

## Developing Local Healthwatch in Portsmouth

- 1) As part of the [Health and Social Care Bill](#) currently going through the committee stage of Parliament, the current role of Local Involvement Networks (LINK) across the country is being abolished and a new organisation known as Local Healthwatch will take over the role of the LINK and incorporate a number of new functions. This is one part of a reorganisation of the NHS that will drastically change the health and social care landscape, giving more responsibilities to local authorities for its provision and commissioning and give a stronger voice to local communities and service users in the way the health service is run.
- 2) Local Healthwatch will build on the role of the Local Involvement Network (LINK) to be the consumer champion within the health and social care landscape. It will promote the views and feedback of patients and carers at every level of service commissioning.
- 3) The overall structure of the proposed health and social care sector is presented in figure 1 and can more information can be accessed through the [Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS white paper](#) and the [Healthwatch Transition Document](#).

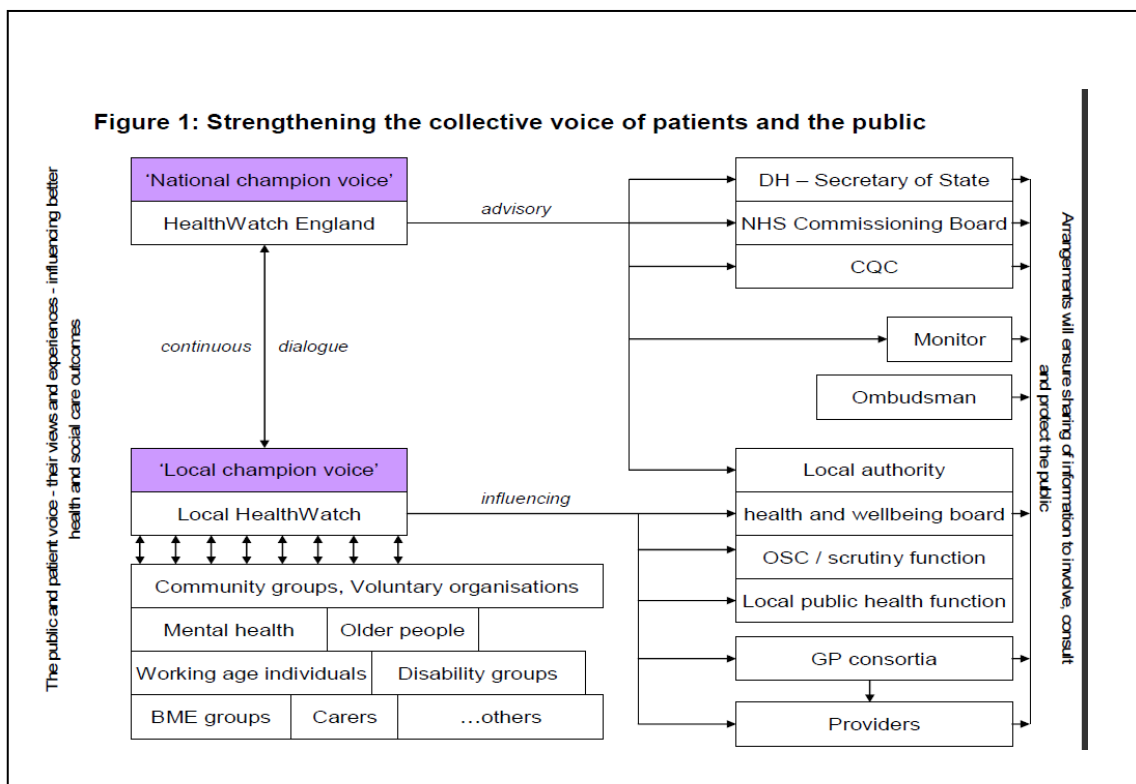


Fig 1 from Healthwatch Transition Document, p.13

- 4) Local Healthwatch will have a seat on the new Health and Wellbeing Board and so will have direct input into the decision making process to ensure the patients and consumer voice is always heard. It will also incorporate a number of new responsibilities listed below:
  - a. Provide the advocacy services that were previously provided by ICAS (after 2013)
  - b. Be a single point of contact for local people providing information and advice with health and social care needs
  - c. Have a seat on the Health and Wellbeing Board (details of which to be decided by PCC as the responsible authority)
  - d. Assist in the work on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the Joint Health and Wellbeing process
  - e. Provide local evidence based information and carry out community engagement activities. This evidence base will be used to represent the users at the Health & Wellbeing Board.
  
- 5) Because of the new responsibilities passing over to local authorities Portsmouth City Council will have to procure Local Healthwatch and all of the services it will provide by autumn 2012. In preparation for this Portsmouth City Council will be organising a Healthwatch development group to incorporate Council officers, healthcare professionals, scrutiny officials and of course current volunteers across the sector and LINK members. This wider network will hold monthly meeting focussing on a specific aspect of the new service to which some members of the network may wish to attend. The first general meeting will be held on the 16<sup>th</sup> September at 10am in Conference room A.

For more information of the new functions of Local Healthwatch please see:

The Healthwatch part of the [Care Quality Commission website](#).

Or contact

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