

Brighton & Hove City Council

Council

Agenda Item 46a

Subject: Protect Independent Scrutiny, Save Healthwatch England

Date of meeting: 13 October 2025

Proposer: Councillor Hill

Seconder: Councillor Earthey

Ward(s) affected: All

Notice of Motion

Green Group & Brighton & Hove Independent Group

This council notes:

- 1) The Health Secretary's proposal to abolish the independent local health and social care champion Healthwatch and to give health scrutiny powers over to Integrated Care Boards (ICBs). This will mean that the new Sussex and Surrey Heartlands ICB would take on Brighton & Hove Healthwatch's function locally next April. Social Care scrutiny powers would move to Councils.
- 2) That 35,000 residents have been supported by Healthwatch Brighton & Hove since 2013.
- 3) Concerns raised by Brighton & Hove Older People's Council about the disproportionate harm the government's proposal will have on elderly people.
- 4) The letter by Gary Wilkinson, Chair of Brighton & Hove's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee raising the committee's concerns about the work Healthwatch does in ensuring people have up to date information, sharing people's experiences with commissioners and supporting individuals to navigate a complex healthcare landscape.
- 5) The campaign led by local Healthwatch teams to oppose this proposal and to ask the Health Secretary to undertake a consultation with the public to codesign the future of scrutiny services.

This council resolves to:

- 1) Ask the Council Leader to write to the Health Secretary calling for him to change the NHS 10 Year Plan in order to keep Healthwatch England and not to transfer scrutiny powers to ICBs. Concerns should be raised about

having Councils and ICBs marking their own homework, especially at a time when ICBs are being cut by 50%.

- 2) Ask Councillors to consider signing and sharing the petition by Samantha Botsford opposing Healthwatch's abolition with residents.

Supporting Information:

Petition to review the decision to abolish independent local Healthwatch:

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/732993>

Local Healthwatch letter to Secretary of State:

<https://www.healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk/news/2025-07-18/our-letter-secretary-state-opposing-decision-abolish-independent-healthwatch>