

Partnership Agreement: Healthwatch Together & Lancashire & South Cumbria Integrated Care Board



Healthwatch
Together

Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool,
Cumberland, Lancashire and Westmorland
and Furness working in partnership



Lancashire and
South Cumbria
Integrated Care Board

1. Background and context

This Partnership Agreement sets out the commitment of Lancashire & South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (LSC ICB) and Healthwatch Together to work in partnership to realise our shared ambitions to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Lancashire and South Cumbria.

The NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB is accountable for NHS spend and performance, and responsible for the day-to-day running of the NHS in Lancashire and South Cumbria. It includes NHS trusts, local authorities and general practices.

Healthwatch Together is a collaboration of five local Healthwatch organisations: Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen, Healthwatch Blackpool, Healthwatch Cumberland, Healthwatch Lancashire and Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness. Healthwatch Together work collaboratively across the Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care System (ICS).

The Health & Care Act 2022 mobilises partners within Integrated Care Systems to work together to improve the physical and mental health of their populations. These partnerships will only build better and more sustainable approaches if they are informed by the needs, experiences and aspirations of the people and communities they serve. ICBs have legal duties to involve people when developing plans and strategies, but meaningful involvement can support wider objectives including population health improvement, the personalisation of care, addressing health inequalities, improving access to services and driving quality improvements.

This Partnership Agreement seeks to provide a strong foundation to support joint working between L&SC ICB and local Healthwatch organisations, represented through Healthwatch Together, to ensure the voices of local people and communities are heard, inform decision making and shape our strategies and plans.

2. Purpose of the Partnership Agreement

The purpose of this Partnership Agreement is to formally set out ways of working which emphasises the importance of public and patient voice between L&SC ICB and the five Healthwatch organisations working in the Lancashire & South Cumbria ICS under the umbrella of Healthwatch Together. This Partnership Agreement supersedes any existing agreements that may have been in place already.

The five independent Healthwatch organisations will continue to operate at place-based level in accordance with the legal duty placed upon Local Authorities in England to commission a local Healthwatch.

3. Parties Involved

This Partnership Agreement has been drawn up between

- Lancashire & South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB)
- Healthwatch Together:

Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen

Healthwatch Blackpool

Healthwatch Cumberland

Healthwatch Lancashire

Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness

4. Role of local Healthwatch

Healthwatch is the health and social care champion. As an independent body with statutory functions, Healthwatch has powers to ensure system leaders and other decision makers listen to people's feedback and improve standards of care.

Healthwatch also helps people with the information and advice they need to make the right decisions and get the support they need.

Local Healthwatch are funded by and accountable to local authorities.

Their main statutory functions are to:

- Obtain the views of people about their needs and experience of local health and social care services. Local Healthwatch make these views known to those involved in the commissioning and scrutiny of care services.
- Make reports and make recommendations about how those services could or should be improved.
- Promote and support the involvement of people in the monitoring, commissioning and provision of local health and social care services.
- Provide information and advice to the public about accessing health and social care services and the options available to them.
- Make the views and experiences of people known to Healthwatch England, helping us to carry out our role as national champion.
- Make recommendations to Healthwatch England to advise the CQC to carry out special reviews or investigations into areas of concern.

5. The role of the ICB

The role of the ICB is to join up health and care services, improve people's health and wellbeing, and make sure everyone has the same access to services and gets the same outcomes from treatment across Lancashire & South Cumbria. The ICB oversees how money is spent and makes sure health services are working well and are of high quality. Involving residents and communities is vitally important to the work of the ICB and the ICB has made a commitment to putting the needs of people living in Lancashire and South Cumbria at the heart of all it does. This is set out in the ICB's [strategy for working in partnership with people and communities](#).

Nationally, the expectation is that an ICB will:

- Improve outcomes in population health and healthcare
- Tackle inequalities in outcomes, experience and access
- Enhance productivity and value for money
- Help the NHS support broader social and economic development

6. Values and Behaviours

This Partnership Agreement is underpinned by a set of values and behaviours which have been jointly agreed:

- We will support each other and will work collaboratively.
- We will continue to work together in a way that reflects our mutual respect and continues to build understanding.
- We will act with honesty and integrity and trust each other to do the same.
- We will challenge constructively when we need to and assume good intentions.
- We will be driven by a willingness to learn and by a relentless focus on improving access, experience and outcomes for the population of Lancashire and South Cumbria.
- We will hold each other to account for achieving our objectives.

7. Healthwatch Together Commitments

Healthwatch Together will work in constructive partnership with the system, taking up opportunities to represent the public at a strategic level wherever possible. Healthwatch Together will raise concerns with the ICB appropriately and with the right people. In keeping with the values and behaviours set out in section 5, Healthwatch Together and their representatives will act with integrity when challenging constructively and holding partners to account. In the event of concern, Healthwatch will put those concerns in writing and expect a timely response.

Strategic representation allows local Healthwatch to ensure public involvement in planning, commissioning and providing services. As described above this will be in a spirit of constructive partnership.

Healthwatch Together will also represent the views of the public in areas such as:

- Appropriate use of public funds
- Ensuring safe and high quality services
- Duty of candour for NHS organisations
- Transparent and ethical decision making
- Compliance with law, guidance and policy

Healthwatch Together will work and connect locally with ICB colleagues working in and supporting place-based partnerships through our respective local Healthwatches.

8. ICB Commitments

The ICB will commit to working effectively with local Healthwatch and Healthwatch Together. To support this partnership agreement, the ICB will nominate a named representative who will be able to speak on behalf of the ICB. This is the Director of Communications & Engagement.

The ICB will ensure it makes opportunities for partnership working appropriate, reasonable and realistic, recognising the often-limited resources of local Healthwatch. This will be demonstrated by actions such as giving local Healthwatch sufficient notice and clarity on the expectations of their involvement.

The ICB will respond to local Healthwatch reports and recommendations in a timely manner. As making recommendations is a statutory function, the ICB will be clear who are the appropriate staff members to respond, and ensure they respond within the agreed timescale. Where local Healthwatch provide insight reports and updates, the ICB will confirm how these have been used to improve services.

9. Signed

ICB: Neil Greaves, Director of Communications & Engagement

Healthwatch Together:

- David Blacklock, CEO, Healthwatch Lancashire
- Lindsay Graham, Director, Healthwatch Cumberland and
- Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness
- Mike Crowther, CEO, Healthwatch Blackpool
- Sarah Johns, CEO, Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen