



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

HEALTHWATCH KENT AND EAST KENT HOSPITALS UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION TRUST *'Engaging the people of Kent to improve health and care'*

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Engaging Kent CIC was established in March 2013 to deliver Healthwatch within Kent. The Healthwatch agenda is hugely challenging at both national and local levels. It will take time for the new health and social care environment to be understood, partnerships to be built and positive working relationships developed in order to ensure the best possible outcomes and experiences for the people who live and work in our community.

Healthwatch Kent has an important role to play in this new environment. The need to ensure that people who use services now and in the future have a real voice in planning and commissioning processes is even more critical in an environment where resources are increasingly constrained. The benefits of working with communities to design, plan and evaluate services are increasingly recognised alongside, new and existing statutory requirements on health and social care commissioners and providers to consult and engage with patients, users and the public.

This Memorandum of Understanding is intended to support the development of strong working relationships and productive partnership between East Kent Hospitals University Foundation Trust and Healthwatch Kent. In developing this document Healthwatch Kent is keen to demonstrate a number of its core principles and values namely, co-production, transparency and reciprocity. In so doing, Healthwatch Kent will strive to avoid duplication and to add value to existing activity whilst maintaining a strong independent local consumer voice.

This agreement is therefore based on the shared values of:

- Openness
- Honesty
- Accountability
- Integrity
- Respect
- Trust
- Understanding
- Effective communications
- Listening

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HOW HEALTHWATCH KENT AND EKHUFT WILL WORK TOGETHER

The following principles form the basis of our partnership:

1. We will have proper respect for confidentiality, protocols and Data Protection in regard to each other's information.
2. There will be parity of esteem and we will respect each other's role, remit and expertise.
3. We will seek to promote equality and diversity in our working arrangements.
4. We recognise that the new and developing health and social care environment requires constructive challenge and innovative thinking and that the development of joint solutions will be a critical success factor.
5. Should disagreements arise, we will resolve these within the partnership in a constructive and respectful manner.
6. We will strive to ensure that patient, user and community voices are heard and acted upon.

PATIENT VOICE

In its role on the Health and Wellbeing Board, Healthwatch Kent seeks to link providers and commissioners by supporting their hardwiring of patient, user and public voice into service planning, design and delivery.

INFORMATION AND SIGNPOSTING

The provision of a high quality information and signposting service is a key function of all Healthwatch organisations. In order for this service to be effective in Kent, Healthwatch Kent will work with East Kent Hospitals University Foundation Trust to ensure that information relating to their services is effectively shared and up-to-date.

NETWORKS OF NETWORKS

Healthwatch Kent will network with other local groups and provide opportunities for organisations to connect with each other. Through these arrangements, it is hoped that Healthwatch Kent can provide East Kent Hospitals University Foundation Trust with mechanisms to reach deeper into communities and more opportunities for people to have a say and give feedback on the services they receive.

INTELLIGENCE GATHERING AND INSIGHT

Healthwatch Kent will only be seen as a credible, authoritative and robust partner if it is able to access, gather and analyse both qualitative and quantitative data from a wide range of sources. Where others are already collating this information, Healthwatch Kent will tap into these sources but there will be instances where it will need to gather insights itself. East Kent Hospitals University Foundation Trust will work with Healthwatch Kent to provide relevant data and information when appropriate in order to support the development of robust and credible intelligence base.

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DEVELOPING A SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF HEALTHWATCH AND ITS ROLE

As the new health and social care system begins to become more established, Healthwatch Kent will need to understand its developing role, working with others whilst also maintaining its independence and ensuring its own vision, values and strategic objectives are being delivered effectively. East Kent Hospitals University Foundation Trust will support the development of a joint communications and engagement plan that can raise awareness about what Healthwatch does, its role and responsibilities alongside protocols, including press and media handling. Clear lines of communication will ensure there are 'no surprises' and that where we are able to share information this will be communicated at the earliest opportunity

REVIEW

This agreement has been developed by Steve Inett (Healthwatch Kent) and Stuart Bain (East Kent Hospitals University Foundation Trust).

It will be reviewed annually (or as required), within the context of the developing outcomes framework, feedback anticipated as part of that process and deliverables associated with the action plan.

Signed.....

Stuart Bain
On behalf of EKHUFT

Date:

Signed.....

Steve Inett
On behalf of Healthwatch Kent

Date:

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ACTION PLAN

This agreement is based upon the basic premise that Healthwatch Kent aspires to being a critical friend, operating on the principle of no surprises. We have identified the following areas and activities to further develop our strategic partnership.

1. HEALTHWATCH KENT VISION AND VALUES

Senior Healthwatch Kent staff will attend a Trust Board meeting to share its vision and values and to update the Board on emerging issues and priorities. Healthwatch Kent will also meet with and present to the East Kent Governors.

2. INTELLIGENCE, INFORMATION AND PATIENT EXPERIENCE

East Kent Hospitals University Foundation Trust will share with Healthwatch Kent, the same patient experience datasets that it is sharing with Clinical Commissioning Groups.

The Healthwatch Kent Information and Signposting team will liaise with EKHUFT Engagement Team to ensure that information provided is accurate and up-to-date. EKHUFT will support this information sharing by working with Healthwatch Kent to design and deliver a 'master' class with the Healthwatch Kent I&S Team.

3. REPRESENTATION

EKHUFT and Healthwatch Kent will work together to identify volunteering roles across EKHUFT. Both parties will work together to ensure that these are meaningful, appropriate and based on clear skills and competencies; for example on the Patient Experience Committee and Patient & Public Advisory Forum will be key roles that require immediate consideration.

4. PARTNERSHIP

EKHUFT will identify a main point of contact for Healthwatch Kent who will act as a conduit through which other key members of staff can be reached.

EKHUFT will design and deliver an induction into the operations of the Trust, for relevant Healthwatch Kent staff, Directors and volunteers.

EKHUFT and Healthwatch Kent will work together to identify, design and deliver joint engagement activity that adds value to the existing activities of the Trust. Early discussions have identified the potential for looking at:

1. Patient and public consultations.
2. Pathways of hospital discharge.

5. QUALITY

Healthwatch has a role to comment on the Quality Accounts and Equality Delivery System (EDS) reports. Healthwatch Kent and EKHUFT will work together in order to determine how best this input should be structured, managed and impactful.