

WIRRAL SHADOW HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD

Meeting Date	4 September 2012	Agenda Item	6
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Report Title	Transition from LINK to Wirral HealthWatch
Responsible Board Member	

Link To Shadow HWB Function	Board development		
	JSNA/JHWS		
	Health and social care integrated commissioning or provision		
Equality Impact Assessment Required & Attached			N/A
Purpose	For approval	To note	To assure

Summary of Paper	With effect from April 2013, a new organisation, Wirral HealthWatch, will be established to influence health and social care from a lay perspective (previously a LINK function), to signpost people to appropriate services and to provide advocacy for people making complaints about the NHS. Wirral HealthWatch will be a local corporate body which links with HealthWatch England, a statutory committee of the Care Quality Commission.		
Financial Implications	Total financial implication	New investment required	Source of investment (e.g. name of budget)
	£	£	£
Risks and Preventive Measures			
Details of Any Public/Patient/Service User Engagement	The Transition Group (which has been overseeing the transition from LINK to HealthWatch) comprises members from a range of statutory organisations and LINK members. It is planned to hold a series of consultation events over the coming months to raise awareness and to inform the operational model.		
Recommendations/Next Steps	That the Health and Wellbeing Board continues to support the formation of Wirral HealthWatch		

Report History		
Submitted to:	Date:	Summary of outcome:
Fiona Johnson		
List of Appendices	Diagram of HealthWatch model	

Publish On Website	Yes	Private Business	Yes
			No

Report Author: Nick Broadhead

Contact details: 0151 666 3632

Transition from LINK to Wirral HealthWatch

1. In 2003, Community Health Councils were replaced by a system of 'Patients Forums' linked to individual NHS health trusts, and overseen by a Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health (CPPIH). In 2008 both Patients Forums and CPPIH were abolished in favour of the current system of local involvement networks (LINKs).
2. Voluntary Community Action Wirral was selected, via a tendering process, to become the 'host' organisation for LINK, an arrangement which has been very successful and enabled LINK members to focus on their functions as volunteers without needing to be involved in any business side of the organisation.
3. Section 183 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 charged the Local Authority with a duty to make arrangements with a local body corporate to be known as Wirral HealthWatch, to replace local LINK organisations.
4. Wirral HealthWatch will be the independent consumer champion across Wirral to promote better outcomes in health and social care by gathering the views of people who use services and monitoring the providers of some services. Its roles have been described as 'influencing, signposting and advocacy for complaints around health'.
5. A new national body, HealthWatch England (a sub-committee of the Care Quality Commission) will be operational from October 2012, whose role will be to co-ordinate issues from all local HealthWatch organisations and have a national influence on health and social matters.
6. Although the functions of the local organisations have been detailed, there was very little Governmental advice about the form of the organisation that was to oversee these functions.
7. In Wirral, a HealthWatch Transition Group was established in 2010 (comprising members from DASS, NHS Wirral, VCAW, Wirral LINK, Wirral University Teaching Hospital, Clatterbridge Centre for Oncology and the Community Trust) to oversee the development of Wirral HealthWatch.
8. The main focus of the group to date has been the form of the organisation, something that has proved difficult to determine. (Unlike a number of other Local Authorities, Wirral decided not to become a Pathfinder, however, from regular meetings with representatives from these groups, it is clear that Wirral is progressing as well as neighbouring Authorities.)
9. The Act made it clear that the local HealthWatch organisation must be an independent body corporate, which implied that it would have to be a new organisation established specifically for the purpose, however, such an organisation would not be able to provide any evidence of provenance under any tendering arrangement. This placed the Board in a predicament, which we have solved by adopting the model shown in Appendix 1.

10. In this model, the Transition Group will commission VCAW, as the infrastructure organisation, to establish a HealthWatch Board. This Board will oversee the appointment of a Chief Officer, whose role will be to co-ordinate the various functions of HealthWatch, both operational and business related. In order to provide continuity and provenance, Wirral HealthWatch will be obliged to purchase its business functions from VCAW for at least its first year.
11. The business model for the new organisation will be agreed at the next Transition Group meeting, on July 5th, together with a broad outline of the membership of the proposed Board.
12. It is anticipated that there will be a 'shadow' HealthWatch in place by the end of 2012 in preparation for assuming its full role with effect from 1st April 2013.
13. From April 2014, Wirral HealthWatch will be completely autonomous and able to decide how its business functions are to be met – internally or via an external provider.
14. The Act requires that a member of the local HealthWatch organisation will have a seat on the local Health and Wellbeing Board.
15. Originally, the Bill envisaged that local HealthWatch organisations would be operational with effect from April 2012, with responsibility for influencing and signposting. With effect from April 2013 a third obligation would be to provide advocacy for people making complaints about health services. The delay in enacting the legislation means that HealthWatch will be expected to provide all three functions with effect from April 2013. The transition group has agreed that, to reduce pressure on the new HealthWatch organisation, it will participate in a pan-Merseyside consortium which will tender for the provision of health complaints advocacy throughout the patch. This arrangement will in place for two years, after which Wirral HealthWatch can choose to remain within the consortium or make its own arrangements for health complaints advocacy.
16. Having agreed the form of the organisation, the next phase will be a wide consultation with stakeholders about how they expect the functions to be provided on their behalf, how Board members should be selected and any other relevant issues.
17. The local Authority intends to fund Wirral HealthWatch at the same rate as it has funded VCAW to host Wirral LINK.
18. The local LINK Board and LINK members have been fully updated about the transition throughout this process and have continued to function as well as ever, whilst preparing themselves for the transition.