

SHAPING LOCAL HEALTHWATCH: THE ACTIONS AND FINDINGS OF 9 LOCAL AUTHORITIES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

POLICY CONTEXT

All Local Authorities who commission Adult Social Care services have been given the duty to commission a new service called Local HealthWatch from April 2013. Local HealthWatch will be required to provide a range of services that support individuals and communities with regard to health and social care services in their local areas. Some of the services and activities that Local HealthWatch will provide and undertake have been covered previously by Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) and other previous structures that were created by Government to promote patient and public involvement in health and social care services.

LOCAL AUTHORITY ACTIONS

Over the past year, Patient & Public Involvement Solutions Ltd, an independent company that specialises in supporting organisations and communities to improve their effectiveness in engaging with the public, has been working with 9 Local Authorities in England to help them consider and plan their arrangements in regard to their duty to commission the new Local HealthWatch organisations that are being created throughout England as proposed in the Health & Social Care Bill. The 9 Local Authorities are:

- Bournemouth Borough Council
- Dorset County Council
- East Sussex County Council*
- London Borough of Newham*
- Oxfordshire County Council*
- Staffordshire County Council*
- The Borough of Poole
- Warwickshire County Council*
- West Sussex County Council

(*Areas with pathfinder status for Local HealthWatch)

<http://healthandcare.dh.gov.uk/local-healthwatch-pathfinders-announced/>

From that work, a joint report has been co-ordinated and independently written. The report is titled Shaping Local HealthWatch – the Actions and Findings of 9 Local Authorities.

The report presents a picture of the views shared in the 9 different Local Authority areas. It demonstrates both the areas of commonality that people and communities have in the development of their Local HealthWatch and also the subtleties that can bring about different, yet important, local needs. The findings are expressed in the report under 5 'Key Theme' headings.

FINDINGS

Below we have listed the 5 key theme headings together with the words most commonly used by all involved to express what they wanted their Local HealthWatch to be with regard to each heading.

1. Leadership

Professional and Accountable were the words most used to describe how people want Local HealthWatch leadership to be

2. Management and Operations

A Professional, Intelligent, Co-Ordinated 'Hub' were the words most used to describe how people want their Local HealthWatch to be

3. Profile

Independent, Genuinely Representative, and Evidence Based were words used to describe what Local HealthWatch must be to develop and maintain a good profile

4. Representative and Inclusive

Diverse Partnerships, Existing Networks and Multiple Access routes were considered necessary for Local HealthWatch to be genuinely representative and inclusive

5. Influential and Independent

Transparent, Non-Political and Credible were 3 things people said Local HealthWatch has to be if it is to be Influential and Independent.

An extensive number of engagement activities were undertaken and these have provided a wealth of information from communities and organisations that are expressed in more detail in the full report. To date, the breadth of engagement that has been undertaken and reflected in the report includes a *minimum* of:

- **75 hours of focus groups involving more than 250 people**, groups and organisations including Children and Young People, County Councillors, Customer services staff, LINK participants, LINK Host organisations, Members of the public (with remits in Foundation membership schemes and other forums), NHS Community engagement and public involvement leads, Patient Advice and Liaison Service Staff, Voluntary sector organisations with an interest in health and social care, User led organisations
- **3000 responses to surveys** have been received to date.
- **250 people, groups and organisations engaged at stakeholder events** with many areas yet to hold events
- **430 people engaged through café style drop ins and meetings**

It is considered that the processes and outputs from the work that have been detailed in the report can be supportive and encouraging to anyone with an interest in helping organisations and individuals develop an efficient and effective Local HealthWatch that is truly of value to and representative of its community.