

Question from Mr Ali to the Chairman of the Health & Wellbeing Board

Question:

According to Healthwatch England, local Healthwatch is accountable to its local authority. Healthwatch Southend published its 2015/16 annual report on Thursday 30 June 2016 and does not contain a comment from Southend-on-Sea Borough Council.

Is the Board satisfied that Healthwatch Southend (HWS) has delivered all its statutory duties so much so that it did not need to use its entire allocated funds throughout its three years of operation and how come the HWS does not spend its allocated budget to the full?

Answer

There was a change of Healthwatch provider in April 2016. The previous contract holder did pay back a sum of monies unspent. This is what is shown in the latest Annual Report and was due to a period of time with a vacant post and also a member of staff who was on long term absence. During the re-structure that then took place there was an underspend on staffing.

We are satisfied that the previous provider met all its statutory duties and a record of these can be found within the previous three annual reports, all available at the Healthwatch Southend website. The current contract holders are taking advice from Healthwatch England to ensure all the necessary functions are fulfilled and we do not anticipate that the current and/or future contract holders from September will underspend, as they have recruited staff to capacity over the contracted period and current staff will be eligible to transfer to the new provider if there is a change.

We can also confirm that the specification within the tender that is currently running has been approved by Healthwatch England. The 2015/16 Healthwatch annual report came via Southend on Sea Borough Council before publication and so we are involved in its verification before it is published.