

## **Merger of Herefordshire and Worcestershire's Clinical Commissioning Groups**

Response from Healthwatch Worcestershire to the CCGs proposal to merge, which is based on HWW's response to the first STP Plan and previous local proposals to merge the Herefordshire and Worcestershire CCGs in 2017.

- It is Healthwatch Worcestershire's understanding that the decision that the CCGs will merge has already been made by NHSE and that the locally the CCGs are merely following the process that needs to occur to legally give effect to NHSE's decision, and that the issue for local determination is only the time scale in which the merger occurs.
- It is not clear from the information provided by the CCGs as to how the merger will impact on services for patients and the public in Worcestershire. As this implication become clear HWW will expect the new CCG to comply with its statutory responsibility to involve patients and the public as appropriate in a meaningful way.
- HWW would expect the CCGs to operate their operations as cost-effectively as possible to maximise the spend that is available to fund health care and therefore welcome that aspect of the 'merger'. HWW will expect the CCG to publish information to support the proposed benefit of a reduced spend on senior management and associated costs
- HWW is aware that at the time of the publication of the STP Plan the forecast cost deficit of providing services in Herefordshire was considerably more per head of population than in Worcestershire, and on that basis HWW is concerned that any move to merge the allocations to Herefordshire and Worcestershire CCGs with a single control total may result in a reduction of services in Worcestershire to maintain services in Herefordshire.
- The recent rationalisation of CCG engagement activity in Worcestershire which has followed on CCGs operating 'in common' is seen as having the potential to have reduced the CCGs engagement with patients/public in the localities within the existing CCG footprints. HWW requests that the CCGs provide assurance that the proposed merger will not serve to exacerbate that situation through the introduction of further rationalised engagement structures that could further remove CCG decision making from patients and the public.

Approved at Healthwatch Worcestershire's Public Board Meeting on 10 July 2019