

An update on the passage of the Health and Social Care Bill

The Health & Social Care Act 2012 came into being a few weeks ago and below are the key points and implications for Healthwatch Essex Pathfinder.

1. The DoH are drafting and will be consulting on HW regulations over the coming quarter.
2. The existing *LHW: the policy explained* and some best practice examples to be produced by LGA are essentially the extent of the 'guidance' Local Authorities will be getting in order to commission LHW
3. The term *social enterprise* in the H&SC Act is intended to denote *any* form of not-for-profit organisation model for LHW
4. Children and Young People's health and social care is definitely in the Act - DH are waiting for further ministerial clarification in order to produce regulations on what this means for LHW in practice
5. HW England will have a Chair in post by June 2012 followed by a website by September 2012 plus developing a strategic plan for 2013-15
6. Once appointed, the Chair will spend first three months out and about engaging stakeholders to inform the above plan and priorities
7. HW England will have 27 staff, 8 of which will directly be supporting LHWs
8. It was clear that LA's are the system leads and will be supported if they wish to move quickly to set up a shadow healthwatch
9. The creative agency Spencer du Bois on the HW England and Local HW brands will be providing more over the coming weeks. Our domain name www.healthwatchessex.org.uk is the right way round.
10. LAs/local healthwatch should be able to start using some of the key messages behind the brand in the coming quarter although the logo and other creatives will follow later. There will also be a HW Brand Toolkit.
11. LGA and DoH are clarifying funding and timescales in order to support the transition process

I have underlined the children and young peoples social care coming into the remit of Healthwatch with the challenges that brings, but also the very positive statement of a lifelong approach.