

**FORMAL MINUTE FOR CIRCULATION**



**HealthWatch Programme Board  
Minutes of meeting held Thursday 19 May 2011**

**Present**

Joan Saddler (Chair)	Marianne GRIFFITHS	Patrick VERNON
Malcolm ALEXANDER	Frances HASLER	Lisa WALDER
Tony BENNETT	Nick KENNEDY	Nigel THOMPSON
Chris BOOTE	Alyson MORLEY	Frank Ursell
Kasey CHAN	Dave SHIELDS	
Lorraine DENORIS	Mary SIMPSON	Timothy MODU (observer)
Jonathan GARDEN	Jan SOBIERAJ	Jo WEALLEANS (minute taker)

**Apologies**

Cynthia BOWER	Jill FINNEY	Paul STREETS
Yve BUCKLAND	Valerie HARRISON	Jeremy TAYLOR
Andrew COZENS	Lucy MAKINSON	
Sarah CROSSLAND	Glen MASON	
Ann FARRAR	Sarah NORMAN	

**Not present**

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**AGENDA**

**ACTIONS**

This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the HealthWatch Programme Board.

**Agenda item 1: Welcome, introductions and matters arising**

The Chair welcomed members and highlighted recent discussions she had with Department of Communities and Local Government on the subject of engagement and in particular how to get local authorities and LINKs working better together.

Following a couple of points of clarification on the formal minute from the last meeting, the Board agreed them and the action tracker.

The Chair invited members for any matters arising. Mary Simpson advised that the Department received 74 joint proposals from local authorities and LINKs to be HealthWatch pathfinders and that no action could be taken to announce them until after the 'pause'/listening exercise. Mary also advised that the team were still awaiting the outcome of the department's business planning. Nick Kennedy offered to produce early key points from the board meeting to benefit wider membership of the Advisory Group and the Chair agreed that the Secretariat approves them on her behalf.

**Nick Kennedy  
Secretariat**

**Agenda item 2: Update from the Advisory Group**

The Chair explained to new members of the Board that the role of HealthWatch Advisory Group was to: bring up issues 'on the ground' to strengthen the development of Healthwatch and Healthwatch England and ensure LINKs are involved in the process. The Chair invited Patrick Vernon, Chair of the HealthWatch Advisory Group, to provide an update.

Patrick Vernon advised that the group met on 6 May, which Lord Howe (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Quality) and Stephen Bubb (NHS Future Forum) attended and provided the group with an opportunity to take part in the Listening Exercise.

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Patrick reported that the group had agreed to move forward and the work was underway on the four task and finish groups. Patrick advised that the following were issues that remain a concern for members of the Advisory Group: the transformation (as opposed to abolition) of Local Involvement Networks (LINKs); clarity on the relationships with the National Commissioning Board, HealthWatch England, and Monitor's role as the regulator in supporting patient and public involvement; the need to ensure synergy and quality assurance around GP consortia and local authorities commissioning and planning processes to shift and share power; and that there was no LINK representative on the NHS Future Forum. Patrick added the importance of inclusion and disabilities for the Board's deliberations.

The Chair thanked Patrick for his update and advised members that she and Paul Streets, Director of Public and Patient Experience and Engagement, have raised the profile of HealthWatch in the Listening Exercise. The Chair commented on the need for the HealthWatch programme to move forward through addressing the issues raised and invited comments from Board members.

The Board discussed the issues raised. Nick Kennedy advised that LINKs' sense of isolation could be mitigated with LINK representation on the NHS Future Forum and that a greater gap between the group and Board meetings might help in planning. Alyson Morley welcomed theme 3 of the listening exercise on the important distinction and equal importance it makes to the wider public accountability issues e.g. consortia and the mechanism of patient/user involvement. Jan Sobieraj commented that this was about traction in the system that has raised fears about loss of influence but that there was an opportunity to address this during 2011/12. Marianne Griffiths and Lorraine Denoris added that this was an opportunity to build on the relationships between LINKs, commissioners and providers e.g. authorisation process.

The Board agreed with the Chair's suggestion for a paper on the point of entry for Local HealthWatch into the local commissioning pipeline e.g. authorisation process and during transition which could enable influence on local decisions.

**Lorraine  
Denoris**  
**Secretariat**

### Agenda item 3: Establishing HealthWatch England – the principles

Frances Hasler introduced the outline paper for principles of HealthWatch England, that this was direction setting rather than detail to ensure that the establishment of Healthwatch England (HWE) was consistent with the White Paper and the intention of the Health and Social Care Bill. Frances advised that there will be more work done with the Advisory Group with a view to return to the July Board meeting for a further discussion.

The Board made the following suggestions for the next iteration: important to describe the relationship between national and local HealthWatch as influential and more than a conversation that ends at the national level; accountability should be a principle; to be inclusive means to be promoting as well as working towards it; a role for HealthWatch England to be enabling to Local HealthWatch organisations to involve local people in their activities; reference to public health, NHS Constitution, and the role of HealthWatch England to improving health outcomes.

**Frances  
Hasler**

The Board agreed that the importance of HealthWatch England to listen to local voices and asked that the principles paper return with these suggestions in mind.

**Agenda item 4: Defining independence for HealthWatch**

Mary Simpson introduced the independence paper highlighting the different ways to define this because it can be about how HealthWatch would be 'seen'. Mary advised of the aspects that enable an organisation to operate independently including acting impartially and being self-governing, supported by others and establishing responsible relationships i.e. constructive and balance in the way in which concerns are raised and recipients being open and generous with the information.

The Board welcomed the paper, which they commented was good and helpful. Alyson Morley advised of a self-assessment procurement tool available to local authorities and this could help to gain mutual understanding on independence. Marianne Griffiths advised that it could help shape the rules of engagement and holding people to account. Patrick Vernon advised that it provided an alternative mechanism to explore the options through local negotiation. Malcolm Alexander advised that real independence as local voice champions should not be compromised by funding constraints.

The Board asked that Lorraine Denoris worked with Alyson Morley, Marianne Griffiths and the HealthWatch team on reaching mutual agreements on independence and rules of engagement to inform the self-assessment tool for local authorities.

**Lorraine Denoris**

**Agenda item 5: Working with local authorities**

Dave Shields introduced the paper, which highlighted that from a commissioning point of view, local authorities needed to know what they were commissioning. Dave explained that this was to fulfil the EU procurement rules i.e. effectively need a year's timetable to have something in place by July 2012, and there needed to be sufficient information to understand if Local HealthWatch was a hugely complex new type of organisation and the option to use an alternative route such as Grant-in-aid. Dave advised that there was more appetite for HealthWatch than for LINKs at a strategic and member level.

The Board welcomed the useful paper, which provided an opportunity to bridge the relationship between local authorities and LINKs to work towards a Local HealthWatch in the future. Nick Kennedy advised that this provided an opportunity for co-production; and Chris Boote added that this could also provide an opportunity for conversations about appropriate levels of funding. Alyson Morley advised that guidance might be helpful to local authorities in the autumn and queried if the pathfinders could help by raising intelligent questions for LINKs and the community to work through and develop practical tools for implementation.

The Chair asked Board members interested to be involved in developing some of this work with Dave Shields to let the secretariat know about forming a task and finish group to deliver this.

**Board members**  
**Secretariat**

**Agenda item 6: Update on the Risk Register**

Kasey Chan introduced the updated risk register and explained there were: 17 risks on the register, of which there have been four revisions to reflect previous Board discussions. These were: risk 4 on buy-in of LINKs (up to an Amber-Red rating); risk 6 on funding cuts to voluntary and community organisations (up to a Red rating); risk 9 on impact of local authority budgetary constraints (up to a Red rating); and risk 13 on LINKs feeling isolated (up to Amber Green rating).

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There were three issues to agree how the risk register captured them and these were: further clarity required on the role of Monitor; independence discussion sufficiently captured under risk 11; and creating a new risk on equality.

The Board clarified that the role of Monitor was critical to influencing national and local voice and that the advisory role of HealthWatch England would mitigate this; this would be a new risk to add to the register. The Board agreed risk 11 and to creating a new risk on equality and inclusion.

**Kasey Chan**

The Board asked that substantive action needs to be taken in relation to any red rated risks and the Chair advised support would be sought from the DH Local Government Transition Board to facilitate local authorities to support Local HealthWatch during difficult period of reduced budgets.

**Joan Saddler**

### Agenda item 7: Communications update

Frances Hasler provided an update on action taken to develop communications for HealthWatch and highlighted the work underway on branding and the online forum.

The Board noted the update and advised that the voluntary sector national organisations such as the NVCO and National Voices could support the lead communications from the Department and the Care Quality Commission.

**Frances Hasler**

### AOB

The Board made no comments on the updated information papers. The Chair invited any other business.

Alyson Morley raised the issue of clarifying HealthWatch functions to develop its form to fit with the local tapestry. Nick Kennedy clarified the competency issue that may have been raised through discussion about LINKs, at this meeting, and advised that most LINKs have the skills to be Local HealthWatch organisations. Chris Boote raised the importance of Health and Wellbeing boards potentially triggering concerns for CQC.

Malcolm Alexander asked about the status of Board papers after the meeting. Mary Simpson advised the Board's agreement to circulate formal minutes and suggested that individuals contacted the secretariat about the board papers.

**Board members  
Secretariat**

In summing up, the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions and confirmed that a formal minute will be circulated. The next HealthWatch Programme Board meeting will be on 21 July.

*HealthWatch Programme Board Secretariat  
June 2011*