

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove Board meeting minutes 21.10.2024

Board Attendees

Geoffrey Bowden (Chair)	Chair
Chris Morey (CM)	Board Finance Director
Gillian Connor (GC)	Board member
Howard Lewis (HL)	Board member
Angelika Wydra (AW)	Board member
Salma Ahmed (SA)	Board member (online)

In attendance

Alan Boyd (CEO)	HWBH CEO (online)
Lester Coleman (LC)	HWBH Head of Research
Will Anjos (WA)	HWBH Project Coordinator
Jo Dorey (JD)	HWBH Project Support Officer
Vanessa Hollingworth (VH)	HWBH Volunteer

Apologies

Khalid Ali (KA)	Board member
Katy Francis (KF)	HWBH Project Coordinator
Kate Jones (KJ)	HWBH Project Coordinator

Item 1 - Welcomes and declarations of interest – Chair

1. Declarations of interest.
 - a. No new declarations of interest declared.
2. Welcoming SA as a newly appointed member of the Board.

Item 2 - Minutes from Healthwatch Board (8th July 2024) – Chair

1. The Board approved the minutes from the 8th of July 2024 Board meeting.
 - a. LC confirmed that the six-month Public Engagement Events report had been published, and the full 10-page document is being distributed.
 - b. Staffing updates: Project Support Officer, JD was introduced.
 - c. Risk register – no comments (CEO).

Item 3 – Public Questions – Chair/CEO

1. Public questions (dropped if no questions received) – no public questions received.

Item 4 – Appointment of new Director – Chair

1. Chair recounted that they and KA had interviewed VH and could confirm her suitability for the position of Board member.
 - a. Chair stated that VH has been a valued volunteer during her time with HWBH, as well as having prior Human Resources (HR) expertise.
 - b. Chair asked the Board to approve the appointment of VH. **Appointment confirmed.**

Item 5 – Staff team Projects update (verbal updates) – LC

LC represented the staff team and presented an overview of current projects.

1. Project on vaping and young SEND people, led by KJ.
 - a. HWBH is collaborating with The Parent Carers' Council (PaCC), Amaze and Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC) to deliver the project.
 - b. KJ has drafted a questionnaire for children and parents/carers.
 - c. LC and CEO confirmed this is a core project, without additional funding.
2. LC is leading on the imminent delivery of a dementia study in collaboration with University Hospital Sussex NHE Trust (UHSx).
 - a. UHSx had approached HWBH to support them with this work which builds on an earlier HWBH-led project that had explored insight about dementia services across Sussex.
 - b. This new project would focus on inpatient and outpatient experiences of hospital dementia services. This study will engage 20 participants in total from various hospital sites. These participants will be identified by UHSx with interviews conducted by HWBH.
 - c. HWBH's contribution to the study will be completed by the end of March 2025 to align with the development of UHSx's new 5-yr dementia strategy.
 - d. Chair asked if this is funded work and whether we are partnering with other local Healthwatch (HW) bodies. LC confirmed that this is not commissioned and is core work project and that this was a HWBH project.
 - e. SA asked whether this study would engage people who have recently been diagnosed with dementia. LC stated that the participants identified will be coming from dementia services so it's likely some will have been previously diagnosed, with input from carers (principally carers, spouses and family).

3. Ear Wax treatment survey led by KJ. This went live on the day of the Board meeting (21.10.24).
 - a. SA shared her experience of ear wax treatment and highlighted that adult treatment had previously been free but has now been privatised. Major pharmacies in urban areas are offering a flat rate cost, unlike independent chemists in rural areas where cost can be prohibitive. This limits access and makes treatment less affordable for certain groups e.g. disabled or elderly people in rural areas.
 - b. Chair suggested that a focus for the project should be whether cost is a barrier to access.

4. Hypertension project led by KF, run in collaboration with Trust for Developing Communities (TDC).
 - a. A series of sessions are being delivered by several VCSE partners to raise people's literacy of hypertension (HT). There will be a focus on participants who don't know the state of their HT, with secondary sessions run around two months after initial engagement.
 - b. HWBH will conduct an analysis of the success of the project. LC confirmed that this is a funded project.

5. Monthly polls are delivered in collaboration with HW East Sussex and HW West Sussex. This month, HWBH are leading with a poll asking for experiences of hospital outpatient letters. Over 200 responses had been received thus far, which had been largely positive.

6. PLACE (Patient-Led Assessments of the Care Environment) led by KF in collaboration with NHS Sussex. This is a large annual project which involves staff and volunteers visiting UHSx wards and departments. KF will draft a report summarising our findings and will share these with UHSx.

7. Mystery Shops: this is a project examining the customer service experience at reception areas across RSCH sites, led by KF.
 - a. LC confirmed that this is a funded project.
 - b. KF has expressed concern over running the project in the children's emergency department (ED) and main ED due to the nature of the environment. This concern will be reviewed.

8. Homecare Check update led by WA.
 - a. WA confirmed that this is a Council-funded project and that contracts have been renewed, including some new providers.
 - b. Currently seven volunteers are supporting the project.
 - c. WA confirmed that target lists have increased; where previously targets were approximately 30, this has risen.

- d. A question was asked about whether this includes private providers? (HL) and WA confirmed that all providers must be at least partly funded by BHCC.
 - e. Chair asked that we share reports of this work with volunteers and the Hospital Overview Scrutiny Committee (HOSC).
9. Trans and non-binary GP survey led by WA.
- a. This project is funded by Healthwatch England (HWE).
 - b. Chair asked which community groups HWBH will engage. WA and JD confirmed The Clare Project, amongst others, and Chair will recommend other groups.
 - c. Project to close December 2024 and reported on by February/March 2025.
 - d. HOSC produced a comparative report which Chair will share.
10. HWBH Performance Report was praised by Chair and CEO. The HW Commissioner is yet to comment. Please find the full HWBH 6-month Performance Report (April 2024 – September 2024) here:
[Healthwatch Brighton and Hove six-month Performance Report \(Apr 2024 to Sep 2024\)](#)

Item 6 – CEO update – CEO

1. CEO praised staff for ongoing work during the HWBH contract renewal process.
2. Neighbourhood Mental Health (MH) Forums are currently being established as part of Integrated Care Teams. The Council had responded positively to a suggestion made by HWBH to conduct an external review of this new system of providing MH services. HWBH is following up on this with commissioners.
3. CEO described how HWBH had recently partnered with local VCSEs on a number of opportunities which offer further additional funding potential:
 - a. The Ageing Well contract was currently out for live procurement and HWBH had submitted a partnership bid, which if successful, would secure income of £15,000 over three years. HWBH's role would be to evaluate the service and connect with service users.
 - b. HWBH, together with TDC and 20 other VCSEs, had submitted a bid for Lottery Climate Funding, which if successful would secure income of £31,000 over three years. HWBH's role would be to evaluate the success of the project from a health lens i.e. the impact that good environments can have on health. CEO stressed that this as an example of where HWBH can diversify its funding opportunities outside of NHS Sussex e.g. the National Lottery.

4. The Dash Report 2024.
 - a. Dr Penny Dash is leading a new review evaluating six patient safety bodies. This follows her review of CQC. Whilst HW is not a patient safety body, it has been included. CEO reported that HWE welcomed this review as an opportunity to demonstrate our work and value. However, the review could highlight HW's fragmented way of working across different districts nationally.
 - b. CEO commented that this could possibly impact HWBH's contract renewal.
 - c. SA suggested adding a new risk to the HW Risk Register.
5. HW annual awards would be announced in early 2025. HWBH had submitted two bids, one in partnership with West/East Sussex for our work on patient transport.
6. The Risk register should be reviewed at the end of 2024 but CEO advised it would be pertinent to do this once we knew the outcome of the contract retender. CEO requested Board members to contribute to reviewing the register. Chair recommended SA to take part.
7. Chair asked if there are other comments. None were received.

Additional Comments

CEO asks if there are future items the Board would like to share, and to confirm with CEO and Chair.

1. SA asked if a condensed version of the six-month report is available, or whether elements can be made available in advance. Chair stated that it is a timed report, so can only be issued within that period. Chair also requested whether the latest six-month report can be shared with HOSC in tandem with the contract renewal. CEO stated that Chair can share with local councillors.
2. GC suggested that the current NHS consultation is an opportunity to raise our profile. Elected officials and their families use our resources, and HW upholds the patient view. CEO responded stating that current staff capacity will inform how much we are able to support this process.
3. GC suggested a team away day or strategy day in the new year.
4. WA stated that HWBH has updated its Helpline resource and that we will go public with this new approach. This will be shared with the Board.

Meeting closed
End of minutes