



Communications update

The following papers provide the Healthwatch Pathfinder Executive with an update on our key communications messages for the coming months. This includes:

1. Our developing vision and operating principles for Healthwatch Essex;
2. Some background information and key facts;
3. A briefing containing an update on recent activities and news. This will be the first of a series of briefings for the Executive.

Members with queries relating to any aspects of Healthwatch communications are encouraged to pass these on to either Matt, Tom, Nadine or Andy:

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1. Vision

Following August's development day, the vision and operating principles for Healthwatch Essex are crystallising:

Healthwatch Essex: an independent voice for the people of Essex, helping to shape and improve local health and social care services.

Principles

Healthwatch Essex will:

- be a **strong, local consumer voice, making a difference** to health and social care provision for the people of Essex.
- collect the **real voice** of the people Essex.
- provide a platform from which **diverse and seldom heard voices** from across all Essex can be heard.
- will be a **network of networks**, that builds on the legacy of LINK.
- will build the **capacity and utilise the existing expertise** of voluntary sector and community groups in Essex.
- will set the standard for **excellent public engagement**.
- will **provide innovative ways** to gather the **lived experience** of the people of Essex.
- will work hard to be a **respected and credible** organisation, working in partnership across all sectors of health and social care.
- will use its networks and public engagement to gather meaningful and robust **local evidence and intelligence**, capable of influencing key decision making in health and social care.
- will be **unafraid to challenge** service providers and commissioners.
- will ensure that all Essex people have **timely and good quality information** and advice.

2. Background information and key facts

Executive members may find the following information and key facts useful as we develop and communicate the operating model for Healthwatch Essex.

1. Healthwatch Essex is to be established in accordance with the Health and Social Care Act 2012, which requires upper-tier local authorities to establish an independent corporate body (a 'social enterprise'), to carry out statutory responsibilities.

This means that Healthwatch Essex will:

- be expected to be the 'consumer champion' of health and social care users, and the public at large, in shaping local health and social care services;
- influence how services are set up and commissioned by having a seat on the Essex Health and Wellbeing Board;
- support the production of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment;
- produce reports which influence the way services are designed and delivered;
- have the power to enter and view services;
- pass information and recommendations to Healthwatch England and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and,
- provide and assess the quality of information, advice and support about local services to the public.

2. Healthwatch Essex will cover the administrative county of Essex, which excludes Southend and Thurrock. This is the second largest non-metropolitan county area in the UK, after Kent. The population of Essex is 1.4 million people, according to the 2011 census.

3. There are marked socio-economic and health inequalities in Essex, which contains some of the most affluent and the most deprived areas in the country. The Golf Green ward of Jaywick, in Tendring, has been identified as the most deprived small area in England.

4. The key issues set out in the 2012 JSNA are:

- **Population growth and demographic change** - by 2031, for example, the number of people over 85 years of age in Essex will more than double, from about 31,000 to 77,000.
- **Deprivation** - a wide range of problems, from poor health to crime to low educational attainment are associated with deprivation or low income.
- **Educational attainment** - given its relative level of affluence, all areas of Essex suffer comparatively poor educational attainment.
- **Stresses on family Life** - about 13% of pupils aged 7 to 16 years in Essex have poor emotional wellbeing.
- **Life expectancy gap** - the gap in life expectancy between the best and worst wards in Essex is nearly 20 years.
- **Behavioural factors** - areas of Essex have particular high levels of smoking, obesity (25% of people in Essex are obese) and alcohol misuse (over 21% of adults in Essex are taking part in increasing and higher risk drinking).
- **Access to services** - use of health and social care services by some groups, eg Black, Minority Ethnic (BME) groups for social care, is disproportionately lower than expected.

5. As part of the Government's Health and Social Care reforms, there are five Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in Essex: North East Essex, West Essex, Mid Essex, Basildon and Brentwood and Castlepoint and Rochford. These will take on responsibility for commissioning most NHS services. Healthwatch will work with each of these.

6. The role of Healthwatch Essex Executive Members will be to set the overall strategy and the budget of the organisation and act as Ambassadors for Healthwatch.

7. Research conducted for Healthwatch Essex reveals three essential challenges facing Healthwatch:

- 58% of people aren't aware of the ways they can share their views on health and social care services;
- even if they are aware, people aren't engaged enough to share their views;
- people don't feel that commissioners are serious about listening to what people have to say.

8. We also know that Essex's extensive voluntary and community sector is keen to engage with Healthwatch - but research underlines their view



that we need to use existing networks to increase partnership working and to move away from the existing LINKs model.

3. Briefing No. 1 - September 2012

- The acting Chief Executive Officer of Healthwatch Essex has now been announced as Tom Nutt, who will begin a secondment to this role in October 2012.
- Healthwatch Essex is working with ECC to agree the legal form to be adopted by Healthwatch Essex upon its establishment as a corporate body. These negotiations will conclude at the end of September. ECC's decision to create Healthwatch Essex as an independent organisation will be taken by Cabinet in October.
- Healthwatch Essex, as a corporate body, will likely be established by the beginning of November, with a public launch in the new year. **These dates remains provisional.** Healthwatch Essex will work with the Essex and Southend LINK to facilitate a smooth transfer of statutory responsibility.
- Executive members should note that there remains in place a moratorium on members representing Healthwatch Essex at meetings and forums until after next development day in October or early November. If members asked to represent Healthwatch Essex, and you wish for clarification or support in responding, please contact Andy or Tom.
- Anna Bradley, chair of Healthwatch England (and also an Essex resident) is visiting Essex on 1st October, the date of the official launch of Healthwatch England. **THIS VISIT HAS NOT BEEN MADE PUBLIC** yet, and plans are in preparation and will be shared with Executive members as soon as possible.

Work has also started in several other areas, including;

- The development of a concordat setting out the principles for partnership working with stakeholder organisations.
- Healthwatch have agreed in principle to work with Mid-Essex CCG to develop and test the scope of the relationship between



Healthwatch and the CCG and its engagement and decision making structures.

- Arrangements are underway to bring in temporary staff to roll out a series of proto-type or 'proxy' projects, to test the operating principles and practice of Healthwatch.
- Healthwatch Essex is currently running a number of development days for members. The first was held in August and focused on public engagement and outreach and effective engagement with statutory partners. Future dates will be shared in due course.
- The national Healthwatch branding has been released and Essex will incorporate this into its communications strategy on receiving the local Healthwatch branding toolkit. The communication strategy is currently being developed.
- The current Healthwatch web-pages on the ECC website are being reformatted and will provide regular updates to members and the public. The address for Healthwatch Essex is www.healthwatchessex.org.uk.