

Cabinet Member for Crime and Stronger
Communities

30 August 2012

Report of the Director of Communities and
Neighbourhoods

Local HealthWatch York: Service Specifications

Summary

1. To ask the Cabinet Member for Crime and Stronger Communities to approve service specifications for Local HealthWatch and Complaints Advocacy Services.

Background

2. Through the Health and Social Care Act 2012 the Department of Health (DoH) announced that local authorities in England will be responsible for the provision of independent Local HealthWatch and Complaints Advocacy functions from 1st April 2013.
3. Local HealthWatch will be the local consumer champion for patients, service users and the public. It will have an important role in championing the local consumer voice, not least through its seat on the Health and Wellbeing board. Local HealthWatch will be available to anyone who uses, or who wishes to use, health and social care services provided in the City of York.
4. Local HealthWatch builds upon the work of the existing public and patient user representation mechanism Local Involvement Networks (LINKs)
5. The role of the NHS Complaints Advocacy Service is to support residents of York who want to make a complaint about their NHS-funded treatment or care (wherever that care was received). The service is presently commissioned directly by the Department of Health on a region-wide basis.

Commissioning Process - Proposed Timescales

6. It is recommended that the tender process for both Local HealthWatch and NHS Complaints Advocacy should begin as soon as possible to allow a managed handover from existing arrangements.
7. The proposal is to run an open tender process with two separate lots (i.e. Local HealthWatch and Complaints Advocacy). This may result in two separate providers or may allow a single provider to compete for, and hold both contracts. Alternatively, the delivery of NHS Complaints Advocacy services could be more closely connected to the wider advocacy provision in the City through this approach.
8. It is suggested that the tender process is launched by September 2012, and that contracts are awarded by December 2012 with a commencement date of April 2013. The successor bodies will have time to work alongside the current LINK and regional complaints advocacy provider in order to manage the handover process, secure premises, recruit / train staff and undertake marketing and promotional activity.
9. In line with the above the suggested timetable for implementation is as follows:

Aug:	CYC Portfolio holder to agree final service specifications. Announcement of intent to tender – to stimulate the market and encourage collaborative approaches
Sept:	Issue of tender documentation
Oct:	Closing date for responses
Dec:	Contract Award (The full contract will commence April 2013, but the provider(s) will initiate some transitional work beforehand to ensure a smooth handover)

Further Points to Note

10. In order to stimulate the market City of York Council hosted a Local HealthWatch Supplier Day on 4th July, which was well attended by a range of local, regional and national suppliers.
11. In respect of Complaints Advocacy, detailed discussions were held with other Councils in Yorkshire and the Humber to consider a joint procurement exercise. Rather than this approach it has been agreed to ensure regional co-ordination by developing similar specifications / timescales to ensure regional synergy (rather than a combined regional contract).
12. Further guidance is due to be issued imminently by the Department of Health around the structure / constitution of Local HealthWatch, and the types of delivery models that are permissible. In lieu of this guidance being issued CYC officers are working towards the production of a service specification / tender process which will allow a variety of delivery models to be brought forward.
13. The overarching outcomes and objectives within the service specification will closely align with those contained within York's forthcoming Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the wider community engagement processes of CYC.

Options

14. This report is for information only report, there are no specific options for members to decide upon.

Analysis

15. Please see above.

Council Plan 2011/2015

16. The establishment of Local HealthWatch and Complaints Advocacy Services in York will make a direct contribution to the following specific outcomes listed in the draft City of York Council Plan:
 - Improved volunteering infrastructure in place to support increasing numbers of residents to give up their time for the benefit of the community

- Increased participation of the voluntary sector, mutuals and not-for-profit organisations in the delivery of service provision

Implications

17. **Financial** - Local HealthWatch / Complaints Advocacy services will be financed through the following strands of funding:
 - Existing government funding to Local Authorities to support the current LINKs function will be rolled forward into HealthWatch.
 - Monies provided for the current 'signposting element' of PCT PALS teams will be transferred across to local authority budgets from April 2013.
 - Monies for NHS Complaints Advocacy will be transferred to local authorities in April 2013.
18. It should be noted that while an indicative sum of money will be provided to City of York Council under each of the above headings, none of these monies will be ringfenced i.e. they will be paid to City of York Council as part of various Adult Social Care formula grants. The definitive amount of monies transferring from NHS PALS and Complaints Advocacy budgets to local authorities has yet to be confirmed, although 'indicative' amounts have now been provided by the Department of Health.
19. City of York Council has the discretion allocate all these monies to Local HealthWatch, or allocate some of the funding to other health and social care priorities.
20. **Human Resources (HR)** - There are no human resource implications
21. **Equalities** - Establishing a successful Local HealthWatch in York will enable the targeting of support towards activities which contribute towards all the equality outcomes set out in the draft Council Plan. It will be a requirement of the successful organisation(s) delivering Local HealthWatch to demonstrate and evidence their commitment to equal opportunities in the work of their organisations, in line with the Equalities Act 2010
22. **Legal** - There are no legal implications

23. **Crime and Disorder** - There are no crime and disorder implications
24. **Information Technology (IT)** - There are no information technology implications
25. **Property** - There are no property implications
26. **Other** -There are no other implications

Risk Management

27. There are risks of challenge to the validity of City of York Council's procurement and commissioning process if a HealthWatch contract is let without full and proper consultation with City wide partners. The thorough consultation processes that will be followed through the HealthWatch Pathfinder process will mitigate this risk.

Recommendations

28. The Cabinet Member is asked to note the report and approve the finalised service specifications for both Local HealthWatch and NHS Complaints Advocacy.
29. The Cabinet Member is asked to agree that the non ringfenced monies received from the Department of Health are used for the commissioning of Local HealthWatch and NHS Complaints Advocacy.

Reason: to provide high quality Local HealthWatch services for York.

Contact Details

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report:**

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Director of Communities and
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**Report
Approved**



Date 27.07.2012

Specialist Implications Officer(s) n/a

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report