

Update from the Board: Statements from the Chair

Healthwatch Slough CIC was incorporated as a company on 11th September 2013.

During the lead up to the incorporation of the company the Chair and Non-Executive Directors of the Board were appointed by an independent appointments panel. One post remains vacant and is currently being advertised again.

Healthwatch Slough CIC are anticipating the signing of the Slough Borough Council Contract by the end of January 2014.

Following the signing of the Contract Healthwatch Slough CIC will appoint its Lay Members who will join the existing directors who are:

Colin Pill – Chair

Sarah Brown – Independent Director with the portfolio for Governance

Arvind Sharma – Independent Director with the portfolio for Diversity and Engagement

Vacant – Independent Director with the portfolio for Finance

Malcolm Rigg – Member Nominated Director for Citizens Advice Slough

Marianne Storey – Member Nominated Director for Help and Care

Board members were recruited to provide a wide range of relevant and complementary business skills and experience from a range of sectors including health and social care. All independent directors are residents of Slough.

In anticipation of the Contract being signed, Healthwatch Slough CIC Board Members have been meeting to;

- Undertake induction and training to fulfil their roles
- Undertake the business required to set up the company, negotiate the contract, clarify roles and purpose and look at performance indicators and reporting
- Consider protocols to ensure it makes the best use of limited resources: how to respond to individual experiences, how to respond to requests for involvement in other work and committees (including paid work), how to complement and support inspections and other engagement/consultation activity in the area
- Oversee the work of the delivery teams; and
- Plan priorities for an ongoing Work Plan

The Board are planning opportunities for interaction with the public. Information relating to the activities of the Board will be published on the Healthwatch Slough Website.

In overseeing the work of the two delivery teams, the Healthwatch Slough CIC Board have been working closely with Help and Care and Citizen's Advice Slough.

The Community Research and Engagement, and the Evidence, Insight and Influencing elements of the Contract are being delivered by the staff team of Help and Care led by Caris Thomas, Healthwatch Slough Manager and supported by Manvinder Sagoo, Healthwatch Officer. This team of two have been working hard and focussing on;

- Supporting the Board through its set up development phase
- Promoting Healthwatch Slough by attending local events and community groups –in excess of 60 meetings and 15 presentations,
- Distributing leaflets, posters and other promotional material publicising Healthwatch
- Three specific projects which are planned for Jan – March
Healthwatch Projects
 - Wexham Park Hospital
 - Walk in Centre review
 - The community voice – Survey, Launch and Healthwatch Community Funding
- Reviewing the LINK Legacy Report; and
- Preparing to recruit a team of Healthwatch Slough Champions

The Information, Advice and Signposting element of the Contract is being delivered in two parts. Face to face information, advice and signposting is being delivered by Citizens Advice Slough. Arunjot Mushiana is the Healthwatch Advisor available every week day to talk to people about their experiences of health and social care.

Telephone, email and online Information, advice and signposting is being delivered by Help and Care. 68% of enquiries are by telephone, 21% by email. The team spend an average of 38 minutes per enquiry.

In undertaking these two Workstreams Healthwatch Slough is beginning to build a database of comments, issues, experiences and feedback from the general public. It will, over time, use this data to inform evidence based projects. The bank of data is growing daily and it is hoped will reach a point in the New Year where it is of a sufficient volume that it can be used to identify emerging themes and priorities from the consumers of health and social care in Slough. These themes and priorities will form the basis of Healthwatch Slough's ongoing Work Plan.

All Healthwatch organisations across the UK were required to be independent legal entities in their own right. This required the creation of an entirely new company in Slough. Whilst this will allow a fresh perspective on capturing the consumer experiences of health and social care in Slough, inevitably, as with any start-up operation, it takes time to establish a governance framework, recruit, induct and train a Board and a team, build capacity and develop work priorities to ensure future successes and effectiveness over the longer term. We are confident that the foundations we are putting in place will allow us to rapidly increase our community involvement in the short term.
