

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

08 December 2015

Title:	Overview of Complaint Handling
Report of the Barking and Dagenham Healthwatch	
Open Report	For Information
Wards Affected: ALL	Key Decision: No
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Sponsor: Frances Carroll, Chair of Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham	
Summary: This report is an overview of the how complaints are managed across a variety of public agencies that serve Barking and Dagenham residents. The report considers the ways in which the expectations of complainants can be become more central to the complaints process.	
Recommendation(s) The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to note and comment upon the recommendations of the report.	
Reason(s) Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham was asked by the Public Heath Team to undertake some primary research as to how the complainants to a variety of local public services, found their experience. We were then asked to put the research into a wider context.	

1 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham was asked by the Public Health Team to undertake primary research into the experiences of local people when they have had cause to complain about the delivery of health or social care services.
- 1.2 In order to put the experiences of complainants in to a fuller context Healthwatch looked at the annual complaints reports of six local organisations.
- 1.3 It is clear that those raising concerns view the stages of making a complaint in a different way to the organisations that are receiving and investigating the complaint. For the public services involved it is a process driven exercise, usually with three clear stages and timescales. For the complainant however, their stages are more likely to be: shall I make a complaint, how easy will they make it for me, will anyone listen and understand what I'm saying and will it make any difference to me or anyone else in the end?
- 1.4 This report looks at ways in which both current national and local research can help put the experiences of patients and users at the heart of complaints procedures.

2 Proposal and issues

- 2.1 This report proposes that individual agencies find ways of engaging with complainants to their services on an annual basis. Feedback from complainants should be regularly included in organisational annual complaints reports
- 2.2 That the annual complaints reports of agencies and organisations are clearer about what changes are to be implemented as a result of patients and users raising concerns
- 2.3 It will be a challenge to shift the perspective of complaints handling away from the organisational understanding of the need to measure only categories and timescales. However, if the journey of the complainant can also be captured and valued, the complaints procedure can become a more relevant and enlightening experience for all those involved in it.

List of Appendices:

Appendix A Overview of Complaints Handling

Appendix B Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham: *Your voice counts.*