

	AGENDA ITEM 5
	PAF/10/18
Committee:	People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date:	12 April 2018
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RELATIONSHIP WITH HEALTHWATCH ESSEX

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 established a national body, Healthwatch England, to act as a national consumer champion in relation to health and social care services. Healthwatch England provides leadership and support to local Healthwatch organisations whose role is to gather local views on services. Specifically, in relation to local health and social care services, local Healthwatch is expected to:

1. promote and support the involvement of local people in the commissioning, the provision and scrutiny of local care services.
2. enable local people to monitor the standard of provision of local care services and whether and how local care services could and ought to be improved;
3. obtain the views of local people regarding their needs for, and experiences of, local care services and importantly to make these views known;
4. providing advice and information about access to local care services so choices can be made about local care services;

Since 2013 Healthwatch Essex (HWE) has had observer status at meetings of the Essex Health Overview, Policy and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) and, at the discretion of the Chairman, the opportunity to ask questions.

Unlike the HOSC, the People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee has not had an ongoing relationship with HWE despite HWE having a role to be the patient voice for both health and social care. As a result of a meeting last month between the PAF Chairman and Vice Chairmen and the Chief Executive of HWE it is

recommended that HWE be invited to have the same status with PAF as it does with HOSC. In other words, for HWE to have a 'standing observer' status (not membership) and, subject to Chairman's discretion, to be able to speak and ask appropriate public engagement and service user experience related questions at meetings.

Inviting HWE as an observer at meetings does not require any changes to the County Council's Constitution.

It is anticipated that this arrangement may also facilitate closer working between the PAF and HWE.

A link to HWE's website follows (which provides more information on their role and activities: <https://www.healthwatchessex.org.uk/>

Recommendation:

To invite Heathwatch Essex to nominate a representative to be an observer at future meetings of the Committee and, at the discretion of the Chairman, to be able to ask questions.