

Privacy Statement (July 2023)

Purpose of this statement

All of the work we do is rooted in the local community and we take our obligations to ensure the correct processing and use of personal data (in particular, under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations) very seriously. We value the information people give us – it helps us fulfil our mission to act as the local independent champion for people who use health and social care services.

This Privacy Statement sets out the data processing practices carried out by Healthwatch Merton (HWM). We retain and use personal data (information that relates to and identifies living people) in a number of ways, as set out below.

From time to time, we revise our Privacy Statement. The current version will always be the version published on our website at:

www.healthwatchmerton.co.uk/privacy

How we use personal data

HWM processes personal data in a number of different ways. The following is non-exhaustive and sets out some key data processing activities:

1. To enable people to receive our newsletter and/or social media updates.
2. To help people who contact HWM with enquiries and/or who are seeking support in accessing local health and social care services.
3. As part of attendance at community engagement events.
4. In response to surveys we may undertake.
5. As part of **Enter & View** visits.
6. Engaging with HWM in other ways – for example, via various local boards and other forums which HWM is involved with.
7. To support the work of Healthwatch England.
8. To support the work of health and social care stakeholders – for example, LBM, the NHS, the ICB etc.
9. In certain circumstances, we may need to process personal data relating to safeguarding and/or by law – for example, under the FOIA 2000.

10. To recruit and support HWM volunteers and trustees.

11. To recruit and employ HWM staff.

Security

We are strongly committed to data security and we take reasonable and appropriate steps to protect your personal information from unauthorised access, loss, misuse, alteration or corruption.

We have put in place physical, electronic, and managerial procedures to safeguard and secure the information you provide to us.

Only authorised employees, volunteer representatives and contractors under strict controls will have access to your personal information.

Using our website

Please note that this statement does not cover links within this website to other websites.

When you browse through the information on this website, it does not store or capture your personal information. We do log your IP address (as it is automatically recognised by the web server), but this is only so you can download this website onto your device rather than for any tracking purpose; it is not used for any other purpose.

Please be aware that some systems on our website require the use of cookies, but we will always state if this is the case.

Signing up to our newsletter

We use a third-party supplier to provide our newsletter service. By subscribing to this service, you will be agreeing to them handling your data.

The third-party supplier handles the data purely to provide this service on our behalf. This supplier follows the requirements of the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 in how they obtain, handle and process your personal data and will not make your data available to anyone other than Healthwatch Merton.

Information about people who share their experiences with us by other means

There are a number of different ways that we collect feedback from people about their experiences of using health and social care services day to day. Our staff and other Authorised Representatives will visit different health and social care settings as part of their role to evaluate how services are being delivered. We also receive phone calls and requests for information directly from members of the public as part of our signposting service.

Where personally identifiable information is collected we will ensure that we have your consent to keep it and we will be clear on how we intend to use your information. Where we include personal experiences in reports or other publications we will anonymise the information, unless we have your consent to publish your personal details. There may be exceptional circumstances where we can and will keep the data without consent, we must have a lawful basis for doing so, such as for safeguarding purposes.

Personal data received from other sources

On occasion, we will receive information from the families, friends and carers of people who access health and social care services. We use this data to inform providers and commissioners to help them deliver services that work for you.

Where it is practically possible, we will make sure that we have your consent to use information that is about you. We will only process your personal data where there is a lawful basis to do so under current data protection legislation.

Sharing your data with Healthwatch England

We are required to share information with Healthwatch England to ensure that your views are considered at a national level. This enables them to analyse service provision across the country and supply the Department of Health and national commissioners with the information you provide. Find out more about Healthwatch England's purpose and what they do www.healthwatch.co.uk/what-we-do

The information we provide to Healthwatch England contains no personally identifiable data. Any information that is used for national publications is anonymised and will only be used with the consent of a local Healthwatch.

Information about people who contact us for Information and Signposting Service

In addition to ensuring that the voices of service users, patients and the public are heard by decision makers within health and social care, we also provide an information and signposting service to the public about accessing health and social care services. This includes:

- A free, friendly and confidential service that is independent from the NHS and social care services
- We will perform a signposting role only. This means that we will give you the contact details for a range of services that best supports your request. You will then need to contact those organisations yourself
- We can give you information about choices you have with regard to where you might get help in relation to your health, social care and wellbeing needs
- We can put you in touch with sources of information on NHS and social care services in Merton
- We can give you information about what to do when things go wrong, and you don't understand how to make a complaint
- We will process the following information when people contact our service:

- Email address – By sharing your email address with us, we will not add you to our mailing list or contact you for any other purpose than to share information about local and national sources of support appropriate to your needs (related to your signposting request).
- A telephone number – Your telephone number will be used only in connection with your particular query and not for any other purpose. We might contact you with further suggestions or to clarify details about why you are contacting our service.
- A summary of the circumstances surrounding the purpose of the call – We record this information to assist our staff in providing you with relevant information and to check that we have not missed opportunities to suggest possible sources of support. We also use it to share information with our commissioners (our funder) and other stakeholders about the types of queries we receive.
- A record of where we signposted (names of organisations and groups) – This information is recorded in order that we can demonstrate the breadth of signposting delivered by our service to our commissioner and also to the public to which we are accountable.

Information about our staff, volunteers and people applying to work with us

We need to process personal data about our own staff, volunteers and people applying to work for us) so that we can carry out our role and meet our legal and contractual responsibilities as an employer.

The personal data that we process includes information about racial or ethnic origin, religion, disability, gender and sexuality. We use this information to check we are promoting and ensuring diversity in our workforce and to make sure we are complying with equalities legislation.

Our employees decide whether or not to share this monitoring data with us and can choose to withdraw their consent for this at any time. Employees who wish to withdraw their consent for us to process this data can let us know.

Other personal data that we are required to process includes information on qualifications and experience, pay and performance, contact details and bank details.

We check that people who work for us are fit and suitable for their roles. This may include asking people to undertake [Disclosure and Barring Service](#) (DBS) checks.

People joining Healthwatch Merton will be asked to complete a 'declaration of interests' form to identify any services with which they have close links (for example, because they have previously worked there or because the service is run by a close relative) or any other issues which could cause a perceived conflict of interest. Staff, Trustees and Authorised Representatives are regularly asked to update these forms.

Children and Young People

Healthwatch Merton will not knowingly process the personal information of people under the age of 18 without the consent of a parent or guardian. In exceptional circumstances, we may need to disclose personal data about a child/young person if (for example) we have safeguarding concerns. In which case, we will follow our safeguarding policy.

Contacting us

You have the right to contact us at any time about our processing of your personal data including: what personal data we may hold on you (if any); correcting and/or deleting personal data; amending or withdrawing your consent to our use of your personal data. Our details are below:

Data Protection
Healthwatch Merton
Vestry Hall
London Road
Mitcham
CR4 3UD

Telephone: 020 8685 2282

Email: info@healthwatchmerton.co.uk

Complaints about how we look after or use your information

Please contact us. A senior manager and/or a trustee of the charity will look at your complaint.

If you feel that we have not met our responsibilities under data protection legislation, you also have a right to request an independent assessment from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). You can find details on [their website](#).