

Central Bedfordshire  
Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board

**Contains Confidential or Exempt Information** No.

**Title of Report** Delivering Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire

**Meeting Date:** 8 November 2012

**Responsible Officer(s)** Julie Ogley, Director of Social Care, Health and Housing

**Presented by:** Julie Ogley, Director of Social Care, Health and Housing

---

**Action Required:** The Board is asked to:

1. Note the plans being put in place for the provision of NHS Complaints Advocacy from April 2013 to March 2014.
2. Note the approach being taken to the role of children and young people in Healthwatch in response to the mandate given by the Central Bedfordshire Youth Council.
3. Note the progress being made towards establishing Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire particularly through the first meeting of the Pathfinder held in October 2012.

---

**Executive Summary**

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| <b>1.</b> | This report provides an update on progress to develop and deliver Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire by 1 April 2013 particularly in respect of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Children and young people as part of Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire</li><li>• A Healthwatch Pathfinder for Central Bedfordshire led by voluntary and community infrastructure organisation to develop a partnership approach to establishing Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire and builds on existing local resources, knowledge and expertise</li><li>• The procurement strategy for Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire.</li><li>• Provision of Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy</li></ul> |
|-----------|--|

---

**Background**

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| <b>2.</b> | The Health and Social Care Act 2012, replaces Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) with Local Healthwatch. The legislation requires local authorities to commission effective and efficient Local Healthwatch organisations which will include new functions of providing signposting and access to complaints advocacy. |
|-----------|--|

	<p>Healthwatch will have a statutory seat on the Health and Wellbeing Board to ensure that the views of local people are represented on the Board and will be the independent customer champion for the public, locally and nationally, to promote better outcomes in health for all and in social care.</p> <p>Local Healthwatch organisations are required to be in place by 1 April 2013.</p>
<p><b>LINKs Legacy</b></p>	
<p>3.</p>	<p>A 360-degree feedback review of the legacy of Central Bedfordshire LINKs has been completed. This review identified some key areas for consideration by the Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire Pathfinder particularly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raising the profile of Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire through an ongoing communications plan</li> <li>• Recruiting and maintaining an active volunteer base representative of the communities of Central Bedfordshire</li> </ul> <p>A clear message through the process of stakeholder engagement on Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire has been to build on what already exists locally. This message has been taken forward into the arrangements for the Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire Pathfinder and procurement process as further detailed below.</p>
<p><b>Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy</b></p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Central Bedfordshire Council is working with other Local Authorities in the East of England to commission a 12-month Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy Service from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013. This will enable Central Bedfordshire Council to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fulfil the requirement under the Health &amp; Social Care Act 2012 to commission this service from April 2013</li> <li>• Provide a continuity of service to those already receiving advocacy support to make a complaint about the NHS through the Independent Complaints Advocacy Services (ICAS) currently commissioned by the Department of Health (DH) and which ends on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012</li> <li>• Better understand local needs for independent NHS complaints advocacy in order to commission a more appropriate service for the local population from 2014.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Children and Young People</b></p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>Following a presentation to the Central Bedfordshire Youth Parliament, a clear mandate was given by children and young people that they wish to be involved in Healthwatch through the existing local mechanisms of the Young Inspectors and Young Commissioners programmes delivered by Children's Services. Members of the Young Parliament will provide a link from this activity into Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire and back out to other local children and young people.</p>

<b>Procurement strategy</b>	
<b>6.</b>	A provider workshop took place on 25th September 2012 following which 11 local voluntary and community organisations came forward with a commitment to work together to develop an operational model for Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire. It is envisaged that the work of these organisations will produce a corporate body which could be awarded the contract as Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire.
<b>7.</b>	A contingency plan has been developed as part of the procurement strategy to ensure the Council is able to fulfil its duty to commission an effective and efficient Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire through a competitive procurement process if necessary.
<b>8.</b>	A service specification for Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire has been written clearly setting out the functions of local Healthwatch in line with the vision and values developed through stakeholder engagement. In recognition of the interdependencies between Central Bedfordshire and neighbouring areas, particularly in respect of District and General Hospital and Patient Advisory Liaison Service provision, the specification includes an expectation for Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire to work closely, where appropriate, with other local Healthwatch organisations. This work has been shared with Bedford and Luton Borough Councils.
<b>Healthwatch Pathfinder – October 2012 to March 2013</b>	
<b>9.</b>	A Healthwatch Pathfinder for Central Bedfordshire has been set up and had its first meeting on 17 October 2012. The Pathfinder is being Chaired by John Gelder representing local community and voluntary sector infrastructure services and health and social care providers who expressed an interest in working in partnership to develop a model based on a “network of network organisations” and builds on existing resources to deliver Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire.
<b>10.</b>	This partnership approach to the Pathfinder offers an opportunity to respond to the findings of the LINKs legacy work by building on what already exists locally, avoiding duplication, and delivering value for money through organisations working together to deliver the vision for Healthwatch as a ‘network of networks’ and a ‘no wrong door’ philosophy.
<b>11.</b>	A similar ‘coming together’ of existing organisations is also emerging in other areas such as Staffordshire, Norfolk and East Sussex and enables different organisations to contribute the particular skills and expertise to delivering the statutory Healthwatch functions which would be difficult for a single organisation to do given the breadth of the Healthwatch remit.

12.	The breadth of customer and carer experience which this collective approach offers has the potential to provide a wealth of key data as part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and can also contribute to the Public Health agenda by identifying trends and disseminating advice and information.
13.	The Pathfinder Board have a clear action plan and timeline for developing a proposed model of corporate body for Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire in time for the Council to make a decision about awarding a contract or delivering the contingency procurement process.
14.	A suite of documents has been developed to support the Pathfinder and Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire through the Council's involvement in regional and national Healthwatch development networks. These include a constitution, code of conduct, complaints procedures and role descriptions for the Chair and other key position holders.
15.	The emerging operational and governance model (to be further developed ahead of sign-off by the Pathfinder in November prior to reporting to the Healthwatch Project Board) is one of a company limited by guarantee governed by a recruited Board of Directors made up of public and community and voluntary sector organisations. This arrangement would be to enable Healthwatch to be established and begin operating as an independent corporate body legal entity. It also allows the future make up of the Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire to further evolve during Year 1 as part of the national programme of support to local Healthwatch organisations being offered from April 2013 by Healthwatch England and the Local Government Organisation.
16.	A timeline and action plan is being drawn up by the Pathfinder Group with support from the SCHH Partnerships and Performance Service; Commissioning leads as well as expertise from the Council's Procurement Team.
17.	Specialist Healthwatch development support will be available to the Pathfinder group and other identified support needs met from the Healthwatch start up monies.
18.	The Pathfinder will report to the Healthwatch Project Board, chaired AD for Commissioning with CCG and Children Services representation and is responsible for the overall transition from LINK to Healthwatch.

<b>Challenges and risks</b>	
Funding	
<b>19.</b>	Funding has been identified but exact figures are not yet confirmed by the Department Health. Funding will be available for Local Healthwatch to Local Authorities from the Department of Health and will not be ring fenced. There is a firm commitment to ensure that the newly commissioned Healthwatch is fit for purpose and reflects the needs and requirements of local people.
<b>20.</b>	The final funding settlement in respect of the transfer of signposting arrangements from Patient Advice and Liaison Service is still being awaited.
Regulations	
<b>21.</b>	Central Bedfordshire responded to the Department Health consultation on secondary regulations for Healthwatch to support the inclusion of Children and Young People in Healthwatch with the exclusion of Enter & View rights into children and young people health and social care services. The local arrangements already in place through Central Bedfordshire Council Children's Services will ensure that the experience of local children and young people will still be heard and acted upon as appropriate.
<b>Conclusion and Next steps</b>	
<b>22.</b>	Progress towards Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire continues to move forward through the active involvement of a number of key stakeholders including the community and voluntary sector, Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group and LINK.
<b>23.</b>	Local activity is commensurate with other authorities in the region in terms of Pathfinder arrangements beginning in October and a partnership/consortium approach being taken with existing community and voluntary sector providers of local health and social care services.
<b>Issues</b>	
Strategy Implications	
<b>24.</b>	The establishment of Healthwatch is a statutory requirement and Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire should be operational by April 2013. Developing a Central Bedfordshire Healthwatch impacts upon the Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Central Bedfordshire, Community Engagement Strategy and the Social Care Health and Housing Advice and Information Strategy. It will also have implications for the Clinical Commissioning Group Engagement Strategy. The role of Healthwatch in gathering and

	representing the public voice has clear links to the Public Health agenda.
<b>Governance &amp; Delivery</b>	
<b>25.</b>	The Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire Project Board chaired by Assistant Director for Commissioning, Central Bedfordshire Council provides governance and delivery of the Healthwatch project and ensuring appropriate strategic links are made with other programmes of work.
<b>Management Responsibility</b>	
<b>26.</b>	Commissioning Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire is a duty for the Local Authority under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Management of this process is via a Project Board. Updates to the Health and Wellbeing Board on progress towards commissioning Healthwatch will be through the Director of Social Care, Health and Housing.
<b>Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)</b>	
<b>27.</b>	The PSED requires public bodies to consider all individuals when carrying out their day to day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between in respect of nine protected characteristics; age disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire will be representative of the whole population as well as influencing decision making at the Health and Wellbeing Board to address health inequalities.
	Are there any risks issues relating Public Sector Equality Duty <span style="float: right;"><b>Yes/No</b></span>
No	Yes <span style="float: right;"><i>Please describe in risk analysis</i></span>

### **Risk Analysis**

A risk register is being maintained by the Healthwatch Project Board, and actively informs project actions and future arrangements. Key risk for HWB to note are:

<b>Identified Risk</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Actions to Manage Risk</b>
Pathfinder does not produce an effective or efficient operating and governance model.	Possible	Medium	Contingency procurement strategy developed and key milestones in Action Plan will enable the Council to make a decision about if/when to implement this contingency approach.
Risk of failure to have Local Healthwatch in place by April 2013.	Possible	High	Project plans includes timescales to carry out open procurement process. Service Specifications has been developed. Continuing close working with Region and Department of Health including attendance at HealthWatch "Masterclass" led by Department of Health.
The legacy is not managed effectively which causes a loss of good practice, skill base and learning from current challenges.	Unlikely	Low	Support for LINKs and volunteers is ongoing. Close working and involvement of LINK staff to ensure smooth transition and implementation of Exit Strategy.

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location (including url where possible)</b>