**Protocol for submitting 20-day request response letters to reports and recommendations from Healthwatch**

This protocol recognises that Healthwatch acts as an independent consumer voice for people who use health and social care services.

**Protocol**

1. Final drafts of all Healthwatch reports requiring a 20-day response will be sent to a named senior manager in the appropriate agency at least 5 working days prior to an agreed publication date. This will allow them to check the facts or seek clarification from Healthwatch as appropriate. Where any factual inaccuracies or omissions, these will be considered by Healthwatch, and feedback provided prior to publication. In the unlikely event that agreement cannot be reached. A Healthwatch Board member and/or senior member of Healthwatch staff will meet the senior named manager and agree a way forward.

2. Recipients of final draft reports will not attempt to influence the content or recommendations in any Healthwatch report prior to publication or attempt to delay publication.

3. Healthwatch will include in this final draft a list of all those to whom the final report will be circulated.

4. The named senior manager will not share or discuss the content of the draft report with any other person or organisation without the consent of Healthwatch.

5. Healthwatch will send the appropriate agency a copy of the final report, including the final circulation list and incorporating any of the agreed amendments prior to the final publication date.

6. The named senior manager will be asked to co-ordinate a full and appropriate response to Healthwatch reports, recommendations and requests for further information within the 20-day timescale and as far as practicable, sooner.

7. The named senior manager will co-ordinate circulation of the final report to their own key staff officers and elected members as appropriate and may suggest additions to the circulation list.