

Minutes of the Healthwatch Northumberland Board meeting held on 11 June 2024 at Adapt NE, Burn Lane, Hexham

Present: Peter Standfield (PS) Chair, Liz Prudhoe (LP) Adapt NE, Debra Blakey (DB) Carers Northumberland, Mike Allport (MA) Independent Member, Denise Robson (DR) Patient Advice and Liaison Service, Jim Brown (JB) Public Health NCC, Alison Killen (AK) Independent Member, Dawn Porter (DP) Independent Member

In attendance: Derry Nugent (DN) Project Coordinator, Claire Jackson (CJ) Communication and Marketing Officer, Laura Haugh (LH) Digital Marketing and Content Creator

Apologies: Sue Taylor (ST) Independent Member, Gillian Robinson (GR) Independent Member, Caroline Rogan (CR) Northumberland CVA, Kevin Higgins (KH) Northumberland County Council

Minutes recorded by: Laura Haugh

1. Introduction, apologies and declarations of interest	Action
<p>1.1 PS opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.</p> <p>1.2 Apologies noted above.</p> <p>1.3 PS reminded the board of his involvement with Abbeyfield Northumbria, which provides residential care and sheltered accommodation for older people on a not-for-profit basis in Newcastle and Northumberland.</p> <p>JB reminded the board that he is employed by the NENC ICB and works for Northumberland County Council.</p> <p>No other interests were declared pertinent to items at this meeting.</p>	
<p>2. Minutes of last meeting</p> <p>The minutes of 12 March 2024 were agreed as a true record.</p>	

<p>3. Action points</p> <p>3.1 Item 3.1 - DN provided an update on transport between hospital sites. There is a limited car service and a pilot 'hoppa' bus service although these are not well promoted. The board will continue to raise transport and accessibility as a health inequalities issue. CJ and LH will look into promoting the transport service.</p> <p>3.2 Item 12 - DN to share council meeting notes in Policy Digest, is in progress. Members can watch recordings of all council meetings on our website. DN said it would be useful for members to let her know what they would find useful to be shared.</p> <p>3.3 All other action points were noted as complete.</p>	<p>CJ and LH will look into promoting the transport service between hospital sites.</p>
<p>4. Matters arising</p> <p>There were no matters arising from the minutes.</p>	
<p>5. Questions from the public</p> <p>No questions had been received from the public. There had been no call-out for questions due to the pre-election guidance.</p>	
<p>6. Presentation: Communication and marketing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CJ gave an overview of communication and marketing activity. • The aim is to raise awareness of HWN, build reputation, add value, increase engagement and use of services. • Communication and marketing channels include social media, email, content marketing e.g. blogs, SEO (search engine optimisation), digital advertising, events, word of mouth/networks and traditional marketing. • A cost of living leaflet has been produced - 2500 printed copies and an online resource. Feedback has been very positive. An application was made for Community Chest Funding to translate the leaflet into seven different languages but this was rejected. • There are plans to create a similar resource with mental health support information in the autumn/winter. This could be a joint resource with CNTW or local Healthwatch. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CJ said she has looked at radio advertising options – both commercial and hospital radio. This could be in collaboration with other local Healthwatch. • CJ has also looked at bus advertising but this is expensive for a short-term campaign and is hard to measure impact. • HWN has had an advert in the Northumberland Gazette’s lifestyle booklet – 5000 printed copies and a one-day online takeover. This will be repeated in the summer. <p>Questions and comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AK suggested an Easy Read version of the cost of living leaflet. • Members discussed accessibility and the effect of financial barriers on health. • DR asked about the Northumberland Gazette online takeover – this meant the HWN branding was displayed on the website for one day. • MA raised an issue about emails going into his spam folder. CJ will look into this. • Members suggested possible publications for adverts including Northumberland News, ABC magazine and Glendale Live. • PS asked how we know who the printed advert is reaching. CJ has a list of postcodes. • DP suggested pop-up events to reach young people. • PS asked about parish council magazines – CJ said it is getting easier to get content in these as relationships have been built with parish councils and it helps to send the exact content ready to publish. • JB suggested an annual review of HWN’s impact on inequalities. DN said this was built into the operational plan. 	
<p>7. Operational, risk and financial update 2023/24</p> <p>DN asked for questions on the circulated paper.</p> <p>7.1 Budget – PS noted low training costs and staff/volunteer expenses. DN said training this year has been low cost or free. Volunteers are encouraged to submit expenses but costs have been low.</p>	

<p>7.2 Volunteering - JB suggested finding new volunteers from schools from other areas than Hexham and students completing the Duke of Edinburgh Award. DP suggested work placements for students getting ready to go to university.</p> <p>7.3 Strategic Risk Register – JB suggested a correction to the risk rating figure for ‘Reorganisation and restructuring in key stakeholders during implementation of Integrated Care System (ICS)’.</p> <p>JB suggested removing the word ‘potential’ in ‘Impact on staff capacity of increased involvement with ICS structure as agreed through potential Working Agreement with other local Healthwatch.’</p> <p>JB suggested adding a new risk to the register about the risk of increasing health inequalities by not hearing from people living in more socioeconomically deprived areas or from inclusion groups and amplifying the voice of people living in less deprived areas who already have better health and access to healthcare and other opportunities.</p> <p>The following risk can be removed – ‘Ability to engage with public reduced during staff recruitment process’.</p> <p>Board members agreed the changes above.</p>	<p>DN to update the Strategic Risk Register.</p>
<p>8. Operational Plan 2024/25</p> <p>DN asked for comments on the Operational Plan 2024/25. She asked members to consider HWN’s core business priorities and project choices.</p> <p>8.1 JB suggested an amendment to the wording of the outcomes for Community Engagement and Insight and Communications and Marketing to include ‘advocacy’ and ‘amplify’.</p> <p>8.2 There was a discussion around ‘closing the feedback loop’ and ways to show impact.</p> <p>8.3 DN referred to the decision-making policy which can be found on the Board Hub. This will help to decide which</p>	<p>DN to share decision-making policy.</p>

<p>projects to choose. DN will share this policy again with members.</p> <p>8.4 Members discussed some groups to reach out to including men, the farming community and veterans. LP suggested contacting the local PCNs.</p> <p>8.5 Helen Brown (HB), Tim Hakim (TH) and Lorna Beech (LB) joined the meeting for this discussion.</p> <p>8.6 Members agreed the core business and agreed to focus on the groups we want to hear more from to help choose projects. There will be more focus on social care and health inequalities projects this year.</p> <p>8.7 Members agreed to move the Pharmacy Needs Assessment (PNA) to core business.</p> <p>8.8 HB suggested making it clear at the beginning of commissioned projects that HWN requires feedback.</p> <p>8.9 DN and PS will amend the Operational Plan and share again with members. DN will provide an update at the next meeting.</p>	<p>DN and PS will amend the Operational Plan and share again with members. DN will provide an update at the next meeting.</p>
<p>9. Board partner organisation updates</p> <p>a. Carers Northumberland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 'Working for Carers' project has been funded for one year to help carers get back into work, education or training. The project can also help to support carers currently in employment who are experiencing issues. • Funding from the Carers Trust will provide support for parent carers. • The online Mobilise service is now part of a wider commission across the NENC area. • This week is Carers Week and Carers Northumberland has organised various events and activities. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carers Northumberland will be involved in the inspection of Adult Services at Northumberland County Council. • New council contact Carol Paz has been a helpful contact so far, for example with carer assessment training and refreshing the carer strategy. <p>b. North of Tyne Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new Assistant Services Manager is in post. • There have been 2715 concerns raised since March. • Car parking is a common issue. Blyth Hospital car park is getting a revamp. • A refurbishment of Hexham General Hospital is planned to start in September/October lasting for one year. <p>c. Northumberland CVA</p> <p>There was no update from Northumberland CVA.</p> <p>d. Public Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding from the ICB has paid for two Healthcare Navigators, one within Northumbria NHS and one within housing at NCC. These will be good links for HWN. 	
<p>10. Governance issues update</p> <p>10.1 Healthwatch England Quality Framework</p> <p>The next three-year iteration of the Quality Framework is due. The board agreed the recommendations and DN will arrange a date to discuss the next action plan.</p> <p>10.2 Co-option and Deputy Chair appointment</p> <p>Expressions of interest for the role of Deputy Chair should be received by 8 July 2024. DN will share the link with further information about the role.</p>	<p>DN to arrange a date to discuss the Quality Framework.</p> <p>DN to share the link with further information about the role of Deputy Chair.</p>
<p>11. Reflections on meeting</p>	

<p>PS thanked everyone for their contributions and asked for thoughts on the longer meeting time. AK suggested a break would be useful when there is a big agenda.</p>	
<p>12. Any other business</p> <p>There was no other business.</p>	
<p>13. Close</p>	

Date of next meeting – 10 September 2024

Dates of meetings for 2024/25

- 10 September 2024
- 23 October 2024 (AGM)
- 3 December 2024
- 21 January 2025 (Board Planning Day)
- 11 March 2025