

Paper 5: HW correspondence with Integrated Care Board

1. From HW to ICB 1/10/25

Via Email: 01/10/2025

To:

Anu Singh, Chair LLNR ICB

Toby Sanders, CEO LLNR ICB

Dear Anu and Toby,

Proposed Governance of LLNR ICB Governance Arrangements and Local Healthwatch

We are writing jointly on behalf of Healthwatch Leicester, Leicestershire, Rutland, North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire, regarding the governance arrangements for the new Integrated Care Board (ICB) for our region.

It has recently come to our attention that Healthwatch will no longer hold a seat at the ICB Board meeting. While we recognise that Healthwatch representation at Board level is not a statutory requirement, but rather an invitation, we feel strongly that our continued involvement is of great value. As the statutory, independent champion for people who use health and social care services, we bring the voice and lived experience of patients, service users, and communities into strategic decision-making. Our independence of commissioners and providers enables us to understand and represent the needs of the public and patients, without being constrained or conflicted by other priorities. We retain our statutory remit to represent the public until primary legislation has been enacted, which we expect to be 12 to 18 months away.

We are mindful that the governance structures are still developing, particularly the range of underpinning boards, committees, and partnership forums that will evolve to cover areas such as neighbourhoods, quality, performance and outcomes. We are keen to ensure that Healthwatch representation is embedded wherever patient experience and community insight are central to decision-making. This includes, but is not limited to, committees where the quality of care, performance, and outcomes are discussed, and where our contribution can strengthen the patient voice in shaping services.

To ensure continuity and to avoid losing this important perspective during the transition period, we would like to formally propose that:

Two Healthwatch seats are established on the ICB Board – one for the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Healthwatch organisations, and one for Northamptonshire Healthwatch organisations – until such time as the governance structures are fully reconfigured between the ICB and local authorities.

We ask that Healthwatch representation be considered across relevant underpinning boards, committees, and partnership structures, particularly those focused on patient experience, quality, and outcomes.

We believe this approach will safeguard the independence and importance of the patient voice during this critical time of system change and will ensure that decision-making continues to reflect the needs and priorities of our communities.

We would like to discuss this proposal further and to work with you to identify the most appropriate forums for Healthwatch representation. Please let us know your availability over the next month to arrange this, and please contact gabriella@healthwatchwestnorthants.com to arrange this meeting.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Healthwatch West Northamptonshire, Rutland, Leicester, Leicestershire and North Northamptonshire.

CC:

Local Authority Commissioners

HW CEOs: Kate Holt CEO Connected Together CIC, Pratima Dattani CEO, Support Northamptonshire

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2. From HWR to ICB 1/12/25

Via Email: 01/12/2025

To:

Anu Singh, Chair LLNR ICB

Toby Sanders, CEO LLNR ICB

Dear Toby and Anu,

We want to begin by thanking you both for meeting with our Healthwatch cluster in early November. We appreciated the opportunity to hear more about the current position and future ambitions for our joint work with the ICB, and we valued the open and constructive discussion. Following that meeting, our cluster has since come together to consider the offer of a single Healthwatch seat on the ICB Board and to reflect on how we can best fulfil our responsibilities to the people we represent.

While we are grateful for the proposal of sub-committee involvement and one shared Board seat, we would like to express some concerns regarding the ability of a single representative to speak effectively for such a large and diverse geographic footprint. Northamptonshire and Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland have distinct population needs, differing demographic profiles, and varied local priorities. We believe this diversity makes it challenging for one voice alone to fully reflect the breadth of insight, lived experience, and public feedback that each Healthwatch brings.

Healthwatch holds a unique statutory role across both systems by providing independent, community-based insight, amplifying the voices of seldom heard groups, and bringing real-time intelligence from residents and service users. Regardless of the number of seats, our cluster will continue to bring positive influence and value to the Board through:

- **Independent insight** rooted in lived experience, community engagement, and robust evidence.
- **Early identification of risks, inequalities, and service pressures** before they escalate.

- **A system-wide view of what matters to people**, providing practical intelligence that supports improvement, quality oversight, and commissioning decisions within health and social care.
- **Constructive challenge and holding service providers to account**, aligned with the ICB's statutory duties around transparency, patient voice and reducing inequalities.
- **The ability to identify issues experienced by seldom-heard communities**, supporting the ICB's ambitions around equity and population health.

However, we believe that our effectiveness—and ultimately, the ICB's access to reliable, place-based insight—would be significantly strengthened through two Healthwatch seats on the Board, one for LLR and one for Northamptonshire. This would enable:

- **More accurate and place-specific representation**, ensuring local priorities, challenges, and population needs are not diluted across the wider footprint.
- **Clear and accountable channels for public voice** in each system, aligned with the ICB's place arrangements.
- **More meaningful contribution to strategic discussions**, as each Healthwatch can draw directly on the intelligence of its communities without compromise.
- **Stronger partnership working**, with each Healthwatch able to engage consistently and in depth with its local partners, providers, and voluntary sector networks.

We therefore respectfully request that the ICB give further consideration to enabling two seats, which we believe would deliver a more balanced, equitable, and effective model of public representation across the integrated care system.

In relation to the other actions from our previous meeting, we are keen to confirm dates for our regular meetings with the ICB. Would it be possible to arrange a date before Christmas? Our next cluster meeting is scheduled for the 15th of December, to which you are both welcome to join.

Finally, we wished to clarify whether ICB Board meetings, though attended in person, will also be made available through a livestreamed or virtual viewing option or recorded for later viewing in order to add transparency and greater equality of access for the interested public.

We ask that you please reply to all Healthwatch signatories below to arrange our next LLNR Healthwatch cluster meeting.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to your response.

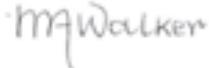
Yours sincerely,

Healthwatch West Northamptonshire

Manager: Gabriella Van Beek

Signature: 

Chair: Morcea Walker MBE DL

Signature: 

Healthwatch North Northamptonshire

Manager: Claire Neilson

Signature: 

CEO : Pratima Dattani

Signature: 

Healthwatch Rutland

Manager: Tracey Allan-Jones

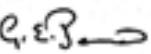
Signature: 

Chair: Janet Underwood

Signature: 

Healthwatch Leicester and Leicestershire

Manager: Gemma Barrow

Signature: 

Chair: Harsha Kotecha

Signature: 

3. From ICB to HW 11/12/25:

By email:

Thank you for your recent letter from the four Healthwatch organisations. It was helpful to understand your reflections following our meeting and also your preference in terms of number of seats on the Cluster Board.

Proposals for further Partner Member and Participant attendance will be considered by the Cluster Board in public session at our next formal meeting on Thursday next week. Papers for this meeting will be published on our website later today. In respect of future Board membership, the paper proposes 1 Healthwatch and 1 VCSE Participant seat across the Cluster/both ICBs. Anu and I recognise that this is not your preferred option and the paper for next week will make your position clear in terms of feedback so that the full Board is sighted on your views for consideration prior to taking a final decision.

You are of course welcome to attend the public part of the meeting where this will be discussed to observe should you wish. Either way I will make sure that we follow up with all four of you after the meeting to confirm the outcome and start making arrangement for the nomination process.

Whatever the outcome of next week the relationship we have with all Healthwatch organisations is valued and important so we look forward to picking up with you again in the new year and also making arrangements to get a Healthwatch perspective back around the Board table along with all of the newly nominated Partners/Participants from February.

Kind regards

Toby