

Healthwatch North Tyneside policies and procedures

Freedom of information

March 2024

1. Policy

Healthwatch North Tyneside is committed to complying with the requirements placed on it by The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). To facilitate this, it has published a publication scheme (below) that incorporates our procedures.

2. Publication scheme

Guide to information routinely published by Healthwatch North Tyneside

Introduction

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) gives rights of public access to information that is recorded and held by public authorities (including local Healthwatch). The FOIA aims to promote a culture of openness and accountability among public sector bodies, to improve understanding of how public authorities carry out their duties, make decisions and spend public money. The FOIA achieves this by requiring public authorities to make information about themselves and their activities routinely available to the public. This guide describes the information that Healthwatch North Tyneside (HWNT) makes routinely available and how to find it.

HWNT has adopted the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) 'Model Publication Scheme', which commits us to:

- Proactively publish, or routinely make available, information that falls within the 'classes of information' listed on the following pages.
- Specify the information that we hold, and which falls within those 'classes of information'.
- Publish guidance on how we make this information available, so that the public can easily identify and access it.
- Regularly review and update the types of information we make available.
- Publish information on any fees that we may charge for this information.
- Making this publication scheme available to the public.

How we publish information

We use our website ([Home – Healthwatch North Tyneside](#)) as the principal way to publish information about our organisation and activities. In most cases, you can find information using the 'search' facility on the site.

The following type of information will not generally be made routinely available:

- information in draft form
- information that would be impractical or resource intensive to prepare for routine release
- information that is no longer readily available because it is archived or retrieving it would be too difficult, impractical or resource intensive to prepare for routine release
- information whose release is prohibited by law, or exempt under the FOIA, or is otherwise considered to be protected from disclosure.

We routinely publish information within the following classifications:

Who we are and what we do

Information about our organisation, its structure, locations and how to contact us.

- You can contact us with a general enquiry or with a complaint about HWNT here: [Contact – Healthwatch North Tyneside](#)
- You can give feedback about local services here: [Services – Healthwatch North Tyneside](#) and you can search for hospitals, care homes, dentists, home care, and other services. You can tell us your experience, good or bad, and you can provide this information anonymously, if you wish. You can also find information in our Trend reports.
<https://healthwatchnorthtyneside.co.uk/reports>

Details about our organisation

- This provides information about our Board and staff team, how we work and how we make decisions: [About Us – Healthwatch North Tyneside](#)
- Biographical details of HWNT Board members and staff team are available at: [Meet the team – Healthwatch North Tyneside](#)

Information relating to the legislation relevant to HWNT's function

- The Health and Social Care Act 2012 sets out our powers. Details of our functions and powers can be found at: [Health and Social Care Act 2012 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

Board meetings

- Board minutes detailing discussions at our public board meetings: [Board meetings – Healthwatch North Tyneside](#)

What we spend and how we spend it

- Financial information relating to projected and actual income, procurement, contracts and financial audit
- We publish annual summary financial statements in our annual reports: healthwatchnorthtyneside.co.uk/reports
- More detailed accounts can be accessed at: [HEALTHWATCH NORTH TYNESIDE – 1160753 \(charitycommission.gov.uk\)](https://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/HEALTHWATCH%20NORTH%20TYNESIDE-1160753)
- Regular reports on financial performance are presented at our Board meetings.

Allowances and expenses

- Our Board members do not receive allowances but out of pocket expenses are reimbursed when claimed for
- Our Handbooks for Trustees, Staff and Volunteers sets out our approach to expenses.

HWNT's strategies, priorities and progress

- HWNT's strategy and priorities: [Plans and strategies – Healthwatch North Tyneside](#)

How we make decisions

- Our decision-making structure and processes: we have an agreed approach to making key decisions. Details of our decision-making policy can be found at [Policies – Healthwatch North Tyneside](#) . We also take decisions at our Board meetings: [Board meetings – Healthwatch North Tyneside](#)

Public consultations

- Information about our public consultations and have your say: [Have your say – Healthwatch North Tyneside](#)

Our policies and procedures

- Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities: [Policies – Healthwatch North Tyneside](#)

Privacy and information governance

- Our privacy statement, information governance policy and code of practice on Confidential Personal Information sets out how we handle personal information: [Privacy statement – Healthwatch North Tyneside](#) and [Policies – Healthwatch North Tyneside](#)

Equality and human rights

- Our equality and human rights impact assessments analyse the possible effects that our policies and functions could have on equality and human rights: [Policies – Healthwatch North Tyneside](#)

Complaints

- Although HWNT cannot take up complaints about providers on behalf of the public and people who use services, we provide guidance on how to complain about poor care: [Making a complaint – Healthwatch North Tyneside](#)
- We aim to provide the best possible service, but we may not always get it right. You can complain about the actions of HWNT. Our policy is at: [Policies – Healthwatch North Tyneside](#)

3. Making a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000

If the information you need is not in the publication scheme, you can contact us to request it under the FOIA. Please email info@hwnt.co.uk

Or write to:

FREEPOST HEALTHWATCH NORTH TYNESIDE or

Healthwatch North Tyneside
Spirit Of North Tyneside Community Hub
2nd Floor Wallsend Customer First Centre and Library
16 The Forum
Wallsend
NE28 8JR

We will usually respond within 20 working days after we receive your request, but we may extend this deadline if we need to ask you for more clarification or if (in very rare circumstances) we need to consider complex issues of public interest in deciding whether to provide certain information. We will tell you if we need to extend the deadline and will explain the reason why.

Some information might be exempt from disclosure under FOI but we will usually tell you if we are withholding information. We will also explain why we feel that it is appropriate to apply the exemption.

In some cases, the FOIA allows us to refuse to confirm or deny holding certain information. For example, we can use exemptions under FOIA to refuse to disclose confidential personal information, or to refuse to make disclosures that would make it difficult for us to carry out our regulatory role.

We store most of our information anonymously in line with our confidentiality and data protection policies.

We may need to consult with other people or organisations before giving you the information. This usually happens where you requested information that was provided to HWNT by another organisation.

If you are unhappy with our response to your FOI request, please tell us why. We will respond to you in writing. If you are still dissatisfied following your appeal, you can contact the Information Commissioner at the following address:

The Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF
Tel: 01625 545 745

4. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed as it is deemed appropriate, but in line with any new or changes in legislation, regulations or business practices but no less frequently than every three years.

Document classification	Public	Document reference	
Document category	Organisational	Policy introduced	February 2021
Reviewed by	Paul Jones	Review date	March 2024
Approved by	Board	Next review due	March 2027