

**Minutes of the Healthwatch Northumberland Board meeting held on 21 March 2023 at Adapt NE, Hexham.**

**Present:** David Thompson (DT) Chair, Margaret Young (MY) Independent Member, Denise Robson (DR) Patient Advice and Liaison Service, Debra Blakey (DB) Carers Northumberland, Mike Allport (MA) Independent Member, Gillian Robinson (GR) Independent Member, Jim Brown (JB) Public Health NCC, Lorna Beech (LB) ICAN, Caroline Rogan (CR) Northumberland CVA

**In attendance:** Derry Nugent (DN) Project Coordinator, Emma Grimwood (EG) Volunteering Officer, Laura Haugh (LH) Communications and Marketing Assistant

**Apologies:** Liz Prudhoe (LP) Adapt NE, Fareeha Usman (FU) Independent Member, Sue Taylor (ST) Independent Member, Kevin Higgins (KH) Northumberland County Council, Jacqui Davison (JD) Independent Member

**Minutes recorded by:** Laura Haugh

<b>1.Introductions, apologies and declarations of interest:</b>	<b>Action</b>
<p>The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.</p> <p>Declarations of Interest: JB reminded members he is employed by the ICB. No other members declared interests pertinent to items at this meeting.</p>	
<b>2. Minutes of last meeting</b>	
<p>The minutes of 13 December 2022 were agreed as a true record. Members asked JB if the new Chief Executive had started which was mentioned at the last meeting. JB confirmed she was now in post.</p>	
<b>3. Action points</b>	
<p>Item 7 – There was a partial discussion of the EDI KPI at the Planning Day.</p> <p>Item 7 – Vaccination process escalation – DN has spoken to Rachel Mitcheson from the ICB who has identified the person to speak to for a response. This action point will be kept open until a response is received.</p>	<p>DN to provide an update on the outcome of the vaccination process escalation.</p>

<p>Item 7 – Enter and View – DN will provide an update on this in the Operational/Financial Update later in the meeting.</p> <p>All other Action Points noted as complete.</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>There were no questions received from the public.</p>	
<p><b>6. Presentation: Volunteering update</b></p> <p>EG gave a presentation about the young people’s ‘How are you feeling?’ project.</p> <p>The reason for this project is that HWN has low engagement with young people. In 2021/22 only 12 pieces of feedback came from 13-24 year olds, therefore this group was identified as a priority in the Operational Plan.</p> <p>Three young school volunteers and adult volunteer Lisa, who has an interest in mental health, worked with the staff team on research and survey design.</p> <p>The project is about two-way engagement – collecting feedback from young people and also raising awareness of HWN and health and care services available in Northumberland.</p> <p>A short online form has been created and schools have been invited to take part with prizes for one of the schools and one student. Resources to promote the survey will be distributed to the schools which have registered. The survey will also be promoted widely to young people on social media and our newsletters.</p> <p>A test run was carried out in October 2022 at Queen Elizabeth High School with 80 responses received.</p> <p>1 in 3 high schools/colleges invited have registered so far including high schools, academies, colleges and a boarding school, based across the county – this is around 4500 young people.</p> <p>EG shared examples of the campaign resources and showed the Board a video produced with the help of the young volunteers.</p>	

<p>The team will hand deliver the survey resources to schools/colleges to build links and confidence with contacts.</p> <p><b>Comments and questions</b></p> <p>DT thanked EG for her presentation and said although it would be good to have a young person on the Board, this project is an effective way of reaching large numbers of young people.</p> <p>JB asked how the young volunteers were recruited. EG said most come from QE High School through school contacts and the freshers' fair. One came from Duke of Edinburgh award.</p> <p>JB said there is a Children's Health and Wellbeing Survey every two years. He suggested asking Yvonne Hush when this is running to avoid duplication.</p> <p>GR asked how the survey will be cascaded through Northumberland College. She said it's important to have the right contacts.</p> <p>DB said the project sounded great and it would be useful to link in with Carers Northumberland's young carers. When the survey is ready HWN will link with Anne-Marie from Carers Northumberland to promote it to young carers.</p> <p>DN said there had been no interest from Prudhoe or Haydon Bridge high schools so if any members have a contact there that would be helpful.</p> <p>JB suggested contacting David Street, Deputy Director of Education. He asked if the education directorate had been informed about the survey. DN will let the Director of Education know.</p> <p>GR suggested asking HWE for money for this project but DN said there was no money available, only for targeted projects.</p> <p>JB noted it was impressive how the project and the survey had been tested before it was launched.</p> <p>This was EG's final Board meeting and David thanked her for all her work which will have a lasting impact on HWN.</p>	<p>DN will check the date of the Children's Health and Wellbeing Survey.</p> <p>DN will check the contacts at Northumberland College to send survey resources to.</p> <p>HWN will link with Anne-Marie at Carers Northumberland to promote the survey to young carers.</p> <p>DN will let the Director of Education know about the survey.</p>
<p><b>7. Operational and financial update 2022/23</b></p> <p>DN spoke to the circulated report.</p>	

Finance – DB asked about the overspend on the budget for meeting rooms and volunteer expenses. DN said this was due to venue hire for the AGM and volunteer travel costs. The £400 miscellaneous expense was for InDesign software. The overspend will be absorbed by underspend in other areas and salary savings while recruiting for the volunteering officer post. The overall budget spend sits at 74% which is on track.

Enter and View – DN said she has now had a conversation with Craig Healthcare and they are keen to work with HWN. This could be a joint piece of work with HW North Tyneside. DN will develop the project plan and circulate to the Board for approval.

Lloyd’s pharmacy – There is an emerging issue with the closure of Lloyd’s pharmacy in Sainsbury’s, Cramlington as this is a 100-hour pharmacy and its closure will leave a gap in pharmacy provision, especially for out of hours. DN said the issues are the impact on patients and how the changes will be communicated to patients. The matter will need to be considered by the Health & Wellbeing Board and HWN has indicated to the Council that some public engagement is required in the pharmacy, particularly on evenings to fully understand the impact. Management at Lloyds is agreeable. DN said this could be done as Enter and View but to do this the Board must agree there is a purpose and E&V is the correct approach. Board members agreed this in principle. DN will make a formal proposal to the Board in due course. DN reminded members who are trained Authorised Representatives that they will be called on to take part.

Autistic children and young people report – DN said the comments from the two lead commissioners are being finalised then the report will be published. It will be sent to the ICB Quality and Safety Committee.

HW 10-year celebration event – The members who attended this event all gave positive feedback. MA said it went well and GR said it gave good insight and she was impressed with Claire Riley’s presentation. MY noted that the other HW seemed to have the same concerns, for example around funding.

Funding – DT thanked DN for sending around the HWE report on funding.

Operational capacity – DN said she would be reconfiguring the vacant post to be an Engagement and Volunteering Officer.

DN will develop the project plan and circulate to the Board for approval.

DN will make a formal proposal to the Board in due course.

<p>Commissioned projects – The sight-loss report is almost ready – the design is currently being finalised. JB suggested Vision Northumberland could take it to the Ageing Well workshop in April.</p> <p>Engagement – The report from the annual conversations will be sent to the Board when complete. Online talk sessions coming up include Eating Distress North East and Chartered Institute of Physiotherapy. DT noted the engagement with the fishing community. GR suggested making links with young farmers. JB suggested the Locality Coordinators Julie Leddy and Ruth Armstrong are good contacts.</p> <p>Outpatients report – A broad brush response has been received from Northumbria Healthcare Trust. DT raised the importance of specific recommendations and the need to push for responses on all of them. DN said she would discuss this with HW North Tyneside, the joint authors and with Northumbria Healthcare.</p> <p>Volunteering – The annual catch-up chats are outstanding. This will carry over to the new Engagement and Volunteering Officer.</p> <p>Communication and marketing – DT said the digital marketing and newsletter figures are impressive. LH explained that some money has been spent on paid social media adverts to boost reach.</p> <p>Strategic influence – DN said more information can be found in DT’s detailed meeting reports.</p> <p>JB noted that given the level of funding, HWN does a lot.</p>	<p>DN said she would discuss this with HW North Tyneside and with Northumbria Healthcare</p>
<p><b>8. Board partner organisations updates</b></p> <p><b>Carers Northumberland</b></p> <p>DB gave an update on Carers Northumberland.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young Carers Action Day took place on 15 March 2023. The theme was ‘Take time for Young Carers’. Carers Northumberland ran a successful social media campaign day with suggestions from young carers on what they could do to take time for themselves if they had 5, 10 or 30 minutes to spare. There was also a residential weekend at Ford Castle for a group of young carers with the chance to participate in lots of different activities.</li> <li>• The Young Carers in Schools programme has accelerated over the last few months with some of the more engaged schools making great progress with their offer to young carers. Two schools, Malvins Road Primary and Croftway</li> </ul>	

Primary, have achieved the Recognition of Excellence for Young Carers in Schools Standard which recognises their commitment to supporting young carers in the school environment.

- Parent Carers – additional funding secured to continue supporting parent carers. This is a commitment from NCC’s Children’s Services to recognise the support Carers Northumberland has been providing to parent carers over the past 2 years. The plan is to take a more holistic approach to supporting parent carers which includes the identification of any young carers in the household and providing whole family support.
- Carers Northumberland carried out a survey on respite provision in response to comments made at a recent Home Care Provision Forum. Carers who responded mainly reported that they were unable to secure adequate and/or timely respite for relatives to enable them to have a break from caring. The collated responses have been shared with Healthwatch Northumberland and with Alan Curry at NCC.
- Continued pressure on the service, with requests to be involved in many forums, task and finish groups etc. Many of these are at the request of statutory services (NCC, ICB, NHS) and while it is important for VCS organisations to be included in these discussions there is little recompense for the time spent attending and the follow-up work being carried out. DB also concerned that Carers Northumberland have not had funding from the ICB confirmed for 2023-24 yet.

#### **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

- DR will now represent PALS on the Board since Catherine Lee’s retirement.
- PALS has dealt with 8000 concerns since April last year (across the North East, not just Northumberland). This is around the number expected. 400 compliments have been received.
- A new PALS officer has started work at Wansbeck and another officer will be recruited soon. They will also do some work in Northgate and St. George’s hospitals.

#### **Northumberland CVA**

CR gave an update on Northumberland CVA’s activity.

- The cost of living crisis is having a significant impact.

- NCVA is trying to get out and about in communities across Northumberland to remind people what services are available, but many people have retreated to their homes.
- NCVA receives many calls for support with debt, food banks etc. especially now the Bridge project has ended.
- Projects to help with digital inclusion are in progress.

**ICAN**

LB gave an update on the emerging themes in NHS complaints.

- The impact that raising complaints/concerns has on patient treatment. Patients reassured by trusts/service providers that their care will not be compromised by raising a complaint, however a recent advocacy case involved a patient being removed from a surgery list due to the surgeon “stepping away” following her complaint submission, highlighting how vulnerable patients can feel raising complaints/concerns.
- Inconsistencies with contact details for advocacy/complaint support noticed in printed information provided by trusts and some inaccurate/insufficient details noticed on GP surgery websites, including inaccurate timescales for raising complaints (DN noted Healthwatch are aware of this). The importance of ensuring clear and consistent information for patients.
- Pattern of complaints noticed regarding personal care by nursing staff in hospital ward settings, lack of attention to issues such as personal hygiene, highlighting that what may seem less significant to decision makers is often extremely important to patients.

LB to let DN know the response to the case with the surgeon stepping back from patient’s care following complaint.

JB asked where these themes are fed back to – this information needs to be collected. DR said PALS themes and trends get fed back to management. LB will talk to DN about emerging themes.

**Public Health**

JB gave an update on NCC and Public Health.

- Gill O’Neill has been appointed Executive Director of Public Health, Communities and Inequalities
- After a competitive tendering process for integrated sexual health services in Northumberland, it is being recommended to

LB to let DN know the response to the case with the surgeon stepping back from patient’s care following complaint.

LB will talk to DN about emerging themes.

<p>Cabinet that the contract be awarded to Northumbria Healthcare.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progressing with re-commission of our Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Service. New contract to commence in Oct 2023.</li> <li>• Funding from ICS Health Inequalities fund for respiratory outreach by Northumbria Healthcare to NRP, additional funding for a vaccination midwife, and behavioural insights work on school-based immunisation.</li> <li>• DHSC has confirmed Year 2 funding award to Local Authorities to enhance local drug and alcohol services and support the local delivery of the Drug Strategy. Northumberland has received £702,310 for 2023/24.</li> <li>• Launch of the new Stop Smoking Service website as part of our digital offer.</li> <li>• NHS Health Check community outreach project due to start in May/June which will see health trainers providing opportunistic NHS Health Checks in community settings to people who are less likely to attend their general practice for a health check.</li> <li>• The Northumberland and North Tyneside Infection Prevention and Control strategy is almost complete.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>9. Draft strategy and feedback from Board Planning Day</b></p> <p>The Board agreed the strategy subject to textual amendments suggested by JB. The strategy will be confirmed at the next meeting in June.</p>	<p>DN to liaise with JB to amend draft strategy.</p>
<p><b>10. Governance issues</b></p> <p><b>i) Board recruitment update</b> The Chair interviews will take place on Friday 31 March with three candidates attending. Further recruitment for new members will take place in the Autumn once a new Chair has been appointed.</p> <p><b>ii) Board development session</b> DN thanked those who attended this session. Feedback from the session was very positive.</p> <p><b>iii) Policy Review Group update</b> DN said there will be two more key stone policies to review in April. DN will be sending out a 'Conflict of interest' form to all members shortly. DN would like to take 'Measuring our impact' out of the policy group and look at this separately.</p>	<p>'Measuring our impact' policy to be put on the</p>



	agenda for the June meeting.
<p><b>11. Strategic Risk Register (standing item)</b></p> <p>The Board agreed the items currently on the Register and DN asked if there are any emerging risks.</p> <p>JB asked if there is a continuity plan if both DT and DN are not available. DT said this was a good point to raise as he is currently undergoing treatment for prostate cancer.</p> <p>DN said it is part of the Strategic Risk register. The Board agreed it would be helpful for DN to discuss this with LP.</p>	<p>DN to discuss contingency for senior posts with LP</p>
<p><b>12. Dates of meetings for 2023/24</b></p> <p>13 June 2023 12 September 2023 5 December 2023 – NB date change</p>	
<p><b>13. Any other business</b></p> <p>DN suggested working with other local HW to provide a joint response to quality accounts to avoid duplication e.g. NEAS and Newcastle Hospitals. The Board agreed this was a good idea.</p> <p>DT thanked everyone for attending the meeting and said it was good to hear about more opportunities for young people to be listened to. He said he is convinced the ICB is more committed to listening to people but dentistry and Lloyd's pharmacy remain big issues.</p>	<p>DN will progress with HW Newcastle/Gateshead and HW North Tyneside</p>

**Date of next meeting – 13 June 2023**