to meet these commitments, yet still wish to receive support, please contact us at info@healthwatcholdham.co.uk or phone 0161 622 5700 and ask for a member of the Healthwatch Oldham team.