

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Agenda
Item No.

8

Report to
Health and Wellbeing Board

On
20 November 2013

Report prepared by:
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Healthwatch England annual report 2012/13
Presented to Parliament pursuant to section 45 C (2) of the Health and Social Care Act
2008 as inserted by the Health and Social Care Act 2012
Final report

1. Purpose of Report

To present Healthwatch England annual report 2012/13.

2. Recommendation

2.1 That the Board note the report.

3. Background

3.1 This is the first Annual Report from Healthwatch England, the national consumer champion for health and social care in England.

3.2 This first report outlines two fundamental parts of Healthwatch England's work so far. They are:

- an overview of the current state of health and social care in England. Healthwatch England commissioned research including a survey and a face to face deliberative event, so they could understand what people really think about the care they receive
- an explanation of the role of Healthwatch England and local Healthwatch, as well as reporting on our activity for the first six months of Healthwatch England's life, from 1 October 2012 to 31 March 2013

3.3 Health and social care is fundamental to the people in this country. They are best able to articulate what they want from their care. That is why all Healthwatch work starts with the consumers' point of view.

3.4 Healthwatch England has been working with members of the public and this report contains quotes from them throughout.

- 3.5 A survey found that 72% of the public say they get good quality care. This is heartening. It might, at first sight, seem surprising that almost 94% of us think NHS and social care services could be improved.
- 3.6 The reason for this quickly becomes clear when you dig a bit deeper. A shocking 1 in 3 people say they are worried about basic levels of safety, with someone they know having experienced a serious mistake, abuse or preventable illness or death.
- 3.7 Taken together, these findings demonstrate the need for a fundamental change that puts the user at the heart of the service. To help drive this change, Healthwatch England thinks a set of rights in health and social care can help people become more empowered and engaged and help service providers and commissioners focus on the things that matter most to users and their carers.
- 3.8 The concept of consumer rights is a familiar one in many areas of our lives; nowhere more so than on the high street. Healthwatch England thought the concept could help people get what they want and need in health and social care. Their research shows that the public agree and they have helped to develop a set of consumer rights that they think work in health and social care.
- 3.9 Healthwatch England is uniquely placed to work with consumers to define a set of rights that can help people get what they need from health and social care. This is because the role of Healthwatch is to champion the rights of all people: children, young people and adults, from birth to death. And Healthwatch has a particular responsibility for championing the needs of those who are often not heard. We have a dual role to champion the needs of users of health and social care, as well as holding the system to account for how they successfully engage the public.
- 3.10 Healthwatch England has a national perspective on the things that affect people. However, they do not work alone as they form part of the Healthwatch network. Along with Healthwatch England, the network is made up of local Healthwatch across 152 localities, including Healthwatch Southend. These organisations are the eyes and ears on the ground. Since the launch of Healthwatch England, they have been busy developing the network, building the organisation and working with key partners to have an impact on the things that matter most to people.
- 3.11 This report provides a summary of Healthwatch England's work so far and lays out their mandate for future work.
- 3.12 Over the coming year, Healthwatch England will continue to refine their work on rights, in conversation with the public, stakeholders and partners. In the next annual report, they will lay out the complete set of rights that people expect when using health and social care. This will help consumers and users to understand their personal rights. Importantly, this should help to give them the

confidence to speak up about what works and what doesn't and give them reassurance that they will be taken seriously. It will also help Healthwatch England to work with commissioners, providers, regulators and policy makers to challenge them to improve health and care services to meet consumer expectations.

3.13 By listening long and hard to the public's voice, together we can make sure our health and social care services are focused and responsive to people's needs.

3.14 *"I hope Healthwatch will be created as a robust independent organisation that is taken seriously by those in the health service and more widely."*
David Cameron, Prime Minister

4. Rights

4.1 The report suggests the following eight consumer rights, developed with the public for health and social care.

The right to essential services – I have the right to a set of basic and essential treatment and care services at a defined standard.

The right to access - I have the right to access services on an equal basis with others, when I need them and in a way that works for me and my family.

The right to a safe, dignified and quality service – I have the right to high quality, safe services that treat me with dignity, compassion and respect.

The right to information and education – I have the right to information and education about how to take care of myself and what I am entitled to within the health and social care system.

The right to choose – I have the right to choose from a range of high quality services, products and providers within health and social care.

The right to be listened to - I have the right to have my concerns and views listened to and acted upon. I have the right to be supported in taking action if I am not satisfied with the service I have received.

The right to be involved - I am an equal partner in determining my own health and wellbeing. I have the right to be involved in decisions that affect my life and those affecting services in my local community.

The right to live in a healthy environment - I have the right to live in an environment that promotes positive health and wellbeing.

The full report can be found at [Appendix A](#).

5. Corporate Implications

- 5.1 Contribution to Council's Vision and Critical Priorities – becoming an excellent and high performing organisation.
- 5.2 Financial Implications – potential cross partnership savings should recommendations be implemented
- 5.3 Legal Implications – to be determined, dependent on duties under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.
- 5.4 People Implications – none at present
- 5.5 Property Implications – none at present.
- 5.6 Consultation – by Healthwatch England with the public.
- 5.7 Equalities Impact Assessment – none at present.
- 5.8 Risk Assessment – none at present.

6. Background Papers

- 6.1 There are no background papers

7. Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix A – Healthwatch England annual report 2012/13