

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Slough Wellbeing Board **DATE:** 20 July 2016

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WARD(S): All

PART I **FOR INFORMATION**

HEALTHWATCH SLOUGH ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

1. Purpose of Report

To present the Board with the annual report of Healthwatch Slough for 2015/16.

2. Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

2.1 The Board is recommended to:

- a) Note the report and note the progress which Healthwatch Slough has achieved;
- b) Note the organisation's ongoing work as consumer champion for health and social care services.

3. The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

3a. The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy

Healthwatch Slough contributes to the delivery of the Slough Wellbeing Strategy priorities by providing an independent consumer voice, by contributing positively to reducing inequalities and improving the health and wellbeing of our residents and by helping them live more positive, active and resilient lives. It also contributes to the delivery of the Strategy's cross cutting theme of civic responsibility - Consumer engagement in health and social care decision making is a key element of people having more control over their own lives and contributing to improving the quality of services received by the whole community locally.

3b. Five Year Plan Outcomes

Healthwatch Slough contributes to the delivery of the Five Year Plan outcome that more people will take responsibility and manage their own health, care and support needs through addressing cross cutting themes such as prevention, early intervention and facilitating the integration of services.

4. Other Implications

- a) Financial - There are no financial implications associated with the proposed action.

b) Risk Management - None.

c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications - There are no Human Rights Act implications that arise as a result of this report.

d) Equalities Impact Assessment -The Annual Report states the steps which have been taken to get the views of people who are:

- under 21 or over 65
- volunteering or working in your area but who may not live in your area
- disadvantaged or people you believe to be vulnerable
- people who are seldom heard

5. Supporting Information

5.1 Healthwatch Slough is an independent champion for consumers and users of health and social care in Slough. It has the following statutory responsibilities:

- Promoting and supporting the involvement of local people in the commissioning, the provision and scrutiny of local care services.
- Enabling local people to monitor the standard of provision of local care services and whether and how local care services could and ought to be improved;
- Obtaining the views of local people regarding their needs for, and experiences of, local care services and importantly to make these views known;
- Making reports and recommendations about how local care services could or ought to be improved. These should be directed to commissioners and providers of care services, and people responsible for managing or scrutinising local care services and shared with Healthwatch England.
- Providing advice and information about access to local care services so choices can be made about local care services;
- Formulating views on the standard of provision and whether and how the local care services could and ought to be improved; and sharing these views with Healthwatch England.
- Making recommendations to Healthwatch England to advise the Care Quality Commission to conduct special reviews or investigations (or, where the circumstances justify doing so, making such recommendations direct to the CQC); and to make recommendations to Healthwatch England to publish reports about particular issues.
- Providing Healthwatch England with the intelligence and insight it needs to enable it to perform effectively.

5.2 It is also required to report on how it has delivered against these statutory activities and the impact that its work has had on the commissioning, provision and on the management of local health and care services.

5.3 The report (at Appendix A) outlines how local people's needs and experiences of health and care services have been obtained and how Healthwatch has provided people with information about local services and helped them navigate the local health and social care system. It also outlines the recommendations made to the Care Quality Commission (CQC), the number of and providers and commissioners that responded to information requests and the impact Healthwatch has made on service improvement.

5.4 Providing access to information and advice

The introduction of the Care Act is reshaping how residents will access information and advice about local services. 2016 has already seen the introduction a new independent information, advice and advocacy services provided by SPACE and Slough Advocacy with further developments in the pipeline with the development of a new strategy planned for later in the year and the introduction of a new e marketplace further integration and the establishment of asset based approaches to managing people's care needs. This will have an impact upon how Healthwatch provide access to information and advice about local services and how it can be effectively reshaped and aligned with this new environment to avoid duplication. We would recommend that Healthwatch and the new providers work more closely together to streamline the offer of how the public access and use information and signposting services and this is included in Healthwatch's forward looking plan.

5.5 Balancing 'critic' and 'friend' by developing a joint working protocol

Local Healthwatch has to balance two potentially conflicting roles: being an independent public voice, rooted in the community (the 'critic') which means seeking independent evidence of local people's views, and essentially communicating this evidence to local bodies and in some cases holding them to account for action; and being a strategic local partner working within the system (the 'friend') - working in partnership with providers and commissioners, sharing views and evidence to support improvement in services and getting involved in how their local evidence is used and acted upon.

Getting the balance between these two conflicting roles can be difficult. For instance knowing when to combine and move between these different approaches, so as to be both independent of the system holding it to account on behalf of the public, and at the same time 'at the table', able to take part in strategic decisions as a part of the system. This is a difficult balance to achieve, and it brings high risks of tensions and challenges both internally and externally as a result of differing expectations. To clarify the roles we propose the introduction of a joint working protocol between Healthwatch, the Wellbeing Board and Health Scrutiny will minimise confusion and misunderstanding at the strategic level.

6. **Comments of Other Committees**

None to date.

7. **Conclusion**

This report outlines the impact that Healthwatch Slough has had in the past year in highlighting key issues and effect service improvement. The service is due to be recommissioned from 1st April 2017

8. **Appendices Attached**

A – Healthwatch Slough Annual Report 2015/16.

9. **Background Papers**

None.