

# Commissioners Conference 14 March 2016, London

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## Presentations and notes from table discussions

The event was attended by 45 local Healthwatch commissioners from across the network and a show of hands indicated there was a mix of people based in the following Local Authority Departments; Corporate Policy, Adult Social Care, and Public Health.

The day was facilitated by Paul Rideout, commissioner for Healthwatch East Sussex, East Sussex Council and Andy Payne, Head of Network Development, Healthwatch England.

### Morning session one:

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#### Enabling commissioners and local Healthwatch to make the most effective use of the Quality Statements

- Reflections and next steps: Professor Mark Gamsu and Jennie Chapman of Leeds Beckett University, with Ben Knox, Head of Communications, Healthwatch England, Sue Bickler, local Healthwatch commissioner for Bournemouth Borough Council and Sue Newell, local Healthwatch commissioner from Poole Council

### Morning session two:

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#### Local Healthwatch and Local Authority Monitoring relationship

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- Table discussion facilitated by Paul Rideout: Sharing effective and innovative ways of getting the most out of your contract monitoring relationship

**Key messages from the session were that monitoring should:**

- Be proportionate
- Be achievable (through effort)
- Be measurable
- Illustrate the vision
- Demonstrate continued development of Healthwatch functions
- Demonstrate continued development of relationships

**Healthwatch commissioners need to have a working knowledge of the tools available to develop monitor performance including:**

- Healthwatch England Quality Statements
- Healthwatch Outcomes and Impact Development Tool V2
- Reflective Audit for local Healthwatch

**Healthwatch Commissioners should have some understanding of the Local Authority's priorities, and integration (Health & Social Care)**

## Morning session three:

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**How local Healthwatch can amplify the voice of the public and patients through service change (Presentation)**

- An overview of the national programmes local Healthwatch are involved in current and future support for local Healthwatch from Healthwatch England: Phil Brough, Service Change Lead, Healthwatch England, Q&A implications

**Some key areas of discussion from commissioners:**

- Income generation, e.g. Healthwatch Wiltshire commissioned £100k to go engagement activity in terms of Better Care Fund
- Local Healthwatch may collaborate together to do engagement work, e.g. the urgent and emergency care network in North East involves 5 local Healthwatch



- Low awareness of what a new care model vanguard is, in that delegates felt they are very NHS driven and less involvement of social care.
- It was suggested that briefing documents and product materials in terms of service change should also be available to the commissioners.

## Afternoon table discussions: Opportunities and challenges for local Healthwatch

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- Delivering the introductory presentation for the session, Rachael Foster (Commissioner, Telford and Wrekin Council) reflected on her relationship with Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin, and the importance of this relationship.

The afternoon table discussions then gave commissioners the opportunity to talk about what they are doing locally to take advantage of future opportunities and to mitigate some of the specific challenges, to focus on:

Maintaining Local Healthwatch independence within the current health and social care environment and balancing priorities across the system.

### Challenges

- The word 'Independence' can be misinterpreted; it was felt that local Healthwatch needed to demonstrate their view was independent of internal and external agendas, and based on evidence of what their community is telling them. However there can be pressure for independence to be seen as a need to constantly challenge the system.
- There can be much more of a focus on health rather than social care, meaning it can be more challenging for organisations in the social care system to understand the value local Healthwatch can bring.

### Opportunities

- Commissioners to promote the role of local Healthwatch within Local Authority
- New approaches to commissioning local Healthwatch; being creative and going through a thorough consultation process to understand what key stakeholders would like to see from local Healthwatch



- Focussing on social care could enable closer working with the Overview and Scrutiny Group, which could be key for building credibility within the local authority
- Nationally, Healthwatch England to build relationships with CCGs

## Long term sustainability of local Healthwatch and opportunities for income generation

### Challenges

- Some people may view local Healthwatch independence as being compromised through income generation
- Local Healthwatch need to feel able to turn down funded pieces of work if they do not believe they are credible
- Do not want to see all of local Healthwatch time taken up focussing on looking for and applying for funding
- Concern that some local Healthwatch who have taken on a number of contracts and additional funding opportunities will be able to bid for other local Healthwatch contracts more competitively, and may dominate the market.

### Opportunities

- Many local Healthwatch are taking on funded pieces of work and are being recognised for the credibility of their work
- Healthwatch England to reinforce the value of local Healthwatch funding at a national level

## How can Healthwatch England work collaboratively and effectively with you to continue this relationship to support local Healthwatch?

### Challenges

- Lack of information about the work Healthwatch England is doing on a national level, how they are working with local Healthwatch, and how they are working with commissioners.
- Some commissioners only found out about the event today through word of mouth - the mailing list needs to be promoted.



## Opportunities

- Commissioners knowing what resources Healthwatch England can provide to local Healthwatch (to avoid duplication of support they might otherwise have needed to provide)
- Healthwatch England resources; sharing effective practice and resources to minimise duplication.
- Support to commissioners with; learning from the last three years, sharing more examples of effective local Healthwatch practice
- Some positive experiences with Healthwatch England providing support to local Healthwatch in challenging situations
- Although events like the conference can be helpful, the whole day (and travel) is very resource intensive - more regular meetings on a regional level could be more helpful, with more of a specific focus. Agenda to have more input from commissioners.

