



ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

2 MARCH 2021

REPORT TITLE	<i>Re-commission of Wirral Healthwatch Service and Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service</i>
REPORT OF	Director of Care and Health

REPORT SUMMARY

This report is to make Committee aware of the forthcoming re-commission of the Wirral Local Healthwatch and the Independent Health Complaints Advocacy service.

The Local Healthwatch service has statutory functions which are set out in legislation. The service supports local residents accessing health and care services across all wards in the borough of Wirral.

This requires a key decision as it is related to budget expenditure.

RECOMMENDATION/S

Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee is recommended to:

1. Approve to progress the tendering of the Local Healthwatch and Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Services.
2. Give delegated authority to the Director of Care and Health to award the tender of the Local Healthwatch contract to the successful bidder.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to contract the provision of a local Healthwatch service.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 As this is a statutory requirement, there has not been any alternative options considered.
- 2.2 We could have considered alternative contract lengths, but we wanted to secure a 5-year contract for continuity purposes.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Health and Social Care Act 2012 sets out the functions of the Local Healthwatch as follows:
- Obtain the views of people about their needs for and experiences of local health and care services and make their views known to those involved in the commissioning, provision and scrutiny of local care services.
 - Make reports and recommendations about how those services could or should be improved.
 - Promote and support the involvement of people in monitoring, commissioning and provision of local care and health services.
 - Represent the collective voice of patients, service users, Carers and the public on the Wirral Health and Wellbeing Board.
 - Exercise Enter and View functions i.e. enter health and social care premises to observe and assess the nature and quality of those services.
 - Provide information and advice to the public about accessing health and care service and promote choice in relation to aspects of those services.
 - Make the views of local people known to Healthwatch England.
 - Make recommendations to Healthwatch England to advise the Care Quality Commission to carry out investigations into areas of concern, where appropriate.
- 3.2 A summary description of the service is that the Local Healthwatch is a statutory service for people who use health and social care services and provide an independent channel for people to communicate their views on the health and care system in order to improve standards.
- 3.3 The Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service supports people with health and social care complaints and signposts people to information and advice.

- 3.4 Healthwatch Wirral went live in April 2013. The service was re-commissioned in April 2015 with a 3-year plus 24-month contract length. The contract was due for renewal in 2020, but due to coronavirus the contract was extended throughout 2020/21.

The Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service

- 3.5 The Independent Health Advocacy Service contract was originally awarded to Carers Federation this arrangement ceased when the contract ended in 2018, following procurement rules, the service was transferred to the incumbent Healthwatch provider in April 2018. It is intended that this service will be recommissioned in conjunction with the main Local Healthwatch commission.
- 3.6 The proposed contract length is 5-years with two 12-month extension options.
- 3.7 The provider will be a social enterprise that has an accessible Wirral base; an excellent understanding of the local health and social care service provision; proven experience in actively seeking the views and experiences of local people and evidence the ability to provide a quality service and social value impact. Tenders will be evaluated following best value principle and demonstrate that they meet the most economically advantageous tender.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Local Healthwatch contract annual budget is £170,000. The total cost of a 5-year contract would be £850,000.
- 4.2 The Independent Health Advocacy contract annual budget is £18,000. The total cost of a 5-year contract would be £90,000.
- 4.3 The budget for the service is available from the Adult Social Care budget.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Following the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the Local Healthwatch service was established. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 sets out the arrangements for patient and public involvement through the Local Healthwatch Service.
- 5.2 Commissioning will follow the Public Contract Regulations and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.
- 5.3 An Open Procurement exercise of 30 days will take place, with the Alcatel 10 working day stand-still from contract award notices to the final signing of the contract.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There are no implications as a result of this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 If we do not commission a Local Healthwatch service we would fail to meet our statutory requirements.
- 7.2 If a new provider is successful, commissioners will work with the incumbent and new provider to ensure that any disruption to service delivery is kept to an absolute minimum.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The Local Healthwatch functions are embedded in legislation and have not been consulted on.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Local Healthwatch service is available to all people in the protected characteristic groups and all Wirral residents. An impact review will be completed prior to tendering.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no significant environment and climate implications in relation to this service. The service provider will seek alternative solutions i.e. essential travel, to reduce generation of CO2 emissions.

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APPENDICES

N/A

BACKGROUND PAPERS

HeathWatch Wirral Contract Award Letter (dated 1 March 2018)

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date