

Minutes of the Healthwatch Northumberland Board meeting held on 22 June 2021 via Zoom

Present: David Thompson (DT) Chair, Margaret Young (MY) Independent Member, Mike Allport (MA) Independent Member, Kevin Higgins (KH) Northumberland County Council, Liz Prudhoe (LP) Adapt NE, Debra Blakey (DB) Carers Northumberland, Hayley Brown (HB) Independent Member, Liz Ions (LI) Northumberland Voluntary Sector Assembly, Fareeha Usman (FU) Independent Member, Denise Robson (DR) Patient Advice and Liaison Service

In attendance: Derry Nugent (DN) Project Coordinator, Emma Grimwood (EG) Volunteer Officer, Laura Haugh (LH) Communication & Marketing Assistant, Colin Nevin (CN) Volunteer

Apologies: Catherine Lee (CL) Patient Advice and Liaison Service, Sue Taylor (ST) Independent Member

Minutes recorded by Laura Haugh

1.Introductions, Apologies and Declarations of Interest: The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. He encouraged members to complete the Healthwatch England survey on diversity if not already done so. Declarations of Interest: no members declared interests pertinent to items at this meeting.	Action
2. Minutes of last meeting The minutes of 23 March 2021 were agreed as a true record.	
3. Action points All items were agreed as completed.	
4. Matters Arising There were no matters arising from the minutes.	
5. Questions from the public Before the meeting members of the public were asked to submit questions, which addressed the agenda. No questions were received.	

<p>6. Presentation: Volunteer Update</p> <p>EG gave a presentation on recent volunteering activity. During the pandemic the priority shifted to including and involving existing volunteers rather than recruiting new ones. There is a new volunteer web page, online volunteer registration form and a new volunteer hub where volunteers can find all their resources in one place.</p> <p>MY asked if the Board could have a similar section on the website. DN said this is something we could look into, however it would not be a secure area. The volunteer hub is publicly accessible on the website and to make a secure area would have cost implications.</p> <p>MY suggested work such as the volunteer hub should be brought to the Board's attention.</p> <p>CN said he is looking forward to attending the upcoming engagement events at Amble and Bedlington.</p>	<p>DN to investigate a way for the Board to have a secure area on the HWN website.</p> <p>EG to send the link to the new volunteer pages to all Board members.</p>
<p>7. Final Operations and Financial Update 20/21</p> <p>DN spoke to the circulated report. The following points were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HWN is still operating mostly online but first face-to-face engagement events began this week. DN has also attended the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in person at the Council. This is a big step forward in returning to 'normal' operations. • AGM. There is still a way to go on deciding the format of the AGM but two possible themes are a joint event with the Northumberland Recovery College or an event around Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. DT asked the Board for any other suggestions. Themes suggested were 'Coming out of the pandemic' and the care home sector. FU would like to see HWN focus on the difficulties ethnically diverse groups have faced during the pandemic and vaccination programme. DN will take on board the suggestions and decide on the final theme and format. • EDI Key Performance Indicator. DN would like the Board to consider a wider idea around culture, organisation and behaviour rather than a specific KPI. Most quantitative KPIs will form part of the EDI policy and strategy. DT asked the Board to consider this and it will be added to the agenda for the next Board meeting. • Budget. The Board noted the surplus due to savings on staffing and travel costs. The budget for the three commissioned projects agreed at the March Board meeting will be spent this year. 	<p>All Board members to think of themes for the AGM and pass these on to DN.</p> <p>Make EDI Key Performance Indicator an item on the agenda for the next Board meeting in September.</p>

<p>The operational plan update was accepted. DT noted the annual survey mail drop to over 11,000 households and the increase in social media reach and newspaper advertisements.</p>	
<p>8. Operational Plan 2021/22</p> <p>DN presented the Operational Plan for June 2021 to May 2022. DN said the plan could be affected by the continued uncertainty with the pandemic, the implementation of the Integrated Care System and the Healthwatch tender exercise. However, the plan sets out the places HWN would like to be and what projects the team would like to do.</p> <p>DN has removed the KPI around responding to Quality Accounts as this has to be done anyway so does not need to be in the report.</p> <p>DT said the list of projects was very ambitious and asked members for their comments. MY suggested the NHS Community Voice as a good resource for potential subjects for projects.</p> <p>KH asked what the link with the ICS would mean for HWN in practice. DT said there will be a significant impact on HWN in terms of time and resources and there will be a strong need for local HW to work together. Any financial contribution would need agreement from Adapt, the Board and commissioners. DT asked members if they were happy to continue with the Memorandum of Understanding and the draft proposal. All members agreed.</p> <p>KH suggested looking at wider public health issues and said he would like to see some consultation with colleagues in Public Health about social and economic recovery and health inequalities. KH to meet with Sandra Cain initially.</p> <p>DB said there seems to be various groups wanting to talk about the same things. She said there is a lot in the plan and it is important to be ready for the unexpected and not try to do too much. The priority should be small steps to get back to normal.</p> <p>The Board agreed the Operational Plan 2021/22 bearing in mind the suggestions offered.</p>	<p>Once Memorandum of Understanding is in final form, DT to send to all Board members for consideration.</p>
<p>9. Board, volunteer, and staff survey feedback</p> <p>DN thanked everyone for completing the survey and DT noted that the feedback was mostly positive. One area which was highlighted for improvement was understanding the role of Healthwatch.</p> <p>KH suggested it would be interesting to ask if any volunteers joined with an aim to move into employment. DN said this was covered in the volunteer entrance/exit interviews.</p>	<p>DN to repeat Board, volunteer, and staff survey next year</p>

<p>10. Board partner organisations update</p> <p>Carers Northumberland DB reported the organisation's current activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The large number of registrations during the vaccine roll-out in February and March has settled down now. • Focus is now on opening up and face-to-face sessions. This will be a phased return and some venues will change. • Carers Week saw carers take part in walks and outdoor events with more planned over the summer. • A mini survey around peer support has just closed, asking carers what support they would like. • Staff back in office on a rota basis. • Funding has been received to support parent carers. A Zoom peer support group has already been set up. • A new Carers Into Work Advisor, Rea, has been employed and will work with employability projects like Bridge. • Working with CNTW on an older people's pathway for post-diagnosis referrals. • Terms of Reference have been agreed for the Carers Partnership Board. • Funding for Young Carers Project has been extended until July 2022. <p>Adapt NE LP had to leave the meeting before the update.</p> <p>PALS DR gave an update on behalf of CL. PALS has been busy with 964 enquiries. Concerns have mainly been around communications and visiting. People have been finding it difficult to get through to hospital wards. Patients are also chasing up appointments and delayed treatment.</p>	
<p>11. Board Recruitment and Effectiveness Survey</p> <p>DT said the Board Effectiveness Survey was not done last year due to the work on the Quality Framework. He said that he was proposing changing the agreed frequency to every two years. The Board agreed the Effectiveness Survey will be every two years.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Board recruitment materials and advertising need a complete overhaul. DN asked if any members would like to join a group to work on this. DB, MA and MY showed interest. Anyone else who would like to be involved should let DN know.</p> <p>FU said the Board needs to consider where the advert is posted, whether it is accessible and who is on the recruitment panel.</p>	<p>DN to discuss Board recruitment materials, advertising and representation with group.</p>

MY suggested children and young people should be represented on the Board.	
12. Strategic Risk Register (standing item) Members agreed to amend the risk item on the Integrated Care System (ICS) to include possible financial expenditure. Contract issues to be added as an item on the risk register.	DN to amend the Strategic Risk Register.
13. Dates of meetings for 2020/21 The next Board meeting is 14 September, format to be decided.	
14. Any other business DT thanked HB for her time as a Board member and wished her well. KH said the North of Tyne Combined Authority is working with Carnegie UK Trust on a wellbeing approach to recovery from Covid. There is a call for evidence which can be completed at the following link: www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/project/wellbeing-in-the-north-of-tyne/ There was no further business. DT thanked everyone for attending and wished everyone a good summer. The Board hopes the September meeting will be held in person.	

Date of next meeting 14 September 2021 Venue/format to be confirmed.