

# HEALTHWATCH AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ASSOCIATION



[www.HAPIA2013.org.uk](http://www.HAPIA2013.org.uk)

FEBRUARY 17<sup>TH</sup> 2014

**TAKE ACTION**

**PRESS RELEASE**

## Healthwatch Demands Return of Missing £10m

**ACTION: CONTACT YOUR MPs, LOCAL COUNCILLORS  
HEALTH MINISTER NORMAN LAMB,  
AND LOCAL PAPERS**

Massive variations in Local Healthwatch budgets revealed by Healthwatch England's survey of every Healthwatch in England, show the failure of the government's policy of abandoning ring-fencing of funding for our health and social care watchdogs. The disappearance of £10m from the Healthwatch budgets nationally is a scandal. HAPIA is calling on the Minister to reverse this attack on local Healthwatch.

The government's response to criticism of its divisive public involvement funding policy is to claim local people and local councils must make local decisions about funding – Ministers know local people have no say at all in local Council's decisions about the funding of Healthwatch.

Despite the disasters of Winterbourne View and Mid-Staffs, demonstrating the need for high level monitoring of local services by Healthwatch, and their support as a powerful champion of local people to articulate and represent the voice of service users and carers, the government has abandoned many communities - refusing to step in when Councils fail to fund Healthwatch adequately.

The attack on the ability of local Healthwatch to function effectively is revealed by figures released by Healthwatch England, which show the differences in money provided by local councils for the populations that local Healthwatch is expected to cover:

City of London	£8-14p per person/yr
Rutland	£1-47p per person/yr
Lambeth	£1-04p per person/yr
Southwark (south London)	43p per person/yr
Stockport	40p per person/yr
Derbyshire	38p per person/yr
Essex	34p per person/yr
Manchester	16p per person/yr

Ruth Marsden, HAPIA North said: "Empowerment is not achieved by making paupers of the people's champions. Local authorities picking at the cash-carcass of LHW is a shameful spectacle. Events have proved all too graphically, tragically and frequently, that neither the NHS, Regulators, local authorities nor the government adequately protect the sick and the vulnerable. It's long past time to ensure the public, through Healthwatch, will be the eyes and ears - after all, that exactly what LHW was enshrined in law to do. Abolishing ring-fencing for LHW budgets is a direct attack on their ability to serve the public in health and social care services."

Malcolm Alexander, HAPIA South said: "We call on Health Ministers to ensure the missing £10m is returned to Healthwatch. Massive budget cuts for the people's champion in the NHS are truly shocking. LHW is the public's statutory voice in health and social care and will be muzzled without adequate funding. LHW must have resources to monitor all health and social care services within their area and hold providers and commissioners to account for the safety, effectiveness and accessibility of local services. Local authorities that starve LHW of funds will be complicit if services fail and harm those in need of care."

**Malcolm Alexander, HAPIA SOUTH**

**Ruth Marsden, HAPIA NORTH**

**HAPIA (formerly NALM) is a national body of local Healthwatch and individuals who are active in campaigning to create effective public involvement and the best possible health and social care services.**

## **HAPIA WILL:**

- **Investigate, challenge and influence health, social care and public health bodies, which fail to provide safe, effective, compassionate and accessible services.**
- **Advise on effective ways of learning from complaints, incidents, accidents and systemic successes and failures that occur in health and social care services.**
- **Challenge government, NHS, health and social care providers on any failure to provide the highest standards of care**

## **Notes for editors:**

- 1) Malcolm Alexander can be contacted on: 0208 809 6551 or 07817505193 or [NALM2008@aol.com](mailto:NALM2008@aol.com)
- 2) Ruth Marsden can be contacted on: 01482 849 980 or 07807519933 or [Ruth@myford.karoo.co.uk](mailto:Ruth@myford.karoo.co.uk)
- 3) Local Healthwatch (LHW) was set up by government from April 1st 2013 to be the voice of local people and to make sure that health and social care services are safe, effective and designed to meet the needs of patients, social care users and carers. It is intended to be a powerful and influential body, led by local people and able to influence and challenge the effectiveness of health and social care services and ensure that action is taken when services fail to meet local need.
- 4) LHW has a legal duty to monitor services, obtain the views of people about their experiences of care and make recommendations about how services should be improved, to persons responsible for commissioning, providing, managing or

---

scrutinising local care services. LHW is the people's watchdog in the NHS and social care.

End