

Consultation on proposals for the Provider Selection Regime

Healthwatch Birmingham welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Department of Health and Social Care's consultation on *Consultation on proposals for the Provider Selection Regimes*. Our key role is to make sure that patients, the public, service users, and carers (PPSuC) are at the heart of service improvement in health and social care. In line with our role, we have focused our comments on:

- Patient and Public Involvement and engagement
- Whether the proposal is responsive to the needs of Birmingham residents

Healthwatch Birmingham notes that the consultation has only been open for five weeks. This short period means that less people will have been aware of the consultation or had time to respond. We also note that the consultation has not been offered in any other format, such as easy read or community languages, excluding those with language or sensory impairment needs from taking part. There is not a phone number or postal address to allow anyone without digital access to easily respond.

Proposal

Healthwatch Birmingham urge the department to look at what constitutes a considerable change in the regime not just from a financial commissioning perspective, but also from a patient perspective. A change such as access method, location of services, or eligibility criteria, can have a drastic effect on the local community who need to access the service. This can be especially pronounced in deprived areas that often have less digital accessibility and can travel to services less easily.

When establishing lists of providers for non-legal right to choice services for patients to exercise choice, Healthwatch Birmingham would like to see consideration given to a number of points by decision-making bodies. These include but are not limited to services demonstrating their public and patient involvement, clear and proper complaints processes and a focus on meeting the needs of their local populations, especially in reducing inequalities and disparities faced in the local area.

Healthwatch Birmingham strongly believe in transparency when awarding contracts by decision-making bodies. These bodies need to be accountable to the public that they serve, and local communities need this clearly demonstrated when awarding contracts. This allows the public to engage with such matters and build trust with decision makers if it demonstrates their needs and views have been taken into account.

Publication of annual summaries allows and ongoing dialogue with the public about the services they receive, and the work that has gone into ensuring the suitability of these services. To make the best use of these annual summaries, they need to demonstrate what changes have happened as a result of public feedback.



Yours Sincerely,



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