

# Healthwatch Wirral

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## Healthwatch - Previous information

### Healthwatch England (June 2013)

Healthwatch England is the independent consumer champion for health and social care in England. Working with a network of 152 local Healthwatch, to ensure that the voices of consumers and those who use services reach the ears of the decision makers.

Healthwatch England works across a broad spectrum that ranges from local organisations and specialist partners, to national bodies and government ministries. Visit their website at <http://www.healthwatch.co.uk/> or contact them at <http://www.healthwatch.co.uk/contact-us>

### New resources on Healthwatch and LINKs published (January, 2013)

They look to be evidence based on real experiences to highlight national issues and trends and raise these at the highest levels.

They are seeking views from all sections of the community, and have close ties with the many organisations that represent them, both at a local and national level.

The LGA have published a series of resources for local Healthwatch and LINKs members. The resources cover a range of topics including:

- How do we make the organisational memory of LINKs is carried forward?
- Knowledge and skills and competencies for an effective local Healthwatch
- Establishing local Healthwatch – working with district councils.

The publications can be downloaded from the LGA website at <http://www.local.gov.uk/publications>

### Wirral LINK - the forerunner of the new local HealthWatch organisation

The Wirral LINK is an independent network made up of individuals, community groups and organisations working together, to speak as one voice to influence and shape local health and social care services.

Their aims include putting people and communities at the heart of health and social care services, making sure that people's views are heard at all levels.

Their work involves finding out what people like and dislike about local services and work with people who plan and run them to help make them better for everyone in Wirral.

The work of LINK Wirral is very much linked to the JSNA where resident views can be collected and presented to commissioners and service planners to help them plan and provide appropriate services.

Visit LINK Wirral website - their information and ongoing local work at [www.linkwirral.org.uk/](http://www.linkwirral.org.uk/)

### **Healthwatch.co.uk website launched (July 2012)**

The CQC and Department of Health have launched a new website for Healthwatch at [www.healthwatch.co.uk](http://www.healthwatch.co.uk)

The website is being further developed during late summer and early autumn but guidance and templates on branding for Local Healthwatch organisations is already available as is a regular “news” feature. Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) continue to help shape services until April 2013 and the site also enables people to find contact details for their local LINK.

### **HealthWatch public consultation (December 2012)**

Voluntary Community Action Wirral (VCAW) working with Wirral LINK led a recent public Healthwatch consultation that was carried out in the latter stages of 2012.

This report is the summary of the data gained from this work. There were a total of 277 surveys returned containing answers on questions that can be generally split between the following categories:

- Knowledge of services available
- Preferences for contacting/being contacted by Healthwatch
- Inclusion information
- Qualitative data

For further information please contact VCAW on 0151 353 9700 or email [info@vcawirral.org.uk](mailto:info@vcawirral.org.uk) alternatively please visit the local LINK website at <https://www.linkwirral.org.uk/>

### **What’s happening about Local Healthwatch in Wirral? (Summer 2012)**

Wirral currently has a successful Local Involvement Network known as a LINK which is a community based, locally accountable network of individuals, groups and organisations designed to strengthen patient, public and user voice in the commissioning, provision and scrutiny of local Health and Social Care services. HealthWatch will replace LINKs from April 2013.

To ensure a smooth transition from LINKs to HealthWatch a group has been set up which has representatives from the Board of the Wirral LINK, the Local Authority and various NHS organisations including the local commissioning groups. The group has developed a model of what HealthWatch in Wirral could look like and the relationships between the various elements and this is set out below.

The Healthwatch has to be a corporate body embedded in local communities and the legal form of this is yet to be decided and we are waiting for further regulations to come from central Government before the final decision can be made.

The local authority, Wirral Council, will provide the funding for local Healthwatch and will remain the accountable body. They also currently fund the local LINK and will do so until 31st March 2013. In addition there is funding available to make sure the transition to HealthWatch goes as smoothly as possible.

The Healthwatch board will be established by April 2013 which will purchase its support in the short term from Voluntary Community Action Wirral (VCAW) in their role as the main infrastructure organisation in Wirral. This will bring some continuity to the system as VCAW presently provide support to LINKs. Once the fledgling

HealthWatch Board has established itself it will be able to tender for this support itself. The actual shape and membership of the board is under discussion and any views or comments would be welcomed.

The Healthwatch Board will also employ a Healthwatch Manager to provide them and the HealthWatch members with both business and functional support.

The Local Healthwatch Board will have a duty to provide influencing and signposting services. This can be done by either directly employed staff or volunteers or alternatively HealthWatch may wish to purchase these services from another provider(s). How this will be done is under consideration and an update will be provided for you on this website as soon as it is available.

Your questions, comments and views are welcomed and you can submit these through the LINKs home page [www.linkwirral.org.uk/](http://www.linkwirral.org.uk/)

### **Other information**

[North West Transition Alliance - HealthWatch Briefing - June 2012](#)

[North West Local HealthWatch Progress Report - March 2012](#)

[Local Healthwatch regulations – a summary report of engagement from the Department of Health \(31 July, 2012\)](#)

### **What is a Local HealthWatch?**

The Health and Social care Act 2012 proposes that HealthWatch will be the new consumer champion for both publically funded health and social care. It will exist in two distinct forms – Local Healthwatch at local level and Healthwatch England at national level.

Local Healthwatch will gather people's views on and experiences of the health and social care system and this will influence those who purchase and provide services to ensure that the services are what people want or need from them and so they can be more responsive to what matters to people.

Local Healthwatch will through its membership of statutory bodies such as the Health and Wellbeing Board will be able to influence the strategies on which local commissioning decisions are made and will therefore be involved in the planning of services from the start.

The evidence and insight gathered locally will also influence the national policy advice and guidance through HealthWatch England.

Local Healthwatch will also be able to support individuals at a local level by providing information and advice about access to services and choice e.g. signposting. The intention is to enable people to take more control of their own health treatment and care and understand and use increased choices available to them.

Because people don't always know where to go to share their experiences, their concerns or compliments or understand what difference they can make by speaking up it is intended that Local Healthwatch will provide a single point of contact to do this and should be imbedded and networked within their local communities. It should use the experience and expertise of the public, community and voluntary sector and others at a local level, particularly working with those groups who often find it hard to

get their voices heard.

The local authority will have responsibility for commissioning Local HealthWatch.

For further, more detailed information follow the link to "Healthwatch a strong voice for people".

<http://healthandcare.dh.gov.uk/files/2012/03/Local-Healthwatch-policy.pdf>