

Minutes of the Healthwatch Northumberland Board meeting held on 14 September 2021 at Cramlington Community Hub

Present: David Thompson (DT) Chair, Margaret Young (MY) Independent Member, Mike Allport (MA) Independent Member, Sue Taylor (ST) Independent Member, Debra Blakey (DB) Carers Northumberland

In attendance: Derry Nugent (DN) Project Coordinator, Helen Brown (HB) Engagement Officer, Tim Hakim (TH) Engagement & Insight Officer, Laura Haugh (LH) Communication & Marketing Assistant

Apologies: Catherine Lee (CL) Patient Advice and Liaison Service, Fareeha Usman (FU) Independent Member, Kevin Higgins (KH) Northumberland County Council, Liz Prudhoe (LP) Adapt NE

Minutes recorded by Laura Haugh

1.Introductions, Apologies and Declarations of Interest:	Action
<p>The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the first Board meeting held in-person since the start of the pandemic.</p> <p>Declarations of Interest: no members declared interests pertinent to items at this meeting.</p>	
<p>2. Minutes of last meeting</p> <p>The minutes of 22 June 2021 were agreed as a true record.</p>	
<p>3. Action points</p> <p>All items were agreed as completed except the annual Board, Volunteer and Staff Survey which is due June 2022.</p>	
<p>4. Matters Arising</p> <p>There were no matters arising from the minutes.</p>	
<p>5. Questions from the public</p> <p>Before the meeting members of the public were asked to submit questions, which addressed the agenda. No questions were received.</p>	

<p>6. Presentation: Engagement and Annual Survey Update</p> <p>TH and HB gave a presentation about the findings of the Annual Survey 2020-21. There were 617 responses and overall Northumberland residents seem very happy with health services. The most common issue was lack of face-to-face GP appointments.</p> <p>The health services people would like us to focus on are GP services (51%), mental health services (30%), cancer services (22%) and dentists (17%). The Board agreed the focus would be on GP services and dentists as work has already been done around mental health services this year and will be the focus of this year's AGM. Also HWN is currently receiving regular feedback from patients about access to GP services and dentists.</p> <p>Cancer services in Northumberland are performing well against national standards at the moment and HWN will monitor patient feedback about this.</p> <p>Only 26% of respondents had used social care but those who did were satisfied with the services. The two areas of social care people would like us to focus on are support to live independently/care at home (40%) and dementia services (34%). Care homes came in a close third (33%) however the Board agreed not to make this a priority as work is already ongoing following the recent report and three-monthly online forums for residents and relatives will start in November. with the new Care Home Forum. The Board agreed that when it is possible to start Enter and View visits again these will be a way to support best practice in care homes.</p> <p>There was a gap in responses from younger people under the age of 25 and people in the Wylam area. These groups can be targeted in next year's survey.</p> <p>DB said she was surprised at the lack of response about social care services but this could be that many people only experience the services when they need them.</p> <p>DT said the Healthwatch Northumberland team should be commended on trying different methods to reach people during the pandemic.</p> <p>DT asked if the findings would affect the Operational Plan. DN said it would regarding dentists. DN will amend the plan for the December Board meeting.</p>	<p>DN to amend the Operational Plan to include work around dentists for the December Board meeting.</p>
<p>7. Operational Plan 2021/22 Update</p> <p>DN spoke to the circulated report. The following points were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Here to Hear – postcards to promote the sessions have been printed. Board members are welcome to collect some to distribute in their 	

<p>area. Three sessions have taken place so far in Haltwhistle, Cramlington and Berwick.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return to office – the team are returning to the office on a rota basis to enable sufficient space and ventilation. • End of life focus groups – the first group took place last week. The focus groups will take place in September and October, the report will be published in November. • PPGs – DN is working with the CCG on ways to support new and established PPGs. DN has been contacted by the PCN regarding setting up a PPG in the west. • Volunteering – We are attending the QE High School Freshers Fair to attract more young volunteers (3 previous young volunteers came from here) • Financial update – costs for venues and travel will rise now we are getting back out again. The second part of the Care at Home project payment will be made once the final report is agreed. <p>DT asked if the report on young people and mental health has been published yet. HB said it is expected to be published by the end of the month and will be sent to all Board members.</p> <p>DT commented that the website and social media reach was encouraging and would like to understand more about what the figures mean. This will be the focus of the Communications and Marketing presentation at the December meeting.</p>	<p>The Communications and Marketing presentation at the December meeting will explain the website and social media reach.</p>
<p>8. Measuring our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</p> <p>DN said at the last Board meeting she was asked to establish KPIs for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion but these are difficult to set without baseline data. DN suggested the following measures to establish the baseline:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The team will increase the basic demographic data collected about who is engaging with us and use this year’s data as a baseline. 2. The annual Board, Staff and Volunteer satisfaction survey data will be used as a baseline for inclusivity and diversity. <p>The Board approved these two measures. DN will report back in 12 months.</p>	<p>DN to report back in 12 months on the two measurements for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.</p>
<p>9. Board partner organisations updates</p> <p>Carers Northumberland</p> <p>DB reported the organisation’s current activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face-to-face carers groups are starting up again and the online weekly group will continue. Possibility of roving groups in the new year. • The Young Carers Activity Coordinator is now in post and there has been a trip to Northumberland Zoo. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent carers – funding has been secured for some pilot work with parent carers. Parent carer assessments are not routinely offered – DB will keep an eye on this and feed back to HWN if necessary. • Carers Northumberland is running an End of Life focus group. <p>Adapt NE No update from Adapt NE.</p> <p>PALS No update from PALS.</p>	<p>DB to monitor issue with parent carer assessments and feed back to HWN if necessary.</p>
<p>10. Integrated Care System: joint working with North East and North Cumbria Healthwatch</p> <p>The Board agreed to sign the Working Agreement with North of Tyne Healthwatch which sets out how the four Healthwatch in North of Tyne and Gateshead will work together.</p> <p>DB asked if the agreement would affect HWN’s priorities. DN said it could influence the workplan priorities but not override them. HWN will still have independence to focus. DT said the agreement is just a public statement of how the four organisations have been working together. Our focus will remain on Northumberland and there will be no financial implications.</p>	
<p>11. Governance issues</p> <p>i) Decision making policy The Board approved this document and it will be published on the HWN website.</p> <p>ii) Volunteer attendance at Board meetings The Board agreed to allow volunteers to attend Board meetings and agreed that a volunteer could become a Board member and still volunteer.</p> <p>iii) Handbook Review Timetable and documents The Board agreed the Handbook Review Timetable and accepted the documents to be reviewed today. DB commented that the document states a nominated deputy should try to attend Board meetings in a member’s absence, but it is often difficult for another member of staff to stand in. It was agreed to keep names and job titles to a minimum to help keep information up to date.</p>	
<p>12. Board Recruitment update</p> <p>DN said the advert and application materials went out last week. There has been some interest already, particularly from the North of the county. The vacancy will close on 1 October 2021.</p>	

<p>DN suggested some future meetings may need to move to the evening to encourage people who work during the day to join the Board.</p>	
<p>13. Strategic Risk Register (standing item)</p> <p>Members agreed to amend the risk register to include a possible threat from increased joint working regarding duplication of work and HWN's independence. The Board noted this could also be an opportunity to carry out more focussed work if other issues have already been covered by other stakeholders.</p>	<p>DN to amend the Strategic Risk Register.</p>
<p>13. Dates of meetings for 2020/21</p> <p>The next Board meeting is 14 December, venue to be decided.</p>	
<p>14. Any other business</p> <p>DN reminded members about the team social trip to The Sill on Tuesday 28 September.</p> <p>DT asked for members' thoughts on meeting in person versus Zoom meetings. The members present agreed they would prefer to meet in person, however the members not present will need to be consulted. It was agreed Zoom could be used as a reserve in circumstances such as bad weather or further lockdowns.</p> <p>DT thanked everyone for their contributions and said it was great to meet again in person. DT hopes the December meeting will be held in person once again.</p>	

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