

Notice of Motion (Full Council)

Title of Motion: **Saving Healthwatch Sandwell**

Date of Council meeting the motion is to be submitted to: 22 July 2025

Proposer: **Councillor Richard Jeffcoat (Independent)**

Seconder: **Councillor John Tipper**

Motion:

Council notes with concern the recent announcement by Government on Friday June 28 that Healthwatch England is to be abolished, a network of 152 local enterprises, including Healthwatch Sandwell, whose current provider is Engaging Communities Solutions. According to the announcement from the Secretary of State for Health, it is expected that the current service offered by Healthwatch Sandwell will be integrated into existing departments, with queries diverted to the NHS App.

Council further notes that last year Healthwatch Sandwell helped 24,117 people to access vital services, to have their say, and to get information about their care. Funding for Healthwatch Sandwell comes from the Council under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, so the Secretary of State's action is not a saving to the NHS Budget.

Council endorses work undertaken by Healthwatch Sandwell, which has visited community groups across our borough, including Tipton Bangladeshi Community Centre, Sandwell Asian Family Support Service, Sandwell Visually Impaired, and helped our residents access services both digital and in person, recognising that 53% of Sandwell residents use the NHS App, but 47% do not. It is essential our communities are not cut off from vital support.

Council urges the Secretary of State to cancel this hasty and self-defeating measure, and we recognise the vital importance of the part Healthwatch Sandwell plays in health education across our borough.

Council therefore calls on the Leader and Cabinet to write urgently to the Secretary of State for Health, setting out the terms of this Motion and highlighting the vital importance of work undertaken by Healthwatch Sandwell, requesting Government re-consider the abolition of all 152 local Healthwatch services"