

City of London LINK – Healthwatch Position Paper 10th August 2012 By the City of London LINK Steering Group

The City of London LINK seeks to achieve transition into Healthwatch City of London. It was awarded Healthwatch pathfinder status in August 2011 and since then has followed a clear action plan to build a suitable legal and financial foundation to enable it to become Healthwatch. This has included devising appropriate governing documents such as a memorandum and articles of association.

In order for Healthwatch to be successful in the City of London, the LINK believes that Healthwatch will need to be:

Sufficiently funded to undertake its duties

Local Healthwatch will need to represent the resident and worker population as well as tertiary service users at Barts. However, provisional funding levels from central government are calculated in relation to the number of residents in the City. This funding may not be sufficient alone, and if the organisation is to carry out its statutory duties, it must be sufficiently funded.

Structured to work independently

It is essential that Healthwatch can carry out its functions independently from commissioners and providers of health and social care services, enabling it to conduct its scrutinizing role without fear or favour.

Seen to be independent, competent and professional.

It is vital that Healthwatch is trusted by those who may use the organisation, and be accountable to them.

Seamless in transition

It is critical that momentum is maintained during the transition. The public need to receive an on-going service through the transition period and the work and enthusiasm of the current members of the City of London LINK must be transferred into Healthwatch. The LINK has formed a strong foundation on which Healthwatch can be built, and through which a smooth transition can be implemented.

Key achievements include:

Robust governance arrangements

The LINK has developed clear and transparent governance structures enabling the LINK to work as an accessible and inclusive body. It has formed a strong and accountable Steering Group, elected by the membership and reflecting the diversity of the members.

Strong membership

The LINK has a membership of over 180 local people and organisations and through these relationships has access to a wealth of local knowledge, skills and experience about health and social care provision across the local area. Active members contribute their knowledge into our work to influence service planning, policy and delivery.

Improved local services

The LINK is guided by community intelligence and priorities identified in the JSNA the LINK has developed an effective work plan which is focused on a range of local priority issues. The LINK has made significant contributions towards developing the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. This work has enabled the LINK to use its local knowledge to help develop local policy, influence local service development, and to strengthen relationships with partner organisations.

Engagement with the wider population (beyond LINK membership)

The LINK has developed a varied programme for engaging with the local community. The Community Champions Programme has enabled the LINK to reach diverse communities and ensure there is a regular dialogue about their health and social care issues which can be included into the LINK work plan. Through regularly attending community events such as residents meetings, local fetes and volunteering fairs the LINK has forged strong relationships with local residents.

Constructive working relationships

The LINK has developed positive, effective relationships with local statutory partners, including the City of London Corporation. The LINK has already developed good working relationships with new bodies being created by the Health and Social Care Act, including the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Clinical Commissioning Group, and the PCT cluster.