

Chairs Report

Dash Review

The announcement, through a leak to the Daily Mail, that all local Healthwatches were to be closed was offensive in how it was done, and unfortunate in terms of a dialogue of the importance of future independent patient voice. We've spoken with our Commissioners, who were very responsive as well as concerned and will continue to ensure we keep up close links with Salford City Council going forward.

I've reported previously about proposals by Healthwatch England to commission all Healthwatch services. I've been concerned about two issues – the loss of a local link and the failure to address funding. It appears that a less than accurate picture of our work as local Healthwatches was portrayed during the preparation of the Review. It is ironic that Healthwatch England have also been recommended for absorption within the Department of Health.

Details about next steps remain sketchy – these changes require legislation, and it is unlikely this could be completed until April 2027. In the meanwhile, the statutory requirement for Healthwatches continues, and we will be expected to fulfil the contract in what are demanding circumstances. I **recommend** we continue to work closely with our Commissioners on delivering our contract, the prospect of a GM agreement on independent patient voice and transitional arrangements.

The conversation with Penny Dash has been interesting. She favours retention of independent voice, but within the system. Her reasoning is she was told that local Healthwatch work was patchy, not consistently implemented and she wanted a strategic role for patient voice within providers. Penny Dash has also been clear that although not covered in her report that funding for Healthwatches should be safeguarded for that independent patient voice.

Discussions at a Greater Manchester level, within HW in Greater Manchester and with Warren Heppollette from the ICB have opened up a sliver of an opportunity. Following up on a suggestion of mine we decided to follow the money. There is £1.7m for Healthwatch work within GM. Working from the assumption that this money is safeguarded this allows for commissioning of independent voice from April 2027. Warren on behalf of the ICB has agreed to discussions with ourselves around how this might work. Penny Dash would also be invited to attend.

This allows a prospect of Healthwatch, in some form, being part of the post 2027 future, and the ability for us and colleague Healthwatches to help shape that future. I **recommend** that we agree to continue such discussions.

Board Members

Following the interviews for HW Salford Chair there are two appointments to the Board today. Both attended the emergency Board meeting on 10th July and I **recommend** that they are appointed at the beginning of this meeting to allow them to fully participate.

Sam has been approached by another prospective Board Member. I've emailed them about a discussion but not received a response.

Northern Care Alliance

Despite more promises, paved with good intentions, no Partnership Board has been called.

Meetings

3rd June – GM Mental Health Foundation Trust
28th May, 17th July and 25th July - Healthwatch in Greater Manchester –
23rd and 24th June – Chair pre-meeting and Interviews
30th June – Paul Walsh and Lauren Fairey, Salford CC Commissioners
1st July - HW Salford Fare
2nd July – Salford CC Health and Adult Scrutiny Panel
27th June and 4th July – HW England Dash Review briefings
17th July – Sam Cook

Future meetings

1st August - Sam Cook
19th August – Lauren Fairey and Sam Cook