

Healthwatch Worcestershire comments on the refreshed Herefordshire and Worcestershire Sustainability and Transformation Plan.

Healthwatch Worcestershire [HWW] has been engaged in the process to develop the Sustainability and Transformation Plan for the Herefordshire and Worcestershire footprint since January 2016. HWW's contribution has included membership of the former Programme Board since the Board was set up and more recently the Partnership Board. It has been represented on both Boards by its Chair, who has significant experience of working at a strategic leadership level in health and care matters across both Worcestershire and Herefordshire. HWW was also an attendee at the communications and engagement group in which HWW has provided advice, guidance and support to the NHS and Local Government stakeholders.

HWW recognises the inclusive approach the STP leadership team has taken to engaging with Local Healthwatch as the voice of patients and the public in developing STP proposals, given the constraints we understand were initially placed on engagement by NHS England, and the extensive programme of public/patient involvement that has taken place since the publication of the STP plan in November 2016. HWW welcomes the positive response the STP team have made to HWW's comments during the process and to the public's feedback during the engagement programme.

HWW therefore welcomes the opportunity to make the following comments on the refreshed STP submission:

- HWW recognises the need for change and has a track record of arguing for safe, sustainable and integrated health and care service provision in Worcestershire which, for example has enabled HWW to support the recommendations for the future delivery of acute hospital services in Worcestershire and the developments in primary care such as 'care at home' and new models of care. HWW therefore welcomes the incorporation of these and associated initiatives into the STP, building on Worcestershire's 'Well Connected Programme' as a pioneer and the review of future Acute Hospital Services in Worcestershire, with a view to delivering the necessary improvements in health care.
- HWW is principally concerned with championing the interests of those who use health and care services in Worcestershire. In that context, from the outset HWW has been concerned about the potential implication for Worcestershire's patients and public of 'pooling' the funding allocations to the Worcestershire CCGs with the allocation to the Herefordshire CCG.

In response to HWW concerns the 2020 financial position as between Herefordshire and Worcestershire has been detailed in the STP submissions, which reflects that Herefordshire's potential gap will be £468 per head as opposed to Worcestershire's gap of £279 per head.

HWW welcomes the recognition from STP stakeholders that achieving financial balance across the STP footprint would result in significant subsidy to Herefordshire from Worcestershire, with a consequent impact on service provision for patients and the public in Worcestershire.

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- HWW believes the patients and public in Worcestershire expect the NHS to make efficiency savings in the ‘back office’ and in the delivery of support services as a pre requisite to making savings in patient services. This should include consideration as to the number of commissioners and providers operating in Worcestershire, as well as the STP footprint.
- HWW recognises the STP proposals include significant reductions in ‘elective care’ and expects the CCGs to properly involve patients and the public in these proposals as they are developed.
- HWW is concerned that NHS plans to deliver care at home could place additional burdens on social care services and have raised an issue about domiciliary care based on its knowledge of the review of the existing care market in Worcestershire.
- HWW endorses the concerns that were widely expressed during the public engagement programme including the potential requirement that will be placed on patients to travel to access services, the implications of the planned reduction of beds across the community hospitals and the impact of the proposals on carers. In particular HWW is concerned about how the proposals will affect the vulnerable and those who live with health inequalities. HWW will expect work-streams in the STP to specifically address this issue.
- HWW recognises that the proposals relating to Self-Care and Prevention require significant behavioural change by the population at large and within the NHS, and considers that this is unlikely to be achieved without a national communications/engagement exercise because of the resources that will be required.