

CABINET – 18 DECEMBER 2012

Procurement of Healthwatch Oxfordshire

Report by Director for Social and Community Services

Introduction

1. Under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, all (top tier) Local Authorities are responsible for commissioning a Local Healthwatch by April 2013. Local Healthwatch will be the new independent consumer champion for people of all ages using social care, and patients using health services. It replaces the Local Involvement Network and will have a number of extended and statutory functions. A member of Healthwatch Oxfordshire will have a seat on the Health and Wellbeing Board.
2. Healthwatch England was launched on 1st October 2012. It is hosted by the Care Quality Commission, but has independent statutory powers to act outside of Government influence. It will provide national co-ordination of local issues of concern and a strong policy influence at a national level.
3. Healthwatch Oxfordshire will be responsible for:
 - Providing signposting, information and advice to the public about accessing health and social care services and making choices in relation to those services
 - Making the views and experiences of local people known to Healthwatch England and making recommendations regarding special reviews or investigations into areas of concern
 - Promoting and supporting the involvement of people in the monitoring, commissioning and provision of local care services
 - Obtaining the views of people about their needs, views and experience of local health and social care services and making these known to commissioners, providers and scrutiny committees
4. Local Authorities will additionally take responsibility for commissioning National Health Service complaints advocacy from April 2013 (currently the Independent Complaints Advocacy Service). In Oxfordshire this is being commissioned regionally for one year initially.

Commissioning and procurement

5. In Oxfordshire, we have:
 - carried out a widescale consultation which has shaped the service specification, developed in collaboration with a diverse Steering Group
 - worked closely with the Local Involvement Network to ensure we take forward a rich legacy
 - developed the local market by offering small grants and support through Co-operative Futures, encouraging partners to work together to seek local solutions

Timeline for Procurement

6. Timeline for procurement:
 - Invitation to tender 1st November
 - Pre-Qualification Questionnaire, shortlisting and final interviews, resulting in a contract award by Jan 2013
 - Transition set-up period for the new Healthwatch Oxfordshire from Feb – April 2013 (supported by a national Transition Grant)

Funding allocation

7. The funding allocation for Healthwatch Oxfordshire has not been confirmed, but the indicative (non ring-fenced) allocation is between £300,000 to £400,000 per annum.

RECOMMENDATION

8. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to** delegate decision-making for the contract award and funding allocation to John Jackson, Director for Social and Community Services in consultation with Councillor Arash Fatemian, Cabinet Member for Adult Services

JOHN JACKSON
Director of Social and Community Services

Contact Officer: Alison Partridge, Public Engagement Manager

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