

## **HealthWatch Advisory Group bulletin**

### **Issue 2**

**15 August 2011**

#### **Introduction**

This is the regular bulletin from the HealthWatch advisory group. It contains up to date, authoritative information on HealthWatch developments.

Feel free to use the content in your publications to keep your stakeholders and members informed about HealthWatch.

#### **Newsflash**

##### **HealthWatch pathfinder announcement**

Announcing 75 HealthWatch Pathfinders, Health Secretary Andrew Lansley said: "Putting patients and the public at the very heart of the health service is central to our vision of modernising the NHS and today is a huge step forward."

Read the full press notice and find out where the Pathfinders are by visiting the **Department of Health website**.

##### **Launch of HealthWatch: Strengthening People's Voices in Health and Social Care**

A new document called 'HealthWatch: Strengthening People's Voices in Health and Social Care' has been published. This document is available on the HealthWatch online community (details on how to join are below).

##### **Consultation on options for allocating new and additional funds for local HealthWatch**

A revised consultation document on options for allocating new and additional funds for local HealthWatch will be available by 15 August, for comment before the end of October 2011.

##### **Background to HealthWatch**

To strengthen the collective voice of patients, carers and the public in the system at both a local and national level Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) will evolve to become Local HealthWatch and HealthWatch England will be set up as the independent consumer champion within the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

The proposals for HealthWatch are part of the Health and Social Care Bill – here is a link to it:

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2010-11/healthandsocialcare.html>

## Local HealthWatch key issues

There will be a meeting in September for people who are taking HealthWatch forward in the regions – the contacts are:

HW/LINK Coordinator		
East Midlands	Rachel	Holynska
North East	Julie	Turner
South East	Ann	Bullen
South East	Eddy	McDowall
South West	Trish	Stokoe
South West	Alun	Davies
East of England	Claire	Ogley
South Coast	Dave	Shields
Yorks & Humber	Rebecca	Matthews
London	Natasha	Cooper
West Midland	Julia	Holding
North West	Margaret	McLeod

## Summary of discussions from HealthWatch advisory group Task and Finish groups

The HealthWatch advisory group has set up five task and finish groups to focus on specific areas of the work programme. They are listed below, with a summary of what they have been working on. When these finish their work, others will be set up. These views, and others, as they emerge, will help to shape the plans for HealthWatch.

## HealthWatch England Principles and Practicalities

The group looked at how the committee for HealthWatch England will be set up.

The group agreed to do some more work to pull out what is unique and distinct about HealthWatch England – and they started a list of their own ideas:

- The main unique point is that consumer voices have a systematic way of going up and through the system
- HealthWatch England has to be consulted and responded to so this gives strength and weight
- HealthWatch England is the view of the people and not the view of the service provider organisation
- Respected by people who are dealing with it, including Local HealthWatch, consumers, stakeholders and local authorities
- Trusted
- Undiluted voice of the consumer

- Enabling Local HealthWatch to be more inclusive

The group agreed to have a future session to look at the pros and cons of differing committee models. There were many different views expressed on the make up and conduct of the committee, and an acknowledgement that we may need a different structure and process of getting people on the HealthWatch England committee initially, from what it may look like in the future.

Frances Hasler and group

### **Local HealthWatch: Building a convincing case**

The Transition sub group, recognising the need for accurate information, initiated these bulletins.

The group has identified the following key issues:

- the meaning and implications of Local HealthWatch as 'bodies corporate', which is currently being looked at by the Department of Health
- giving information to the public about services
- the level of expertise and the capacity required for the delivery of NHS complaints advocacy when the Independent Complaints Advocacy Service ceases (it is anticipated a new sub group will be constituted to deal with this)
- the implications of Schedule 13 of the Bill for Local HealthWatch membership. This will be looked at by the HealthWatch Advisory Group
- the procurement timetable for local authorities for commissioning Local HealthWatch
- the legal, financial and administrative resources needed by local authorities and LINKs for transition to Local HealthWatch and the need to strengthen LINKs' capacities commensurate with the task

Ruth Marsden and Mary Simpson

### **Local HealthWatch: Creating a good local HealthWatch**

The group developed and agreed an initial paper about the future functions for local HealthWatch. They set out describing local HealthWatch in 2015 as:

- Making people's views known through reports and recommendations
- Obtaining the views and experiences of patients and the public
- Promoting and support the involvement of people in commissioning, the provision and scrutiny of local care services

- Making recommendations to HealthWatch England to advise the Care Quality Commission re: investigation, special review etc
- Providing information and signposting/advice to promote choice
- Making the views and experiences of people known to HealthWatch England

Kasey Chan in collaboration with Local HealthWatch task and finish group

### **Communication and engagement: a strategy**

The online community, which allows people to engage in the development of HealthWatch, is now up and running. It contains areas for discussion, responding to tasks, opinion polls and a library of all the latest documents on the development of HealthWatch. We have had over 500 requests to join the community so far. If you would like to join the community please email [healthwatch@nunwood.com](mailto:healthwatch@nunwood.com).

An agency called Spencer du Bois has been appointed to develop the reputation, style and information and communication tools for HealthWatch. They have already held a session with the communications sub group and will be working with groups throughout the project.

Sara Cain

### **Local government working group**

The group discussed the following issues:

- There was a strong consensus for developing a short narrative describing expectations around how local authorities and LINKs may want to work through transition issues. This is now available on the HealthWatch online community.
- The need to develop a more detailed timeline clarifying what needs to be done and by when to enable the local authority procurement/commissioning process and to explore alternative funding options such as grant in aid. This is currently being developed and will be available on the HealthWatch online community once completed.
- The need to consolidate the working going on around the country on Local HealthWatch readiness including key questions people may want to ask - critically this will cover all stakeholders not just LINKs.
- More detailed work on roles and responsibilities, skills and experiences that may be required by Local HealthWatch personnel paid and unpaid.
- More detailed work on issues relating to body corporate - share thinking about emerging organisational models so that we are not reinventing wheels and picking up point made by transition group on good governance.

Lorraine Denoris

## **How to get involved in developing HealthWatch**

To set up HealthWatch the Care Quality Commission and the Department of Health have set up a joint programme. This is made up of a programme board and an advisory group. To read more about these groups and to read the minutes of the meetings please visit the CQC [website](#).

If you would like to find out more about the NHS modernisation programme, please visit the DH website at: <http://healthandcare.dh.gov.uk>.

## **HealthWatch Advisory Group**