

SOCIAL MEDIA AND COMMENT MODERATION POLICY

1. Introduction

The social media are an important way of communicating to the public and others. This policy aims to protect the reputation of Healthwatch Brighton and Hove. The correct social media handling procedure detailed in this policy must be adhered to by all Healthwatch Governing Body members, staff and volunteers when they act on behalf of Healthwatch Brighton and Hove.

2. Authorisation

- 2.1. Healthwatch Brighton and Hove is aware that coverage in the social media can be subject to somebody's own interpretations, and misrepresentation of the facts. It is important that lines of communication are well defined and clearly understood to avoid confusion and 'mixed messages'. Therefore all contact on behalf of Healthwatch Brighton and Hove with the social media must be initiated by, and enquiries from the social media forwarded to, the Engagement and Communications Co-ordinator who will liaise with the Healthwatch Manager and/or Chair of the Governing Body if needed.
- 2.2. Anyone contravening this policy will be deemed to be in breach of the Healthwatch Brighton and Hove Code of Conduct and this may be dealt with as a disciplinary matter.

3. Comments received via the Healthwatch Brighton and Hove website and Social Media

We encourage and welcome open, lively debate, but the decision to publish comments received via website and Social Media sites remain at our discretion. The views expressed by any third parties are solely theirs and are not necessarily endorsed by Healthwatch Brighton and Hove. Comments on all website pages will be closed after 4 weeks.

4. Moderation Policy

- 4.1. Guidelines will be published for social media use, and users will be asked to bear these in mind our guidelines when submitting comments.
- 4.2. Where views have been sought, all comments will be considered before the response is published.

5. Moderation guidelines

- 5.1. We will pre-moderate most of the comments we receive. 'Pre-moderation' means that comments will not be published instantly. They will be checked first by moderators who will monitor the site during normal working hours (0900 – 1700 GMT Monday to Friday) and aim to process comments as quickly as possible.
- 5.2. This is not about censoring people's views. The aim is to ensure that comments relate to the particular subject being discussed. Moderation will not be used to suppress legitimate, reasoned discussion.
- 5.3. Sometimes there is a delay in publishing whilst we seek information from various sources to be included in our response to questions.
- 5.4. We will normally approve comments for publication as long as they:
 - are on-topic.
 - respect other people. Comments should not be malicious or offensive in nature, and should not constitute a personal attack on a person's character.
 - don't incite hatred on the basis of race, religion, gender, nationality or sexuality or any other personal characteristic.
 - don't reveal personal details, such as private addresses, phone numbers, email addresses or other online contact details.
 - are reasonably concise, and don't constitute spamming of the site.
 - don't impersonate or falsely claim to represent a person or organisation.
 - are not party political in nature.
 - don't include swearing, hate-speech or obscenity.
 - don't break the law – this includes libel, condoning illegal activity, and breaking copyright.
 - don't advertise commercial products and services .
 - are in English – we do not currently have the resource to moderate comments in other languages.
- 5.5. We reserve the right to suspend comments at any time, and remove comments older than six months. Where we choose not to publish a comment for a reason other than those listed above, we will reply to the commenter by email explaining our reasons and inviting them to make appropriate changes so that the comment can be reconsidered.

5.6. We will read every comment, and respond wherever we can.

6. Twitter and Facebook

6.1. Healthwatch Brighton and Hove uses Twitter and Facebook, free messaging services offered by a third party, as tools in its efforts to communicate clearly, quickly and in an engaging manner to people interested in our work.

6.2. Retweets (RTs)

Tweets we repeat (RTs) do not imply endorsement on the part of Healthwatch Brighton and Hove. We may retweet news, links and personal observations we believe are relevant to the work we do.

6.3. Following

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove's decision to follow a particular Twitter and Facebook user does not imply endorsement of any kind. We will follow accounts on Twitter and Facebook we believe are relevant to our work. This could include following the Twitter and Facebook accounts of companies and other commercial enterprises (and/or their employees) who comment on health and social care related issues.

6.4. Availability

We commit to updating and monitoring our Twitter and Facebook account during regular office hours (0900 – 1700 GMT, Monday – Friday). However, like many Twitter and Facebook users, we may monitor and respond at other times of the day. We accept no responsibility for lack of service due to Twitter and Facebook downtime or over the holiday period.

6.5. @Replies and Direct Messages

We will read all @replies and Direct Messages sent to us and, when possible, will respond to them.

6.6. Healthwatch Brighton and Hove Staff Tweeting and sending posts on Facebook

Some Healthwatch Brighton and Hove staff and volunteers tweet and send posts under their own names or pseudonyms. Despite their professional affiliation with Healthwatch Brighton and Hove, their tweets and posts do not represent the official position of the Healthwatch Brighton and Hove, and should be considered the product of each individual as a private citizen.