

Children's Scrutiny Committee Briefing: 14th November 2012

Healthwatch Oxfordshire

Background

Under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, all (top tier) Local Authorities are responsible for commissioning a local Healthwatch by April 2013. Healthwatch Oxfordshire will be the new independent 'consumer champion' for people of *all ages* using social and health care services. It replaces the Local Involvement Network (LINKs) 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.

Healthwatch England was launched on 1st October 2012. It is hosted by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), but has independent statutory powers to act outside of Government influence. It will provide national co-ordination of local issues of concern raised by local Healthwatch organisations, and exert a strong policy influence at a national level.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire will be responsible for:

- Provision of signposting, information and advice to the public regarding access to health and social care services, and making choices in relation to those 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, through its statutory seat on the Health and Wellbeing Board and through other routes
- Promoting and supporting the involvement of people in the monitoring, commissioning and provision of local care services
- Ensuring the views and experiences of local people are made known to Healthwatch England and making recommendations regarding special reviews or investigations into areas of concern

LA's will additionally take responsibility for commissioning an NHS Complaints Advocacy Service from April 2013 (currently ICAS). In Oxfordshire this is being commissioned regionally for one year initially.

Commissioning and procurement

In Oxfordshire, we have:

- carried out a widescale consultation which has shaped the service specification. It has been developed co-productively in collaboration with a diverse Steering Group
- worked closely with the LINK and PCT PALs 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:

- Invitation to tender: November 2013
- Tender shortlist and final interviews: January 2013
- Transitional set-up period for the new Healthwatch Oxfordshire: Feb/March 2013
(supported by a Department of Health Transition Grant)

Funding allocation:

The funding allocation for Healthwatch Oxfordshire has not been confirmed and will not be ring-fenced, but the indicative allocation is between £300k - 400k p/a.