

**Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee 17<sup>th</sup> July 2012**

**Report of the Director of Adult Community and Housing Services**

**Local Healthwatch Development in Dudley**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To inform members of the committee on developments to establish a Healthwatch for Dudley and to provide an update of some of the key national or over-arching matters dictating the delivery of Local Healthwatch.

**Background**

2. On 27<sup>th</sup> March 2012, the Health and Social Care Bill became the Health and Social Care Act 2012.
3. Within the Act was the intention that Local Information Networks (LINKs) will be abolished and replaced by Local Healthwatch (LHW) on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013. Extension to the establishment date enables further closer alignment with the Health and Well Being Boards and allows Healthwatch England to provide leadership (it will be setting standards) and support to local Healthwatch.
4. Local Healthwatch will not be a statutory body but an independent social enterprise or Body Corporate. It will have statutory authority to carry out its functions and will be subject to the Freedom of Information Act; Data Protection Act and the Equality Duty. As a Body Corporate it will be able to appoint its own staff to carry out specific roles and set its own work programme and priorities. It can sub-contract statutory functions.
5. Healthwatch Dudley will be an independent and trusted champion for local people and will improve health and social care services by ensuring their voice influences decisions and increases choice. LHW Dudley will aim to: -
  - Provide information and advice to help people access and make choices about services and encourage participation and co-production to develop excellent services.
  - It will signpost to or provide – directly or through another organisation an independent complaints advocacy to support people if they need help to complain about NHS services.
  - It will be a network of networks and will bring together different engagement mechanisms and channels.
6. LHW will either provide or signpost the public to NHS complaints advocacy to support people with complaints against the NHS services. The Independent

7. Local Authorities will be able to terminate the Healthwatch contract if the latter's performance is deemed to be unsatisfactory.

### **Healthwatch Developments in Dudley**

8. The Council began discussions with local stakeholders and the public on a Local Healthwatch in Dudley in July 2011. From the July stakeholder event, a Reference Group was convened comprising a range of local voluntary groups, local people, the Dudley LINK and some elected members including the previous Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health and the Chair of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee.
9. The Reference Group has steered the development of a local specification for Dudley Healthwatch. The Group is chaired by the Director of the Local Strategic Partnership.
10. Consultation with the Reference Group and feedback from the July 2011 Stakeholder event advised us that Healthwatch should "hit the ground running" from the onset. People were mindful that too much time was spent by the LINK in the initial months on setting the processes. As a result it is intended that Healthwatch will commence in transitional form from January 2012.
11. Wider consultation on the LHW specification will be garnered through the Joint Health and Well Being Board and Local Healthwatch event to be held on July 5<sup>th</sup> 2012 along with communication through local networks and bulletins.
12. The July 5<sup>th</sup> event will consult on Values and Outcomes for LHW Dudley. The consultation document is attached as **appendix 1**.
13. The key milestones for establishing Healthwatch in Dudley are:
  - Call for expressions of Interest published 1<sup>st</sup> May 2012 (deadline for submission 20<sup>th</sup> June)
  - Pre Qualification Questionnaires (PQQ) and full specification 20<sup>th</sup> July 2012 to 20<sup>th</sup> August 2012
  - Invitation to tender to shortlisted bidders 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012 to 31<sup>st</sup> November 2012
  - Interviews to be held with shortlisted bidders week commencing 7<sup>th</sup> January 2013.
  - Preferred bidder selected week commencing 14<sup>th</sup> January 2013.

- Successful bidder announced with view to Shadow Healthwatch Dudley being incorporated in January 2013.
- Healthwatch Dudley becomes operational from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013.

## **14. Finance**

### **Financial Implications:**

Local Healthwatch funding will comprise two parts. The first is the on-going baseline funding for LINKs; the second is new additional funding for the new services – the allocation of this funding was subject to public consultation in 2011.

The Department of Health (DH) announced allocations to Local Authorities for additional funding for LHW in June 2012 which is presented in the table below this also shows the approximate LINKs funding to be carried forward as the baseline for LHW funding.

Table 1 From April 2013/14 funding for local Healthwatch will have two different elements

Name	Route for funding	Amount of funding	Approximate Dudley Settlement
LINKs funding	DCLG Business Rates Retention Scheme (BRRS)	£27 million	150,00
Additional Local HealthWatch funding	To be determined	£11.5 million	75,000
Total for Local HealthWatch	-		225,000

As the table shows the total funding from DH for a LHW Dudley from April 2013/14 will be approximately £225,000.

### **NHS Complaints Advocacy**

DH has announced indicative allocations regarding NHS Complaints advocacy which will transfer to local authorities 1 April 2013 (see para' 6 & 16). Dudley's provisional allocation is approximately £95,000 based on the national indicative figure of £14.2m.

This means if the Authority agrees to commission LHW Dudley to run NHS Complaints advocacy the total contract for LHW commissioned by the LA will be in the region of £300,000.

### **Law**

15. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 places a requirement upon Local Authorities to establish Local Healthwatch organisations by April 2013.

16. Clause 185 of the Health & Social Care Bill transfers a duty to commission independent advocacy services from the Secretary of State to individual local authorities; this transfer will take place on 1 April 2013

### **Equality Impact**

17. The aims and principles of LHW can be seen as contributing to the equality agenda in its pursuit of improving care for all. This implies a challenge to ensure that services meet the needs of all sectors of the community to make this an even greater reality in Dudley.

### **Recommendations**

- That the report be noted by the committee.
- That further updates on the development of Healthwatch Dudley will be provided to the committee as required.



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