

Citation

FAQs

Local Healthwatch



What is Healthwatch?

Healthwatch is the independent consumer watchdog for Health and Social Care in England.

There are approximately 150 local Healthwatch organisations and Healthwatch England at national level.

What is the main purpose of Healthwatch?

Healthwatch is the statutory mechanism to strengthen the collective voice of users of health and social services and members of the public, both nationally and locally.

There are two specific duties of relevance: -

- To allow designated Healthwatch Authorised Representatives (ARs) to enter and view services that provide state funded care to individuals.
- To give information about state funded services to Healthwatch when they request it.

Who is likely to be visited by Healthwatch?

Any state funded health and social care service may be visited by Healthwatch. A visit is usually triggered either directly by the provider or because of feedback or complaints from patients, residents, carers or members of the public.

Can a Healthwatch Enter and View visit be refused by a care provider?

No. Unless there are mitigating circumstances which would make the visit disruptive to service delivery such as the death of a service user, an outbreak of norovirus or if the CQC are already inspecting the service. Visits are usually announced 7 days in advance and unannounced visits will only be made by exception.

What should Authorised Representatives 'do' on an Enter and View visit?

- Ensure they have written evidence of their right to visit.
- Ensure the provider has been notified of the visit and its purpose.
- Be aware that resident or patient needs will always take priority.
- Respect confidentiality at all times.
- Abide by any instruction given regarding privacy and dignity, health and safety and infection control.
- Avoid non-communal areas and ensure they are not alone with a service user, resident, patient or carer.
- Ask open questions which are not suggestive or leading.
- Work co-operatively with staff.
- Be unobtrusive.
- Raise any safeguarding concerns or examples of poor care appropriately.
- Provide accurate and timely feedback.



What should Authorised Representatives 'not do' on an Enter and View visit?

- Deal with individual complaints.
- Give opinion or advice on the care or treatment being delivered.
- Make rude, discriminatory or defamatory remarks.
- Request and examine staff and employee files.
- Request and examine Care plans or Support plans.
- Request and examine Medication records.
- Request and examine other documents in relation to the running of the service.

What happens post visit?

The information and feedback gathered from a visit is collated and communicated to the service. Providers have the opportunity to comment on factual accuracy. Individual reports about services are generally published by local Healthwatch and the information may be shared with the CQC and local authority. Some projects and themed reports may involve the completion of a report which is also published on local Healthwatch organisation's website.

What are the consequences?

The progress on any improvements and suggestions made in the report are checked usually within 6-12 months. If action has not been taken to address the issues, this can be escalated to the CQC to consider further enforcement action.

Behaviours, attitudes and values

Healthwatch Enter and Review representatives must treat staff, service users, residents, patients, their carers and families fairly, courteously, with sensitivity and respect. They should value people as individuals and respect their wishes such as leaving someone alone if asked to do so. It is also important that they maintain confidentiality of verbal and written information and work co-operatively with staff.

All Healthwatch ARs receive appropriate training for undertaking enter and view activity. They also receive relevant safeguarding training, confidentiality and data protection and additional modules to support their role. If in any doubt, please refer to individual Healthwatch organisations website.

To view in the detail the Role and Responsibilities of Local Healthwatch [click here](#)