

*Letter from Joan Saddler: National Director, Patient and Public Affairs*

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## **HealthWatch Programme Board – New arrangements**

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Dear HealthWatch Programme Board members,

Further to discussions we had at the last programme board meeting, I wanted to write to you at the first opportunity to explain the changes that are being made to the HealthWatch programme arrangements.

With a year to go to the implementation of HealthWatch, there is an important shift for the programme from policy development to implementation. A number of changes to the leadership and governance of the programme have been made to reflect this shift and in particular, the importance of HealthWatch for local government and the wider health and social care system through Health and Wellbeing Boards.

With this in mind John Wilderspin, National Director of Health and Wellbeing Board implementation, will take on the chair of the HealthWatch Programme Board. I will continue to work closely with the wider HealthWatch team, and continue to advise the programme board on all issues regarding patient and public involvement. John and I are determined that these changes will build on the successful work we have carried out in the past year.

DH is undergoing significant changes as the NHS Commissioning Board and Public Health England are set up. The changes within DH are starting now and David Behan has been confirmed as Director General for a range of responsibilities including adult social care, children and families, mental health, learning disabilities, health inequalities and equality, health and wellbeing boards, the voluntary and community sector and the strategic corporate relationship with local government. As part of this role he will also become the Senior Responsible Officer for the HealthWatch programme.

In support of this, as of November 1<sup>st</sup>, the DH HealthWatch team joined David's Directorate. Andrew Larter, will become the head of the HealthWatch programme in addition to his health and wellbeing board responsibilities. The relationship of the HealthWatch team with the patient and public involvement team will remain critical, particularly as the NHS Commissioning Board is established in shadow form. Mary Simpson is moving to a new broader role within the PPE team, in particular focussing on the relationship between NHS Commissioning Board and HealthWatch. Ensuring the independence of HealthWatch, both locally and nationally, will continue to be an important aim of the policy and we will continue to work in partnership with LINks, local government and others to embed this principle in the work of HealthWatch.

Governance arrangements will need to be adapted for closer working between the HealthWatch Programme Board and DH and Local Government Board. We will be able to discuss our early thoughts about these changes, including considering additions to the membership of the HealthWatch Programme Board, at our next meeting. The date of the next meeting will be confirmed shortly.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your work on this agenda and the support you have provided me. I look forward to continuing to work with you over the coming months.

**Yours sincerely,**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Saddler".

**Joan Saddler**  
National Director, Patient and Public Affairs