

Policy Briefing

Healthwatch England - The Way Forward

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Purpose of document

Healthwatch England have been working together with 152 local Healthwatch and other organisations to find out how they can be the most effective national consumer champions in health and care. They commissioned research in order to better understand people's thoughts about the care that they receive and what matters the most to people in a time when so many changes are happening. As part of their work, Healthwatch England have been engaging with the public to adopt a new method of working that puts their voice at the heart of health and care services, and consumer rights. They have presented their first annual consultation document to parliament.

Summary of contents

The document explains the main findings of the work that they did in the first six months from 1st October 2012 to 31st March 2013. It sets out what Healthwatch England want, their job and how they are going to do it. It also discusses Healthwatch England's plans so far on what they want to do for the future, the most important things to do and what they believe in. The report provides information about Healthwatch and also discusses people's rights to health and care including a list of rights to care and the things that people should do themselves. To build upon their work, Healthwatch England have developed a plan of action that explains their priorities for the next two years.

Summary of outcomes

The findings show an important need to change current ways of working with a greater focus on putting what consumers want at the forefront of health and care services. To begin this change, Healthwatch England have worked with the public to come up with a set of rights in health and care that can help them to become more empowered and involved, and help service providers and commissioners to concentrate on the things that matter the most to service users and their carers. As well as having rights, people said that they want to have a list of things we should all do to use services properly. Healthwatch England is in the early stages of talking to people about this and will talk to them more before making a final list. They will also be finding out how they work with children, young people and people who have mental health issues to see if it works for them.

Summary of recommendations

The recommended areas of work that are considered to be the most important are: ensuring safer services by doing something about risks and complaints; making sure that more people know about and get their rights to care and what they should do for themselves; supporting services to meet the needs of people by working closely with different organisations; helping local Healthwatch organisations to talk about how services are planned to make sure that they meet the needs of local people; and making Healthwatch stronger by networking with lots of people within Healthwatch and other organisations and using it to do more.

Further information and resources

Healthwatch - A Way Forward Easy Read Version

http://www.healthwatch.co.uk/sites/default/files/way_forward_easyread.pdf

NHS Partners Network NHS Confederation

http://www.nhsconfed.org/~media/Confederation/Files/public%20access/NHSPN_response_Healthwatch_The_Way_Forward.pdf