

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>Resilient Communities Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	Ellen Miller, Chief Executive, Empowerment
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	2 July 2015

## HEALTHWATCH BLACKPOOL

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 This report explains the duties relating to Local Authority Health Scrutiny regarding Healthwatch, new arrangements for Healthwatch Blackpool and the programme of work for the coming year.

### 2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 To note the changes to Healthwatch Blackpool and to consider Healthwatch's programme of work for 2015/2016.

To consider how to undertake effective scrutiny of Healthwatch Blackpool in the future.

### 3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

- 3.1 Health Scrutiny functions are set up by law and guidance, and this includes duties to work with local healthwatch.

- 3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

- 3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? N/A

- 3.3 Other alternative options to be considered: None

### 4.0 Council Priority:

- 4.1 The relevant Council Priority is "Improve health and well-being especially for the most disadvantaged."

## 5.0 Background Information

### 5.1 *What is Healthwatch?*

5.1.1 Under the Health and Social Care Act (2012) every upper tier or unitary local authority is required to commission an independent provider to fulfil the duties of Healthwatch at a local level. These are to:

- “provide information and advice to the public about accessing health and social care services and choice in relation to aspects of those services;
- make the views and experiences of people known to Healthwatch England helping it to carry out its role as national champion;
- make recommendations to Healthwatch England to advise the Care Quality Commission to carry out special reviews or investigations into areas of concern (or, if the circumstances justify it, go direct to the CQC with their recommendations, for example if urgent action were required by the CQC);
- promote and support the involvement of people in the monitoring, commissioning and provision of local care services;
- obtain the views of people about their needs for and experience of local care services and make those views known to those involved in the commissioning, provision and scrutiny of care services; and
- make reports and make recommendations about how those services could or should be improved.”

5.1.2 Although the Council holds the funds and is responsible for commissioning the existence of a local Healthwatch, the organisation must be fully independent and the Council cannot determine the work programme or vet the recommendations of Healthwatch. Healthwatch also has rights to “enter and view” health and care services, and health and care providers (including the Council) are required to respond to any issues or concerns raised. Healthwatch has a direct referring relationship with the Care Quality Commission, and a prescribed role as a member of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

### 5.2 *Duties on Health Scrutiny relating to Healthwatch*

5.2.1 The Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 and supporting guidance place the following specific requirements on local authorities:

- The local authority must have a mechanism in place to deal with referrals (including reports and recommendations on service improvements) made

by Local Healthwatch organisations<sup>1</sup>. These must be acknowledged within 20 working days and Healthwatch must be kept informed of any action taken by the Local Authority on this matter.

- Health scrutiny must develop working relationships and good communication with local Healthwatch.
- To ensure clarity at a local level about respective roles between the health scrutiny function, the NHS, the local authority, health and wellbeing boards and local Healthwatch.
- In the light of the Francis Report, health scrutiny will need to consider ways of independently verifying information provided by relevant NHS bodies and relevant health service providers – for example, by seeking the views of local Healthwatch.

5.2.2 The Government guidance<sup>2</sup> on Health Scrutiny underlines the relevance of Healthwatch for Health Scrutiny committees:

*“Local Healthwatch organisations...have specific roles which complement those of health scrutiny bodies...This can enable local Healthwatch to act as the “eyes and ears” of patients and the public; to be a means for health scrutiny to supplement and triangulate information provided by service providers; and to gain an additional impression of quality of services, safety and issues of concern around specific services and provider institutions.*

*Health scrutiny bodies and local Healthwatch are likely each to benefit from regular contact and exchange of information about their work programmes. It may also be helpful in planning work programmes, to try to ensure that certain aspects are aligned”.*

5.3 *What is happening at Healthwatch Blackpool?*

5.3.1 Healthwatch Blackpool started in April 2013, running as a separate company with a support contract with the local branch of the charity Groundworks. Earlier this year the Council retendered the service, and Empowerment were the successful bidder,

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation 21 of the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/324965/Local\\_authority\\_health\\_scrutiny.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/324965/Local_authority_health_scrutiny.pdf)

taking on the service from April 2015.

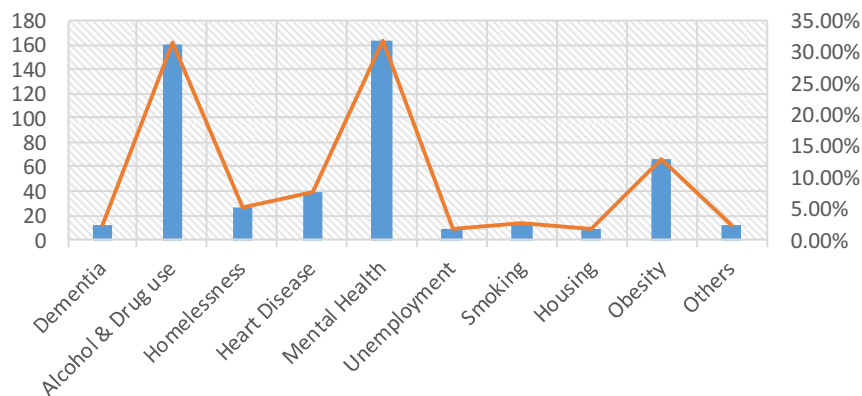
5.3.2 Empowerment is a locally based charity, formed in 2013 from the merger of Blackpool Advocacy (established 1994) and Lancaster Women’s Aid (est. 1991). It works to provide independent advocacy and support to people affected by a range of social issues and health and care problems. In order to retain independence of advocacy they do not provide any services commissioned to meet eligible care needs.

5.3.2 Empowerment’s plan is for Healthwatch Blackpool to:-

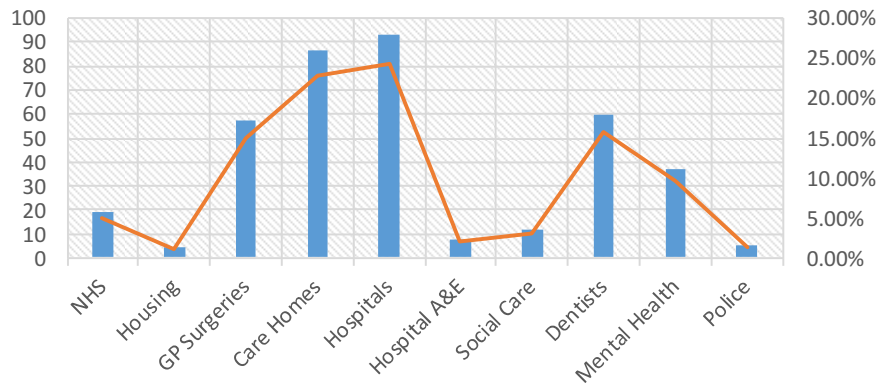
- Undertake consultation to determine priorities for consumers in their use of health and care services;
- To put together a rolling programme of one “Consumer Review” and one consultation exercise per month;
- To engage a wide range of local people to become members of Healthwatch Blackpool and to get involved as Community Researchers, Community Networkers or members of the Healthwatch Board; and
- To produce monthly bulletins outlining what is happening in health and care locally, and how people can get involved in getting their voices heard.

5.3.3 The consultation to determine priorities is now complete, and consisted of over 400 responses, gained through online survey, outreach survey work at a variety of events, venues and activities, plus two consultation events. Questions were deliberately open to allow consumers to articulate concerns in their own terms. The results were:

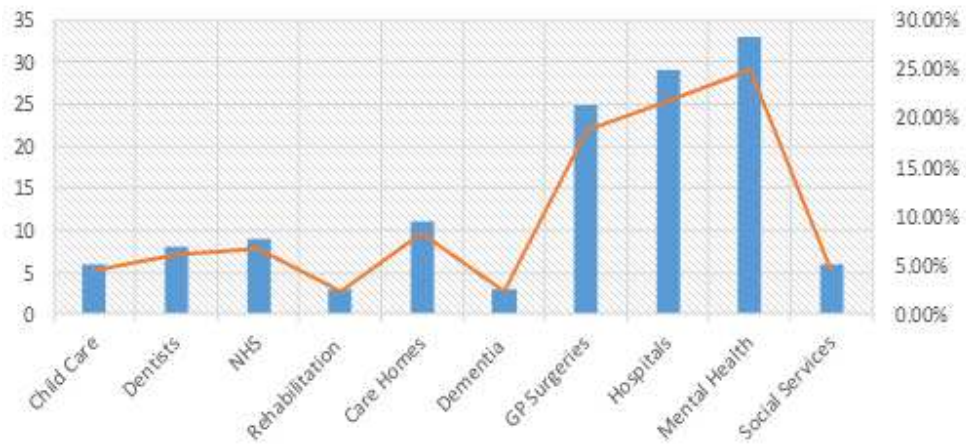
Which are the biggest health and care issues in Blackpool?



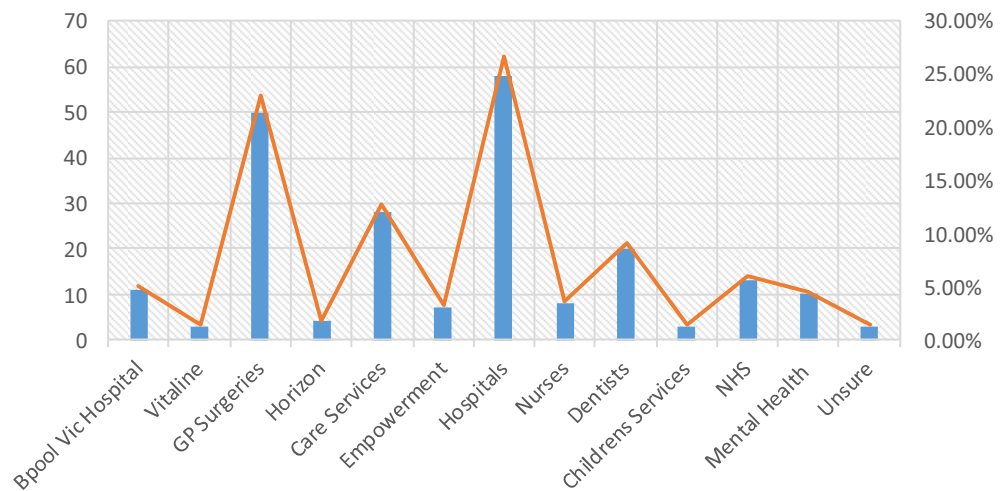
Which services are NOT working well?



Which services could be better at listening to the people who use them?



Which health and care services ARE working well?



(full report including comments available on request)

- 5.3.4 On the basis of this consultation, analysis of current trends and the workplans for Healthwatch England, Care Quality Commission and local provision, Healthwatch Blackpool Board will be agreeing their programme of Consumer-led reviews and consumer consultations over the next 12 months on June 29.
- 5.4 The work of Healthwatch Blackpool is also subject to scrutiny by the committee as the guidance says: “While continuing to be independent organisations able to decide their own priorities and programmes of work, (local Healthwatch) will account to the local authority for their effectiveness and use of public funds”<sup>3</sup>
- 5.5 The Committee is therefore asked to consider their arrangements for receiving the reports and recommendations of Healthwatch Blackpool, and its preferred method for checking on Healthwatch Blackpool’s effectiveness.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

**List of Appendices: None**

**6.0 Legal considerations:**

6.1 As outlined above

**7.0 Human Resources considerations:**

7.1 None

**8.0 Equalities considerations:**

8.1 No Equalities Impact Assessment required – differential impact of health and care will be considered throughout Healthwatch’s work, and Empowerment is committed to extending membership of Healthwatch across the local community.

**9.0 Financial considerations:**

9.1 None

**10.0 Risk management considerations:**

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<sup>3</sup> Regulation 21 of the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013

10.1 If Health Scrutiny does not fully engage with the work of Healthwatch Blackpool they will be in breach of regulations defining their role and operation.

**11.0 Ethical considerations:**

11.1 Empowerment is a sustainable local charity with clear ethical policies. The provision of Healthwatch is entirely in line with the Nolan principles and high standards of accountability for public services.

**12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:**

12.1 Included in the report.

**13.0 Background papers:**

13.1 Healthwatch Blackpool Priorities Consultation Report 2015