

Brighton & Hove City Council

Council

Agenda Item 46a

Subject: Protect Independent Scrutiny, Save Healthwatch England

Date of meeting: 13 October 2025

Proposer: Councillor Wilkinson

Seconder: Councillor Baghoth

Ward(s) affected: All

Notice of Motion

Labour Group Amendment

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~~ **perceived impact** 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) Requests the leader **of the council** to ensure stronger democratic accountability and improved senior representation of elected members within strategic decision-making bodies following the formation of the new Sussex and Surrey ICB.
- 3) Requests the leader **of the council** to work with existing upper tier authorities, new Mayor and unitary authorities under LGR to develop a common approach to capture the voice and viewpoints of users of the local health system **and where possible to maintain local oversight.**
- 4) ~~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>

Recommendations to read if carried:

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- 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) Requests the leader of the council to ensure stronger democratic accountability and improved senior representation of elected members within strategic decision-making bodies following the formation of the new Sussex and Surrey ICB.
- 2) Requests the leader of the council to work with existing upper tier authorities, new Mayor and unitary authorities under LGR to develop a common approach to capture the voice and viewpoints of users of the local health system and where possible to maintain local oversight.

