

Minutes of the Healthwatch Northumberland Board meeting held on 14 December 2021 on Zoom

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, Catherine Lee (CL) Patient Advice and Liaison Service, Fareeha Usman (FU) Independent Member, Kevin Higgins (KH) Northumberland County Council, Liz Prudhoe (LP) Adapt NE, Kaeti Seth (KS) Independent Member, Gillian Robinson (GR) Independent Member

In attendance: Derry Nugent (DN) Project Coordinator, Helen Brown (HB) Engagement Officer, Tim Hakim (TH) Engagement & Insight Officer, Claire Jackson (CJ) Communication & Marketing Officer, Laura Haugh (LH) Communication & Marketing Assistant, Emma Grimwood (EG) Volunteer Officer, Colin Nevin (CN) Volunteer, Ann Atkinson (AA) on behalf of Anne Lyall of VCS Assembly

Apologies: Jacqui Davison (JD) Independent Member

Minutes recorded by Laura Haugh

1.Introductions, Apologies and Declarations of Interest:	Action
<p>The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed GR and KS as new Board members. Due to current Covid restrictions, it was necessary to meet online via Zoom again.</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 14 September 2021 were agreed as a true record.</p>	
<p>3. Action points</p> <p>Items 6, 7 and 13 were agreed as completed.</p> <p>Item 8 is in progress and will be kept as an action point.</p> <p>It was agreed to close Item 9 as an action point but DB will continue to feedback to Healthwatch about any carer assessments as required.</p>	<p>Action point 8 in progress from last meeting – DN to report back in 12 months on the two measurements for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.</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. Two questions were received:</p> <p>What is Healthwatch Northumberland doing about the chaos that ensued in communities following Storm Arwen and the lack of support for people on the priority register?</p> <p>Although the emergency response to the storm is not within Healthwatch’s remit, the issues we can consider are the impact of the storm response on social care services in the county and communication with those without digital access. DN will reply to the person who raised this question.</p> <p>A resident has been trying to get a Covid booster for a housebound patient but there is a long waiting list. Is Healthwatch Northumberland planning to follow this up?</p> <p>DN will raise this issue with Northumberland CCG. DN asked DB to let Healthwatch know if she hears of similar issues from carers.</p>	<p>DN to provide a response to the question about Storm Arwen.</p> <p>DN to raise issue of Covid boosters for housebound patients with Northumberland CCG.</p>
<p>6. Presentation: Communications and Marketing Update</p> <p>CJ gave a presentation about digital marketing and communications, accessibility and branding.</p> <p>CJ gave an overview of the various digital tools including social media, website, search, Google listings, third party sites and e-newsletters.</p> <p>The benefits of digital marketing are that we can choose who sees specific messages and the results can be measured. CJ explained some of the key metrics and demographics that can be measured.</p> <p>CJ gave an overview of the importance of making communications more accessible and showed some examples of the new Healthwatch branding.</p> <p>Digital communication is just one aspect of Healthwatch Northumberland’s communication and marketing plan. Non-digital communication this year has included a monthly newspaper advert and regular press releases. There will be an advert in the Hexham Courant’s health and care supplement in January.</p> <p>DT asked if there was much response from young people through digital communication. CJ said young people are difficult to reach but social media does help to target this group.</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"> • Covid restrictions – Due to new Covid restrictions and guidance from HWE, face-to-face engagement has been suspended and staff returning to the office has been put on hold for now. Restrictions are due to be reviewed on 26 January. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement KPI – DN made a recommendation in her report to change the target for engagement events to 35. It was agreed to keep the target at 20 as Covid restrictions may affect how many events can take place. While face-to-face engagement cannot take place there will be online events and targeted project work. • Engagement projects – DT said the Home Care report was very comprehensive and the dentistry survey was an important piece of work on an issue many people are experiencing problems with. • Volunteering – EG will provide an update in March. The target to produce a briefing document that outlines the volunteering options available has been pushed back as volunteering roles have been very different during the pandemic. • AGM 2022 – The Board agreed the date for next year’s AGM would be Wednesday 19 October 2022. <p>The Board agreed the Operational Update.</p>	
<p>8. Thriving Together initiative</p> <p>In November Board members attended meetings about the Thriving Together initiative. DN asked how the Board sees Healthwatch contributing to the initiative. In summary the Board concluded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthwatch strongly welcomes the initiative and its commitment to joint working. This fits with the HWN strategic plan. • Healthwatch must remember it is independent and there to enable people’s voices to be at the centre of organising and planning health and social care services. • The model provides opportunities for networking and engagement if small voluntary organisations are as well represented as statutory organisations and are given sufficient time and resources to be involved. • Some concern about the language used and underdeveloped focus on equality and diversity. • Social care as well as healthcare needs to be explicitly included. <p>KH sits on the Thriving Together steering group and will pass on this feedback.</p>	<p>KH to pass feedback on to Thriving Together initiative.</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"> • The Carers Rights Day event on 25 November at the Cramlington Hub was a great success. • Some members of staff are working from the office. • It is uncertain whether face-to-face groups in January will go ahead. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working closely with CNTW and the Older People’s Pathway – carers will automatically be referred to Carers Northumberland. • Potential research project with Newcastle University around 16-25 year olds. • There is some work being done on carer journey mapping. • The biggest issue is still care packages not being available and difficulty getting in touch with One Call/care managers. DN suggested DB speak to HB as this was a main issue in the Home Care report. <p>VCS Assembly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northumberland CVA has been reviewing its business plan as a consequence of no longer holding the commission from Northumberland County Council to provide support services to VCS. • VCS Assembly will remain as a county-wide network to provide support and advocacy. • Encouraging voluntary groups to become members and benefit from three free hours of guidance. • Recently held first South East Network meeting face-to-face but back on Zoom for now. <p>Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three vacancies have been filled at Hexham Hospital, St. Nicholas Hospital and the RVI. • The service is busy and there continues to be issues around communication, visiting restrictions and difficulties getting through to people. Patients not as happy to wait as they were during first year of pandemic. • Some queries about the accessibility standard. PALS trying to make all information as accessible as possible. <p>Adapt North East</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LP said like Healthwatch the Advocacy and NHS Complaints projects are fully operational. Core activities are open with the café, business units and car park busy as people are getting out and about again. 	
<p>10. Quality Framework Review</p> <p>This was the first review of the plan which was set in the spring, when it was agreed to review it twice a year. Progress has been made, especially on the red-rated priority actions.</p> <p>DN asked for comments on the draft EDI policy.</p> <p>KS said it was a great policy but we must not lose sight of deprivation and poverty. KS asked what the baseline data is. DN will share information about the demographic baseline data.</p>	<p>DN will share information about the demographic baseline data.</p>

<p>FU said it was a good, simple policy and she will keep Healthwatch updated regarding neurodiversity being added as a protected characteristic.</p> <p>MY said the policy was a good starting point but we need to consider its accessibility for people with learning disabilities in particular. CJ said we have the training and resources to produce an Easy Read document.</p> <p>The Board approved the EDI policy and agreed it will be reviewed in more detail at the Planning Day.</p> <p>DN asked for comments on the recommendation to “Develop an equalities KPI for HWN being an enabler for patients and service users in the new digital world”.</p> <p>KS suggested using the number of people we engage with non-digitally as a baseline. The Board accepted this amendment.</p> <p>The Board accepted the Quality Framework review and another update will be given in the summer.</p>	<p>DN to develop a KPI about the number of people we engage or support in non-digital ways.</p>
<p>11. Board Planning Day 2022</p> <p>Board members agreed that the Planning Day would be best as a face-to-face meeting rather than online. CL suggested a hybrid approach to include those who won’t be able to attend in person but other members said in past experience this format hadn’t worked well.</p> <p>It was decided to move the date back to February (exact date to be confirmed) when hopefully Covid restrictions will have lifted.</p>	<p>DN to confirm a new date for the Planning Day</p>
<p>12. Strategic Risk Register (standing item)</p> <p>The Board agreed to remove the two risks relating to the Healthwatch contract.</p> <p>DN suggested adding to the register the risk of Covid restrictions and the effect on relationships caused by the implementation of the Integrated Care System (ICS).</p> <p>The Board agreed these amendments.</p>	<p>DN to amend Strategic Risk Register.</p>
<p>13. Dates of meetings for 2020/21</p> <p>Planning Day – Date and venue to be confirmed.</p> <p>22 March 2022</p>	
<p>14. Any other business</p>	

<p>DT reminded Board members about the Zoom Christmas Quiz on Wednesday 15 December.</p> <p>DT said there had been little mention of social care at the Integrated Care System meetings he has attended. Healthwatch Northumberland will sit on the Integrated Care Board (ICB) as a non-voting member and can raise any issues. There is more work to be done on how everyone will work together.</p> <p>KS asked if 42 ICBs would be replacing the CCGs as this seemed excessive. DT said he was not yet sure.</p> <p>KS asked if the working agreement is ready to be signed. DN said it has been paused until HWE provide further advice and legal representation. Once fully written it will be shared.</p> <p>DN will share the signed working agreement with North of Tyne Healthwatch with the new Board members.</p> <p>DT will share the draft response of 13 Healthwatch.</p>	<p>DN will share the working agreement with North of Tyne Healthwatch with the new Board members.</p> <p>DT to share draft response of 13 Healthwatch.</p>
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Date of next meeting – Board Planning Day (Date and venue to be confirmed)