

BRIEFING NOTE

Agenda Item no. 9

TO: Social Care & Inclusion Panel
DATE: 4 September 2012

RE: LOCAL HEALTHWATCH

Purpose

This Briefing has been prepared in response to a request from the Chair of the Social Care & Inclusion Panel for an update on Local Healthwatch.

The Board is asked to note that this Briefing is based on the best available information to date and that guidance may change. Regulations for Local Healthwatch will not be available until December 2012, and funding allocations will not be confirmed until the Autumn Statement.

Position

The Council is required to commission a Local Healthwatch organisation by April 2013. The new organisation is intended to be the new consumer champion for health and social care. It will replace the current Local Involvement Network (LINK) arrangements and have many of the same functions, including involving and engaging service users and exercising 'enter and view' powers. It will also take on additional responsibilities, including the 'signposting' elements of the Patient Advice and Liaison Service, reporting local experiences to Healthwatch England, and be represented on the local Health and Wellbeing Board.

The Council will issue a public tender for the new organisation in October 2012, with a Cabinet decision on appointment scheduled for Dec 2012.

Update

1. Consultation

A public consultation for Healthwatch Walsall was launched on 27 July 2012, following the community-based 'Shaping Healthwatch' event in February 2012 (led by the Healthwatch Walsall Pathfinder Group) and further consultations with the Group, the Social Care & Inclusion Scrutiny Panel, and Walsall Council's Communications and Legal teams.

This element of the consultation is in three phases over about 10 weeks. A web-based questionnaire, on the Walsall Council website, is open. 20,000 copies of the printed questionnaire will be going to MyNHS, LINK and PPG members, as well as community organisations, health centres and GP practices in [late August]. Direct consultation with groups who may find it difficult to use these methods will take place in September 2012.

Following the consultation, a draft specification for Healthwatch Walsall will be considered jointly by the Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny Panel and the Health and Performance Scrutiny Panel.

2. Healthwatch England

Healthwatch England is expected to launch formally in October 2012. It has appointed a Chair and launched a website, which includes 'branding' guidelines which local Healthwatch will be required to adopt under a licensing arrangement. [See attachment/Appendix X].

3. Funding allocation

The expected allocation from Department of Health for Healthwatch Walsall 'additional functions' (i.e. excluding the existing and ongoing LINK allocation) has been reduced from circa £133,000 to £67,799 per annum. Consequently, the **total** allocation for Healthwatch Walsall is expected to be reduced to circa £217,000 per annum. This will not be confirmed until the Autumn Statement.

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Healthwatch England/Branding



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Your national spotlight on local care services

About us

Starting from April next year, the new Healthwatch network will act as the consumer champion for everyone who uses health and social care services in England. It will give you a powerful voice both locally and nationally.

[Find out more here...](#)

Find your local organisation

Local Healthwatch organisations begin work in April 2013. Until then, Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) continue to help shape services. If you want to talk about your experience of health or social care, you should contact your LINK.

[Find yours here...](#)

News

[Apply to become a member of the Healthwatch committee](#)

We are looking to recruit up to 12 members for the Healthwatch committee.

[First Chair of Healthwatch England announced](#)

The first Chair of Healthwatch England has been announced as Anna Bradley.

[Healthwatch England recruitment begins](#)