

**Minutes of the Healthwatch Northumberland Board meeting held on 22 March 2022 at Choppington Social Welfare Centre**

**Present:** David Thompson (DT) Chair, Margaret Young (MY) Independent Member, Mike Allport (MA) Independent Member, Sue Taylor (ST) Independent Member, Catherine Lee (CL) Patient Advice and Liaison Service, Fareeha Usman (FU) Independent Member, Kevin Higgins (KH) Northumberland County Council, Gillian Robinson (GR) Independent Member

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

**Apologies:** Debra Blakey (DB) Carers Northumberland, Liz Prudhoe (LP) Adapt NE, Kaeti Seth (KS) Independent Member, Jacqui Davison (JD) Independent Member, Emma Grimwood (EG) Volunteer Officer

**Minutes recorded by** Laura Haugh

<p><b>1.Introductions, Apologies and Declarations of Interest:</b></p> <p>The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.</p> <p>Declarations of Interest: no members declared interests pertinent to items at this meeting.</p>	<p><b>Action</b></p>
<p><b>2. Minutes of last meeting</b></p> <p>The minutes of 14 December 2021 were agreed as a true record.</p>	
<p><b>3. Action points</b></p> <p>All action points are marked as complete except items 3 and 10 which are in progress. DN will report back on item 10 in June.</p> <p>Item 8 is complete but KH will continue to feedback about Thriving Together initiative.</p>	
<p><b>4. Matters Arising</b></p> <p>There were no matters arising from the minutes.</p>	
<p><b>5. Questions from the public</b></p> <p>Before the meeting members of the public were asked to submit questions, which addressed the agenda. No questions were received.</p> <p>The two questions received at the December meeting regarding Storm Arwen and booster vaccines have been responded to.</p>	

<p><b>6. Presentation: Volunteering Update</b></p> <p>EG gave her apologies for the meeting. She will give her Volunteering Update presentation at the next meeting in June.</p>	<p>EG to make presentation to June Board meeting</p>
<p><b>7. Operational Plan 2021/22 Update</b></p> <p>DN spoke to the circulated report. The following points were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteering – We continue to recruit new volunteers to add to the team of 12. Volunteer recruitment materials are now available online which is ahead of the game compared to other HW. Next step is to support volunteers to get involved with face to face engagement activities again.</li> <li>• Engagement – Various outreach sessions planned including regular Here to Hear sessions, sessions to promote the Pharmacy Needs Assessment survey, seafarers event at Amble, Pride and new sessions planned at Being Woman.</li> <li>• MY mentioned a community event at Hirst Park in Ashington over the Jubilee weekend in June. MY to liaise with TH and LH about taking leaflets to the event.</li> <li>• The Home Care draft report is written. Good example of how it's important to consider how we say things, not just what we say. FU to share a model for drafting reports she has come across.</li> <li>• The tender for the Understanding Sight Loss Pathways project has been awarded to Vision Northumberland (formerly NCBA). This will run over the next three to four months and provide a report about understanding sight loss services. DN will provide an update on this project in June.</li> <li>• Your Voice Fund – It was decided not to proceed with the grants this time because the Council and the Recovery College were offering VCSE organisations grants to do engagement at the same time and felt this meant we would not get a good response. Also, the three projects would have taken us over the allocated budget.</li> <li>• GR said it was good that the new national Director, Louise Ansari, is visiting the region in July.</li> <li>• DN explained the role of the Core20PLUS5 group and that money has been allocated to each ICS area to help most deprived areas using Community Champions.</li> <li>• Enter and View to be added to the agenda for the June meeting. Board members were asked to consider if they would be interested in the training. DN will look into training and cost implications.</li> <li>• Contract tender - A decision is expected by mid-April.</li> <li>• DT noted the small number of people attending the first Brockwell engagement sessions. DN explained this was due to a delay in the letters from the practice being delivered by the mail company. To compensate for this Valens PCN has extended the engagement period and arranged extra online sessions.</li> <li>• MY said there are issues with PPGs not being consulted about plans and feeling used only when they are needed for something.</li> </ul>	<p>MY to liaise with TH and LH about taking leaflets to the event at Hirst Park.</p> <p>FU to share a model for drafting reports.</p> <p>DN will provide an update on the Understanding Sight Loss Pathways project in June.</p> <p>Enter and View to be added to the agenda for June meeting. DN to look into training and cost implications.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FU expressed concerns about the Brockwell survey. She did not feel it was accessible and some of the questions seemed 'leading'. There was a similar issue with the GP access survey which had no option to translate. DN said this had also been raised during the engagement sessions. This issue will be raised with the CCG on behalf of the HWN Board. Board members to be kept informed of any development.</li> </ul> <p>The Board agreed the Operational and Financial Update.</p>	<p>The HWN Board will raise the surveys with the CCG. Board members to be kept informed of any development.</p>
<p><b>8. Operational Plan 2022/23 Preparation</b></p> <p>DN referred to the Operational Plan 2022/23 preparation report. This report is a summary of the group discussions at the Board Planning Day.</p> <p>DN said the key themes from the discussions were the focus on health inequalities including facilitating public discussions and to have a more strategic approach to youth engagement which co-ordinated with what other agencies are doing.</p> <p>DN said the Plan will be in line with the HWN Decision-Making Policy with actions having a clear reason for doing it, a method and clear achievable outcomes.</p> <p>Members highlighted issues to be considered alongside those from current and planned work including reaching out to specific groups such as young farmers and seafarers.</p> <p>DT said the next meeting in June members will consider and agree the Operational Plan 2022/23.</p>	
<p><b>9. Board partner organisations updates</b></p> <p><b>Carers Northumberland</b> There was no update from Carers Northumberland.</p> <p><b>VCS Assembly</b> There was no update from VCS Assembly.</p> <p><b>Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CL said PALS is very busy.</li> <li>Patients have frustrations around staff absences, delayed surgery and changes to visiting rules.</li> <li>People not as understanding as they were earlier in pandemic. Some quite angry.</li> <li>Long waiting lists particularly around CYPS mental health services.</li> <li>New building planned at Newcastle Hospitals to centralise services which could affect some Northumberland patients.</li> <li>Issues with BSL interpreters not turning up for appointments.</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CL mentioned the English Unlocked workplace communication training which can help organisations overcome language barriers.</li> </ul> <p><b>Adapt North East</b> There was no update from Adapt North East.</p>	CL to share the English Unlocked website link with DN
<p><b>10. ICS Update</b></p> <p>DT gave an update about the ICS. He recently attended a meeting where Sam Allen, the new Chief Executive of the Integrated Care System for the North East and North Cumbria ICS, gave a presentation. The ICS will become a legal entity from 1 July 2022 but next year will be a period of transition.</p> <p>The HW in North East and North Cumbria continue to work on their joint working arrangements. Board members agreed to receive the formal documents at the June meeting but DT will keep members informed of any developments.</p>	
<p><b>11. Strategic Risk Register (standing item)</b></p> <p>CL asked about support for Ukrainian refugees to access health services. DN will ask the CCG about current plans and ensure HWN has information available to support people in accessing services. Board will then consider if there is any risk to HWN operations.</p> <p>The Board agreed the items currently on the Register.</p>	DN to speak to the CCG about plans to support Ukrainian refugees.
<p><b>12. Dates of meetings for 2020/21</b></p> <p>21 June 2022 13 September 2022 19 October 2022 – AGM 13 December 2022 24 January 2023 – Planning Day 21 March 2023</p>	
<p><b>13. Any other business</b></p> <p>There was no other business.</p>	

**Date of next meeting – 21 June 2022 (Venue to be confirmed)**