

Healthwatch England Business Plan 2014 -15





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1. Chief Executive's Foreword



The network has come a long way since local Healthwatch was launched in April 2013. In many cases starting from scratch, there is now a Healthwatch established in all 152 local authority areas. To help local Healthwatch get up and running, Healthwatch England delivered support that helped save the network time, money and boosted their productivity in this first year of operation. We brought the network

together to establish relationships and an identity, and with our common brand and growing national and local media profile we have begun to build awareness of Healthwatch.

But this is the very beginning of our journey. With the network now set up, our job this year is to ensure we show the value and impact of Healthwatch as the champion for people who use health and social care services. Our focus will be on making the most of this unique role in order to address people's concerns and improve the services they receive.

We are beginning to see the power of the network in action. At a national level, Healthwatch England has set the agenda on a number of issues and has used its statutory powers to advise major national bodies of the changes needed now and into the future. At a local level, Healthwatch are eyes and ears across the country, seeking out and listening to people's views and concerns, taking action locally and escalating issues that they cannot resolve to Healthwatch England.

In the year ahead, we will continue to build the strengths of the network through a mix of support, facilitation and leadership. We will use the strengths of the network to uncover trends, identify areas for improvement, and use our collective voice to make powerful recommendations for change which are rooted in real life experience.

Ensuring that people's worries and concerns about current services are addressed will be a focus this year. We will continue to champion improvements in the complaints system, a system that is currently utterly baffling to the public. Working with local Healthwatch we will provide information and materials to support people to make a complaint. We will support local Healthwatch as they test the operation of complaints systems and to press for changes where services are below standard. We will support Healthwatch to feed into the new Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection regimes, feeding in local concerns to inform and trigger inspections. And we will ensure we continue to handle the concerns and complaints we hear ourselves effectively. All of this work will contribute to the Department of Health's focus on improving standards of care. By supporting individual consumers and local Healthwatch, we will see concrete improvements this year, but given the scale of challenge some of the benefits of this work will be felt in years to come.

We will also work to get services right for the future. Major changes in services are underway in local communities. We will support local Healthwatch as they strive to make the most of the new opportunities presented by the Better Care Fund and to engage



effectively where service change and closure impact on a local community. Projects such as our first special inquiry will look at improving services for those seldom heard, including those with mental health conditions, the homeless and the elderly. Through this we will make our contribution to achieving parity of esteem between mental and physical health and to improving care for the older population. We will use the real life experiences of patients, care users and the public, to understand changing needs and concerns and we will publish our first Consumer Index to track how far people's legal rights, expectations and aspirations are being met. The immediate benefits of this work will be felt as services are designed around people's needs and service change takes greater account of people's views. In the longer term, more empowered and engaged consumers help drive up quality standards.

The potential scope of our work is vast and we cannot achieve our ambition alone. This is why partnerships are critical to us. We will encourage the voluntary sector, health and social care workers, statutory partners and government departments to work with us to make change happen and to take the time to properly listen to the public they serve. After all, what is best for consumers is best for everyone.



2. About

The health and social care reforms of 2012 set a powerful ambition of putting people at the centre of health and social care. To help realise that ambition, the reforms created a Healthwatch in every local authority area across England and Healthwatch England, the national body.

Healthwatch is unique in that its sole purpose is to understand the needs, experiences and concerns of people who use services and to speak out on their behalf.



3. Our partnerships

We have identified the importance of working in partnership with the health and social care sector and the voluntary and community sector, as one of our five organisational values. Working with our partners in the health and social care system is one of our most important foundations to achieving our strategic priorities and how we may get the most from our limited resources.

In our first year our focus was to build strong working relationships with our strategic partners and raise our profile with charities and professional associations working in health and social care. This included signing agreements with the Department of Health, the Care Quality Commission, the Local Government Association, NHS England and Monitor setting out how we will work together with openness, collaboration, cooperation and communication.

We plan to develop these relationships in the following ways:

Care Quality Commission

Our work with the CQC will focus in the next two years on ensuring that they adequately link Healthwatch into the new inspection regimes, so that the CQC benefits from Healthwatch evidence and insight. Healthwatch England will also take a particular interest in CQC's strategic programme of public insight and engagement, providing challenge where appropriate. We will contribute to work to empower people by putting credible and accessible information in their hands (through ratings and signposting), knowing that it will help them and help drive service improvement.

NHS England

We will work with NHS England on our common goal of ensuring that the interests of consumers and patients are at the heart of everything we do. We will have a particular focus on sharing and integrating our intelligence and insight work, developing and improving the complaints system and on the care.data programme.

Monitor

We are currently working with Monitor to determine the focus of our work together.

Local Government Association

Both Healthwatch England and the LGA share a common interest in the future



success of the local Healthwatch network, in particular in the role of local Healthwatch in contributing to effective Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWBs). We want to work together to provide local Healthwatch with the support that some of them are asking for to be effective and influential HWB members. We will do this by sharing what we know about what is happening on the ground and identifying ways to build the role of local Healthwatch on HWBs, which may be particularly important where HWBs are struggling with their role.

In 2014-15, we intend to build on these good relationships, and develop joint work programmes based on our common interests with Public Health England, Health Education England, NICE, the NHS Trust Development Authority and the Social Care Institute for Excellence. Our priorities in this work are to focus on activities in which we can voice consumer concerns on major national debates.

We will continue our work with charities, the voluntary sector and professional bodies, to work to ensure consumers are at the heart of health and social care.

Voluntary and Community Sector

As we share many common goals we will continue our work with charities, the voluntary sector and professional bodies to ensure consumers are at the heart of health and social care.

We recognise that the voluntary and community sector has a wealth of expertise and knowledge. We will work with them to make the most of this in supporting our special projects, including the special inquiry into discharge, and our work on improving the complaints system for people.



4. What we will do over the year ahead

Our work this year will be focused around our four strategic priorities.

Priority 1: Addressing current concerns with health and social care services

During 2014/15 this priority will be met through:

- The escalation of consumer risks and concerns
- Engaging with the CQC's inspection regime
- Identifying national trends and areas of concern and investigating them through our special inquiry powers
- Demonstrating how the complaints system must change to better meet consumer needs and promoting our own complaints handling

Through the eyes and ears of local Healthwatch, and using our own information, we will identify national trends and areas of concern. Providing training, materials and other support for local Healthwatch we will ensure **risks and concerns of consumers are escalated nationally as needed**. Healthwatch England will analyse this data, use our advisory powers and work with others for improvement.

We will support local Healthwatch as they seek to ensure that their insight and intelligence is used by the CQC as part of its **social care, primary care and hospital inspections** and will support them to hold local services to account. Healthwatch England will facilitate the sharing of best practice across the network and offer advice and ideas about how the inspection process could be improved. Importantly, local Healthwatch will sometimes play an important role in assessing and support service improvement after the inspection has been completed, and we will work with them on this.

In 2013/14 we looked at the current complaint system through the eyes of the consumer. This work showed us that people do not have confidence in the current system which is too complex, slow and often unresponsive. This year **we will campaign to change the complaints system** by tackling the issue on a number of fronts.

We want to ensure that people's concerns are not only listened to but valued as a way to improve services. We will provide information for people so they know what they can expect from complaints and advocacy services. At the same time we will support local Healthwatch to challenge providers and commissioners to improve their complaints system. We will work with stakeholders and the Department of Health to ensure that the complaints system is open, transparent and easier to access. We will also ensure that national standards for complaints advocacy are developed, setting out what service users can expect.

We will further develop the way we handle **public enquiries**. Some of the enquiries received to date have been complex and sensitive. Good handling requires training in safeguarding, information governance and health and social care issues and the



development of effective signposting. Investment in enquiries handling at the national level will also ensure that we learn from these individual cases and they inform our policy work. We will share this learning with the wider Healthwatch network.

Priority 2: Ensuring that future services are built to meet people's needs and are shaped by the people who will use them

Major changes in services are currently underway in our local communities. The Better Care Fund is a new opportunity to integrate health and social care, but at the same time many communities are experiencing the closure of local services. Personalised budgets and patient choice also mean that individuals are making more decisions about their care.

In 2014/15 this priority will be met through:

- Encouraging community involvement in local service change and ensuring people can shape and influence the design of future services
- Promoting the voices and views of those who often go unheard and people from excluded communities
- Reporting on the views and experience of consumers and publishing our first Consumer Index
- Delivering our first special inquiry

We will support local Healthwatch as they use their statutory seat on the Health and Well Being Boards and other commissioning and quality oversight groups to influence local decision making. We will provide the support requested by local Healthwatch as they engage in **major debates about service change**, including where services are being redesigned, restructured, merged or closed. We will provide leadership on the debate about the integration of health and social care services and will provide material designed to help local Healthwatch to influence and inform local delivery of the Better Care Fund.

Our work uses the public's views and experiences of health and social care to bring about change and improvement. We give particular focus to the experiences and priorities of those who often go unheard or come from excluded communities. We will report back on our findings for the year in **our annual report to Parliament** and will report back for the first time on the impact and status of the Healthwatch network across England.

We will use our **Consumer Index** to assess how well services across England meet people's rights, expectations and aspirations. We will promote understanding of legal rights in health and social care, including those outlined in the NHS Constitution, among local Healthwatch and will further research responsibilities in health and social care.

Using our powers under the Health and Social Care Act (section 45c), we will undertake **special reports and inquiries** into major or widespread areas of public



concern. Our first special inquiry will focus on people who are discharged from hospital, nursing or care homes or other secure settings without adequate assessment of their on-going needs or sufficient support.

Priority 3: Developing the potential of the Healthwatch network

The network of local Healthwatch gives us our strength nationally. Healthwatch England will develop the potential of the network by providing local Healthwatch with advice, materials and training, facilitating peer support and learning, promoting good practice and by providing leadership.

In 2014/15 this priority will be met through:

- Purchasing infrastructure and services for the whole network, to reduce costs
- Enhancing the capability of the network by offering training, policy and guidance with a particular focus on how local Healthwatch can deliver their statutory responsibilities
- Gathering knowledge and understanding of each local Healthwatch to understand activity and needs of the network
- Providing one-to-one and tailored support for individual local Healthwatch, as required
- Ensuring local Healthwatch can learn from and support each other by developing expert communities, peer support and local networks
- Promoting existing good practice and high standards of delivery

We will support the network to work with consumers to understand their rights through providing **information and signposting** services. We will provide advice and materials to support this important work, as well as running targeted national campaigns to raise awareness, for example around complaints.

Every local Healthwatch is different and a big part of our role is to gather evidence about how they are working in practice. We help local Healthwatch to share examples of good practice to show how they make a difference locally. This data will enable us to understand what the network needs as it grows and evolves, as well as whether individual local Healthwatch need tailored support to function more effectively.

We will provide the network with **platforms and spaces to connect** around common issues of concern, making the best use of our expertise in areas such as dementia, mental health, domiciliary or children and young people's care. We will support the coordination of local Healthwatch at a regional level particularly around addressing services that cross boundaries or are decided at a national level. We will encourage work in areas of particular policy concern - for example, complaints advocacy.



Our leadership function will focus on **sharing good practice** among the network and developing and **promoting standards of delivery**, as requested by many local Healthwatch. We will support the network to develop a culture of learning and evaluation to improve effectiveness.

Priority 4: Ensuring we are an effective and efficient organisation

This is at the core of our business. We will invest in our staff and committee to ensure they have the skills and processes in place to make an effective contribution.

We will continue to respond to public enquiries in a timely and effective way and ensure that where we cannot deal with someone's concern, it is passed on to the right organisation.

We will carefully monitor our use of financial and human resources to ensure we are cost effective and evaluate our contribution, and that of the network, to ensure we constantly learn and adapt.



5. Value for money and cost effectiveness

Even with our limited resources, we value the importance of being able to punch above our weight in our efforts to champion the cause of consumers in health and social care.

One way in which we can achieve this is to maximise efficiency. We have worked hard to ensure Healthwatch England does this and it will continue to form an integral part of our 2014-15 business plan.

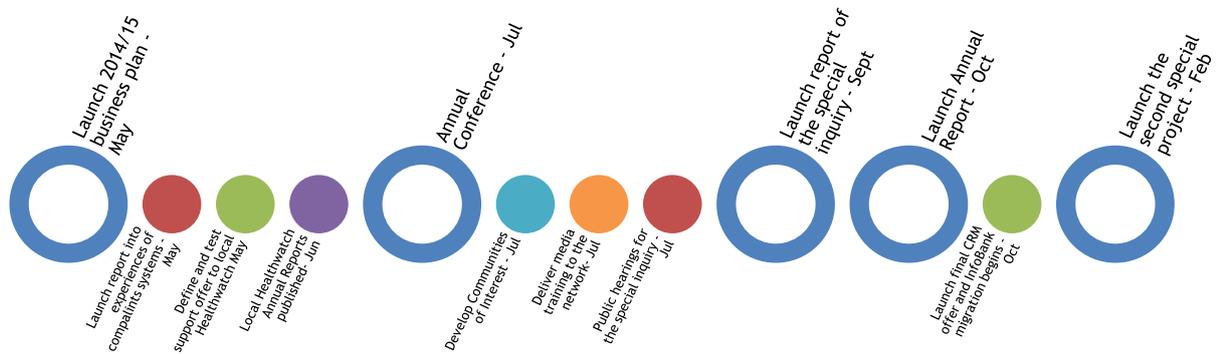
We will continue to work with the CQC to maximise efficiency through shared services and to identify any further efficiency savings which could be sourced through the year and in preparation for 2015-16. This includes establishing service level agreements with the CQC for the provision of IT support, human resources support, finance, legal and procurement services. We will procure the most cost-effective, value-for-money agreements for services that we have to source externally.

Another way to create cost savings nationally is in our support of the Healthwatch network. For example we provide leadership in best practice, guidance on national issues and reports and practical communications and policy support.



6. The Healthwatch year

Our major milestones through 2014-15 are shown below as is the detailed delivery plan for Quarter 1. At the beginning of every quarter, we will report back on our delivery to date and publish our detailed plans for the period ahead.



7. Delivery Plan for 2014 -15

Quarter 1 - April to June 2014

	What it means	Milestones – What we will do
Priority 1 Addressing current concerns about health and social care	This is our work on complaints, inspections and escalation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deliver new escalation report to the committee and to the public ▪ Deliver our complaints report and publish and disseminate to system players ▪ Deliver guidance to the network with CQC to clarify the role of Healthwatch in the inspections of health and social care ▪ Support and encourage escalation from across the network and establish a feedback loop
Priority 2 Getting services right for the future	This is our work on special reports and inquiries, service change work and consumer insight and index	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Launch first special programme ▪ Evaluate across the network current engagement, understanding and confidence levels in Integration Pioneers Better Care Fund and reconfiguration ▪ Deliver our quarterly Consumer Insight Panel findings
Priority 3 Our work with the network	This is how we will support, facilitate and lead the Healthwatch network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deliver initial database of local Healthwatch profiles and assess support needs and deliver dashboard to provide oversight of network activity ▪ Complete new round of data gathering to enrich our understanding of the network ▪ Roll out CRM pilot and launch refreshed hub to the network ▪ Deliver media training to 80 local Healthwatch over Q1 and Q2 ▪ Support Healthwatch to develop their annual reports ▪ Undertake stocktake of current regional events and set future plans ▪ Deliver guidance to the network about Special Administration (subject to DH timeline) ▪ Work with DH to offer additional guidance to the network about purdah for local elections 2014
Priority 4 Being an effective organisation	These are the activities that we do to ensure our organisation is effective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publish Healthwatch England Business Plan 2014/15 ▪ Publish Healthwatch England Strategy 2014/16 ▪ Recruit and induct 6 new committee members ▪ Deliver public committee meeting in Liverpool ▪ Deliver safeguarding and confidential listening training to Healthwatch staff ▪ Design, deliver and analyse first staff survey ▪ Develop organisational and performance dashboard for Healthwatch England



8. Diversity and Inclusion

Because Healthwatch England starts with people first, it is essential for all our work to be inclusive, accessible and meaningful to everyone. Our work covers the health and social care needs of children, young people and adults and we are committed to working for everyone, not just those who shout the loudest.

There are big differences in people's experience of health and social care - people's ability to access services might be affected by their ethnicity or gender. How well people are listened to might be affected by their disability or income. At the same time, access to health and social care affects people's ability to work, care for others or play a part in their local communities. This is why diversity and inclusion is at the heart of everything we do.

Our work will be compliant with equalities law but we want to go further than the legal minimum. We know that diversity and inclusion has to be part of everything we do, but we also know that we should plan and monitor our work in this area separately. In our own work on diversity and inclusion we want to learn from the Healthwatch network and act as a role model by demonstrating our commitment to this area. This is why every year we will produce a Diversity and Inclusion Plan, to support the Business Plan, and this will set out the work we are doing and how we will know that we are working in an inclusive way and for the diverse communities across England.

Diversity and inclusion is about all of us - including Healthwatch staff and Committee and everyone who works in the network or comes into contact with us. We will ensure our staff and Committee can do their work in an environment where they are valued, involved and supported and feel safe from discrimination.



9. Governance

Healthwatch England is a committee of the Care Quality Commission (CQC). We work together as strategic partners but we are fully editorially independent from the Commission.

We negotiate Healthwatch England's funding directly with the Department of Health. They, and our other stakeholders, recognise our responsibility to fulfil our legal duties and to make sure that we have effective governance, decision making, and financial management.

The Healthwatch England committee governs Healthwatch. The committee approves the policies and procedures needed to make Healthwatch England work effectively. They ensure that our policies and procedures comply with the rules applying to Arms-Length Bodies. They set the strategy of Healthwatch England and, with its Audit and Risk sub-committee, provide oversight and scrutiny of the work of the organisation.

We understand and recognise our responsibilities to manage risk. Our Risk Register records potential financial, operational, and financial risk' should read 'financial, operational and reputational risk' to Healthwatch England. The Audit and Risk subcommittee regularly reviews the Risk Register with the Senior Management Team. Our common aim is to ensure that we identify risks and manage them by working closely with our staff to ensure they understand their role in managing risk. We do not shy away from risk. Our approach is to grasp challenges, and take a measured approach to managing and mitigating risk using a sound evidence base.

Local Healthwatch are accountable to their local authority for delivering an effective Healthwatch service. Each local Healthwatch has its own governance arrangement to reinforce their accountability to consumers of local health and social care services.



10. Budget

Our revenue allocation for the year is £3.532m; this represents our statutory funding from the Department of Health for 2014 - 15 and we call this our **Core Funding**. This provides staffing and activity costs. These are presented in the table below:

Core Funding:	
Staffing	£2,195,433
Activities	£1,336,900
Total	£3,532,333

In addition, we have requested financial resources from the Department of Health to support time limited and defined projects. We call this our **Programme Funding**. To date £625,000 of programme funding has been allocated for the year. This funding will support our work with local Healthwatch identified as requiring additional support, and providing support to local Healthwatch to enable effective contribution to and engagement with the Better Care Fund and service reconfiguration.

Both Core and Programme Funding sit within the CQC's budget and are ring-fenced for Healthwatch England.
