
DUDLEY HEALTH AND WELL-BEING BOARD

DUDLEY HEALTH AND WELL-BEING BOARD 29th APRIL 2013

Report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services

Update on Healthwatch Dudley developments

Purpose of Report

1. To update the Board on Healthwatch Dudley (HWD) developments.

Background

2. All Councils were required to establish a Local Healthwatch organisation (LHW) by April 1st 2013. Local Healthwatch is the consumer champion for health and social care. The establishment of LHW is of particular relevance to the Health and Wellbeing Board, how the Board and Local Healthwatch interact with each other will have a direct influence on improving outcomes for local communities and people who use services.

Healthwatch Dudley

3. After an open tender process, the Council procured Dudley Council for Voluntary Services (DCVS) to deliver local Healthwatch for the Borough.
4. DCVS commenced transitional Local Healthwatch arrangements from February 2013 prior to the establishing of Healthwatch Dudley (HWD) on April 1st. The following outlines key areas of progress made by HWD up to the beginning of April 2013:
 - o Set up the HWD website: - the website www.healthwatchdudley.co.uk has been up and running from Monday 4th March. Whilst Healthwatch England has a "Web in a box" facility for Local Healthwatch organisations to use, HWD along with many other Local Healthwatch's is not alone in thinking that a locally developed website will be a more effective tool in engaging and informing local people as opposed to an off- the- shelf product.
 - o Considerable emphasis has been placed in working with Dudley LINK and its host body Shaw Trust on ensuring effective LINK legacy. The Council and then latterly DCVS have facilitated workshops and a number of sessions to ensure the experience and accomplishments of the LINK are not lost with the onset of the new organisation. LINK legacy has incorporated processes, policies, skills and knowledge of LINK members. This will assist Healthwatch Dudley to build on the positive work that has been achieved.

- Recruitment of staff: - the staffing profile of HWD will be as follows- Chief Officer; Participatory Research Officer; Communications Development Officer; Administration Officer. Interviews are being held from March onwards. A clear emphasis is on recruiting the team as soon as possible to facilitate an effective and fully functioning organisation.
 - Planning is underway to hold a Healthwatch Launch Event in late April/early May 2013. The event will use an open space (also known as unconference) approach – one of involvement approaches referred to at the Health & Wellbeing Board Development Session on engagement. This will be an exciting and different way of working and demonstrate that Healthwatch Dudley is eager to embrace contemporary engagement methods and fully harness the potential of both face to face and online ways of working (using social media as a key part of the event). Issues which are discussed and deliberated at the event will come primarily from those participating (including partners), though the Healthwatch Team may submit ideas and issues for discussion which relate to the development of Healthwatch.
 - Clarification of what the HWD board will look like will be achieved through discussions and dialogue with a full range of stakeholders. This activity which began week commencing 4th March 2013 with the LINK Legacy Group including meetings with strategic partners, patient fora, carers groups, DCVS health Network on 20th March.
5. The Healthwatch Board's accountability will be achieved through clear articulation of the role, context, selection and scope of representees on the Board, along with a shared and well communicated understanding of feed in and feed back mechanisms and expectations. The mechanisms for achieving this will include: -
- *Role and context of representation:* there will be clarity about the role of Healthwatch as a representative of patients, service users and the public and of the role of individual representatives from Healthwatch. There would also be a definition of the context in which Healthwatch as an organisation and individuals from Healthwatch are representatives, and contexts in which they are not.
 - *Selection and scope:* there will be clarity about how individuals within Healthwatch are selected to represent others and what powers people have to dismiss them and choose an alternative. For each role, e.g. representative to the Health and Wellbeing Board, the scope of representation will be defined - how far the representative can act on their own initiative.
 - *Feed in and feed back:* there will be support to representatives in Healthwatch to develop a strong understanding of the issues, concerns and ideas of those they represent, and ensure it remains up to date. Through a range of channels and collective discussion, representees will be kept abreast of and involved in the process of representation, including receiving feedback from Healthwatch representatives.
6. It is envisaged that Healthwatch Dudley will be set up as a stand alone organisation from year 2. Healthwatch Dudley will in the mean-time function as an entity sitting within the existing DCVS group structure.

7. Healthwatch Dudley is an independent organisation accountable to the Council, it aspires to work in collaboration with the HWB, Scrutiny committees and other partners along with the public in developing its work programme.

Finance

8. Local Healthwatch is funded by the Government and primarily through Department of Health. The level of funding already received for LINKs, will remain the same, and will be combined with an additional amount that will be awarded to each locality to deliver the additional signposting function of local Healthwatch. Funding is also being transferred from the Department of Health to Local Authorities for the NHS Complaints Advocacy function.

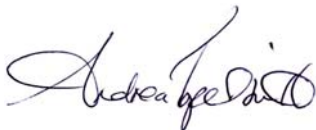
The contract runs for a 3 year period subject to the Governments on-going funding of the Healthwatch programme.

Law

9. As outlined within the Health & Social Care Act 2012, Local Authorities have a statutory duty to support and establish local Healthwatch in their area.

Recommendation

10. That the Dudley Health and Well-Being Board note the work being progressed by Healthwatch Dudley.



Andrea Pope- Smith
Director of Adult, Community & Housing Services
Dudley MBC

Contact Officers:

Shobha Asar-Paul
Quality & Commissioning – DMBC

Andy Gray
Healthwatch Dudley

