

## The Future of Bradford LINK

The government has written a **White Paper** about its ideas for changing the NHS. It's called *Equity and excellence: liberating the NHS* and was published on 12<sup>th</sup> July.

A **White Paper** is something a government writes letting people know what it's going to do before it takes those things to the Houses and Parliament and MPs vote them into law.

The government has now written a 5<sup>th</sup> Consultation paper talking about what will happen to LINKs in more detail, and asking for people to tell them what they think. This new paper is called *Establishing HealthWatch*. In this summary we will tell you more about these ideas.

### Establishing HealthWatch

The government says that it is important for people who use health and social care services to have both a local and a national voice. It says that LINKs have done a good job but that they now need to do more to help people.

To do this, the government will set up a new organisation called HealthWatch England. This organisation will be in charge of making sure that people using health and social care services have a national voice. To make them independent, they will be part of the Care Quality Commission. This is an organisation that has already been set up to check that hospitals and social care centres are looking after the people who use them properly.

Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) will become local HealthWatch. Their job will be to make sure people who use health and social care services have a local voice. The government will write a Health Care Bill, which is a legal paper that goes to Parliament, to set up HealthWatch England and local HealthWatch. Both these organisations will be up and running by 2012.

### What will HealthWatch England do?

HealthWatch England will ask for information from local HealthWatch to see where extra help is needed for people in different parts of England. If it finds problems, then the NHS has to take notice of what it says and make the changes needed to make things better.

HealthWatch England will also be asked what it thinks about any new papers written to help doctors, hospitals and social care staff to choose how to get the best help for people using their services. By doing this, HealthWatch England will be able to use the information it gets from local HealthWatch to



make useful choices to put into these new papers that will help people get better health and social care services.

### What will local HealthWatch do?

At the moment, LINKs – like Bradford LINK – do these things:

- Help more people to get a voice in their local health and social care
- Give people's views on what local health and social care services are like
- Give people's views on any changes that might be made to local health and social care services
- Go and look at how health or social care services are doing if they think this is needed (this is called "Enter and View")

In the future, the Government wants local HealthWatch to keep doing all these things but it also wants them to:

- Help people – especially people who find it difficult - to choose what kind of health and social care services are right for them
- Help people to make complaints about health and social care services
- Give information to HealthWatch England if there is a problem with local health and social care services, so that it can be checked
- Sit on the local Council Health and Wellbeing board, which will make sure that choices made by local doctors (GPs) about local health and social care are the best ones. These boards will also be in charge of making sure public health gets better in the local area.

### Will local councils do things differently too?

Local Councils will have a much bigger say in people's health and social care.

The Health and Wellbeing boards will be very important in making sure choices made by GPs on what kind of health and social care people get, are the best ones.

As well as this, local councils will work closely with local HealthWatch and give them the money they need to work properly. In return, local HealthWatch will need to show the council that what they are doing is helping people in the local area properly and giving taxpayers good value for money.

Local Councils will also give money to make sure that people who have a complaint about a health or social care service, get the right help. At the moment this help is given to people by an organisation called the Independent



# Bradford LINK

connect and make a difference

Complaints Advocacy Services (ICAS) In the future, local councils can either give that job to HealthWatch England or to local HealthWatch.

## How will GPs work with local HealthWatch

The White Paper says that GPs will work together in local groups called consortia, to choose how to give the best help to people in their local area. It will be important for GPs to get the views of local people to help them make these choices. Local HealthWatch will be able to help consortia by asking local people what kind of help they want and what they think to any changes that the GP consortia want to make.

## What happens to LINKs now?

The government say that the year 2011 will be a “transition year” for LINKs where they will have to get ready to do the different things needed for them to become a local HealthWatch. They will need extra help and training to learn to do this properly. The government wants to know what kinds of help would be best to make sure that LINKs are ready to become local HealthWatch in 2012.

### Have your Say

You can have your say on the ideas in this paper.

You can read the full paper by following this link

[www.dh.gov.uk/liberatingthenhs](http://www.dh.gov.uk/liberatingthenhs)

You can email

[NHSWhitePaper@dh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:NHSWhitePaper@dh.gsi.gov.uk)

You can write to

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You need to tell them what you think by **5<sup>th</sup> October 2010**