

Cabinet

7<sup>th</sup> April 2020

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Cabinet Member for Adult Services - Councillor M Mutton

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Deputy Chief Executive

**Ward(s) affected:**

All

**Title:**

Healthwatch Coventry – Grant Aid Agreement

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**Is this a key decision?**

No - although the proposals affect more than two electoral wards, the impact is not expected to be significant.

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**Executive Summary:**

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 placed a statutory responsibility on the City Council to commission an efficient and effective local Healthwatch, which works to strengthen the voice of patients and the public who use health and social care services and speak out on their behalf.

The Healthwatch network across England works together to share information, expertise and learning in order to improve health and social care services for adults.

Healthwatch Coventry was established in 2013 through the Here 2 Help Consortium (now dissolved) and the service was grant funded. The service is now managed through Voluntary Action Coventry, which was one of the constituent members of Here 2 Help Consortium.

The proposals contained within this report are for Healthwatch Coventry is to continue to fund through grant agreement to 2023. This will enable the local focus and understanding of Coventry's Health and Care system gained by Coventry Healthwatch since its inception to continue. Cabinet's approval for this approach is requested to enable the continued service to carry on beyond current arrangements that end on 30th July 2020.

**Recommendations:**

Cabinet is requested to:

- 1) Approve entering into a new grant aid agreement for Healthwatch Coventry from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023

**List of Appendices included:**

None

**Background papers:**

None

**Other useful documents**

None

**Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

No

**Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

No

**Will this report go to Council?**

No

## **Report title:** Healthwatch Coventry – Grant Aid Agreement

### **1. Context (or background)**

1.1. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 placed a duty on the Council to commission a Healthwatch service to assist in the improvement of health and social care services.

1.2. Healthwatch functions in two ways:

- A national body – Healthwatch England which was established as part of the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Healthwatch England has reporting lines from local Healthwatch organisations and advises NHS Commissioning, Local Authorities and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. It has the authority to recommend that action is taken by CQC where there are concerns about health and social care services.
- A Local Healthwatch - the City Council is required under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to ensure that there is an effective and efficient local Healthwatch in the City. Healthwatch Coventry has reporting lines into Healthwatch England.

1.3. Healthwatch acts as a 'Consumer Champion' and 'Watchdog' to represent the view of Coventry's health and social care service users, advocating and influencing the delivery and commissioning of Health and Care services. In summary Healthwatch Coventry has the following main functions:

- Gathering views and understanding the experiences of Coventry's service users.
- Promoting and supporting the involvement of service users in the commissioning and provision of locals' services and how they are scrutinised
- Recommending investigations or special reviews of services via Healthwatch England or directly to CQC.
- Providing advice and information about access to services and support for making informed choices
- Making the views and experiences of service users known to Healthwatch to enable it to function as a national champion.

1.4. Healthwatch Coventry is supported by a network of local volunteers made up of Coventry residents. Volunteer knowledge about the city's health and social care services is well embedded and has grown considerably since the service was first commissioned. As an example, Healthwatch Coventry was one of the few Healthwatches in England during 2018 to represent home support service users by engaging with a sample of the 1100 Coventry recipients of the service on an individual basis. This was made possible through the support from local and experienced volunteers.

1.5. During 2018/19 Healthwatch Coventry through its information service also helped over 350 Coventry residents with health care enquiries relating to:

- Concerns about medical care
- Problems getting a diagnosis or unhappiness with a diagnosis
- The nursing care that people received
- The way that staff and services communicated with patients (from GP receptionists to hospital consultants).
- Challenges that people have accessing services, or people asking how they would be able to access Services because they did not know about them.

- 1.6. Healthwatch Coventry also provides the NHS Complaints Advocacy services, assisting the Council in discharging its duty to deliver a service to support people wishing to make a complaint about local NHS services. It dealt with 100 referrals during 2018/19. The service had a total accumulative total of 134 cases during 2018/19.
- 1.7. The Council is keen to embrace the opportunities presented by the continued grant funding of the service to continue to build on the work achieved since 2013. This in part will be through re-focusing and re-designing some activities by engaging with hard to reach / engage with groups. As Coventry and Warwickshire develops as a health and care system there may opportunities for both Coventry and Warwickshire healthwatch to work closer together to support system development. Particularly where there are cross-over points, where organisations serve both a Coventry and Warwickshire population.

## **2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

The following Options were considered:

### **2.1. Option 1: (Recommended Option) Enter into a new Grant Aid Agreement for Coventry Healthwatch**

- 2.2. This would seek to provide grant funding for the service until 31st July 2023. It would allow the continuation of Healthwatch through Voluntary Action Coventry to carry on working collaboratively and maintain a strong local presence in the City, close to Coventry's communities.
- 2.3. This option would also seek to continue to build on the local volunteer network that Healthwatch Coventry uses to support its full-time staff in performing their duties and engaging with Coventry residents on delivery and shape of services. The current establishment of volunteers is approximately 40 members who collectively contributed 1420 hours of their own time to support the work of Healthwatch in Coventry.
- 2.4. The continuation of this option would also enable the continued links to the voluntary sector in the city through Voluntary Action Coventry (VAC), which manages Healthwatch Coventry. This is a robust link to the voluntary sector and wouldn't be possible through another provider.
- 2.5. Grant conditions would include implementation of the new Healthwatch England Quality Assurance Framework with Key Performance indicators in relation to this.

### **2.6. Option 2: Commence an open tender to secure a provider of Healthwatch Coventry**

- 2.7. This would involve the tendering of the service to source a provider to deliver the service. This would present risks through the potential loss of the relationships and knowledge that Healthwatch Coventry has established. It would also risk the continued contribution of volunteers without any assurance that greater value would be achieved.

### **2.8. Option 3: A single Healthwatch service across Coventry and Warwickshire**

- 2.9. An option for a shared service across Coventry and Warwickshire has been considered. The Health and Social Care Act requires each area Healthwatch to have its own identity, governance and structure, so an amalgamation is not within this requirement.

### **3. Results of consultation undertaken**

- 3.1. Surveys were conducted with key partnership organisations, stakeholders and with Healthwatch Membership during December 2019. The results were largely positive, but the membership survey indicated some areas for improvement particularly around performance and responses to enquiries.

### **4. Timetable for implementing this decision**

- 4.1. Should Cabinet approve the proposal outlined grant funding will commence on 1st August 2020.

### **5. Comments from Director of Finance and Corporate Services**

#### **5.1. Financial implications**

Healthwatch is funded by a mix of Local Reform and Community Voices Grant and core funding. The existing grant had been fixed at £239,000.

During the initial development of the service a Council post was in place as part of the funding package to assist with developing the service. With the service well developed, this post is no longer required and is currently vacant. Some of the funding for this post will be used to support an increase in the annual grant value to £261,000.

#### **5.2. Legal implications**

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 places a responsibility on the Council to commission a local Healthwatch. There is also a legal obligation for the Council to make available an NHS complaints advocacy.

### **6. Other implications**

#### **6.1. How will this contribute to the Council Plan ([www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/))**

The council is committed to strengthening the patient and public voice in health and social care. A continuation of Healthwatch Coventry's approach will provide the community in Coventry with the ability to influence and shape services designed for them. Healthwatch will give people real influence over decisions made about local services engaging individuals and communities in improving health outcomes and supporting Coventry's citizens to lead longer, healthier and more independent lives.

This is expected to contribute to the work going on in the City to tackle health and social care inequalities, and to promote better health for all.

#### **6.2. How is risk being managed?**

There are no specific risks associated with the recommendation in this report.

#### **6.3. What is the impact on the organisation?**

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 Act is not prescriptive about the form of organisation that Local Healthwatches should take beyond stating that:

- Local Healthwatch organisations must be corporate bodies carrying out statutory functions.
- They must be not-for-profit organisations
- They must be able to employ staff and (if they choose) be able to sub-contract statutory functions.

This flexibility allows the Council to choose to commission, tender or offer a grant aid agreement to ensure an appropriate local service.

#### **6.4. Equality and Consultation Analysis (ECA)**

An ECA has not been produced. Equality of access to the services will be built in to the grant aid agreement and monitored accordingly.

#### **6.5 Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment**

No Implications.

#### **6.6 Implications for partner organisations?**

In continuing with the current model for Healthwatch Coventry, Officers have been mindful of the need to ensure that Healthwatch Coventry utilises the expertise of people who know the City well. This has positive implications in the services that they inspect across UHCW, Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group, Children's and Adults' Services

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