

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove Board approved meeting minutes 11.09.2023

Attendees:

Geoffrey Bowden (Chair)	Chair
Chris Morey (CM)	Board Finance Lead
Alan Boyd (CEO)	CEO
Gillian Connor (GC)	Board member
Christine D’Cruz (CDC)	Board member
Howard Lewis (HL)	Board member
Angelika Wydra (AW)	Board member

In attendance

Lester Coleman (LC)	Head of Research
Michelle Kay (MK)	Project Coordinator
Katy Francis (KF)	Project Support Officer
Michael Creedy (MC)	Member of public (Treasurer for Older People’s Council)

Apologies

Khalid Ali (KA)	Board member
Sophie Aunounou (SA)	Board member
Alistair Hignell (AH)	Board member
Will Anjos (WA)	Project Coordinator
Clary Collicutt (CC)	Project Coordinator

Item 1 - Welcomes and declarations of interest

1. a) A member of the public, Michael Creedy, raised a matter in advance of the meeting:

“The NHS in Sussex is becoming centralised around Worthing and I have experienced that this is leading to a lack of accountability and transparency.

I recently have attended, both virtually and in person, meetings of Sussex University Hospitals held in Worthing. The meeting I attended, which was also attended by one governor, some managers and two members of the public, was a series of reports given by the managers. We could submit questions in advance, but nothing as a result of issues which arose during the meeting. Half way through it the meeting was declared “in camera” and we left the meeting. Having travelled from Brighton by bus and experienced difficulties gaining

access to the meeting it was frustrating to see local issues, such as whistle blowing, where glossed over and minimised.

By making it difficult for members of the public to engage with this body and for questions to be asked an impression of a lack of accountability and transparency is being created. Can we expect to achieve any change in this weakening in public oversight?"

b) CEO enquired with University Hospital Sussex and received the following response which was handed out and relayed to MC at the meeting:

"Thank you for your email and for sharing this with us. We do have our Board meetings in public in Worthing as this is space that is large enough to accommodate this meeting and allow access for the Public. We have adopted the process of seeking questions to be raised in advance of the meeting to ensure that responses can be provided. We allow questions to be submitted up to a couple of days before the meeting allow time for these to be submitted after papers have been released. We do get questions submitted in advance, as we did for our last meeting which we answered. The Board meeting was not curtailed in any way. What does happen is straight after the meeting in public then there is meeting in private is convened to take matters that cannot be taken in public such as the award of commercial contracts etc. The public are asked to leave at the end of the Board in public to allow for the private board but this is not pressured and as at the last meeting members of public engaged with a couple of the executive team and I was able to provide some information requested before the member of the public left the room.

The chair is also very clear that we will take questions after the meeting if something is said that was not clear to the public and we would provide them with an answer.

As to the comment that local issues such as whistle blowing, where glossed over and minimised, I don't recognise what the person may be referring to but I am very happy for you to suggest that if they have a question about something said or not covered that they can raise that with myself.

We do recognise that any location we select for our meetings which are open to the public to observe will not be suited to all which is why we offer the opportunity for members of the public to view these meetings online in real time.

A member of the public did speak to me at the last Board meeting about their difficulties in gaining entry through the main door from the corridor, whilst there

is an intercom facility on that door we took on Board the person suggestion and are now placing a sign indicating that there is an intercom and how to use that to gain access).

*I hope this helps with some information on the operation of our Board meeting which open to the public to observe and as said I am very happy for you to direct this person to myself with the concerns.” - **Glen Palethorpe, Company Secretary, UHSx***

- a) The Chair invited MC to stay for the rest of the open part of the HW Board Meeting.
- b) HL agreed with MC that efforts should be made for meetings to be held in other parts of Sussex, not just Worthing.
- c) AW acknowledged that digital exclusion may also be an issue. There should also be an opportunity to telephone in advance of meetings with matters to discuss.
- d) CEO let MC know that Glen Palethorpe, Company Secretary at UHSx, has offered to speak with MC directly.

Action 1: The Chair will respond in writing to MC.

- 2. a) CEO brought up the matter of Conflicts of Interest (COI) and shared the definition. It is the individual's responsibility rather than HW's. He suggested a log for people to share partners interests too.
- b) The Chair suggested you can click on a Board member's profile on the website and see any of their COI.

Action 2: We should have a register of everyone's COI and be able to click through to this on the website.

Items 2- Minutes and matters arising

- a) The Chair confirmed that he made donation to former Board member, Neil McIntosh's charity of choice.
- b) Speak Up Guardian: HL updated that no one has been employed by the trust. They have appointed [The Guardian Service | Home | United Kingdom](#) which will be independent of the trust, and they have cover to speak on freedom of information issues.
- c) The Chair confirmed he received the matrix of volunteer skills.

- d) Team capacity:
- i. CEO updated that Clare Funnell (new Comms & Engagement Officer) has left HW. Her last day was 6th September.
 - ii. CEO informed board that the team discussed CF's duties and what needs to be prioritised. He explained that 5 months of 1 year-long contract has passed, and it will be hard to recruit a replacement for the 7 remaining months. CF's main role to promote awareness of HW, build contacts and gather more feedback. She made inroads e.g. successful Brunswick Festival event and there is an upcoming Ageing Well Festival. It was decided that some things will have to be dropped or deprioritised. The comms strategy needs to be done but this will happen at a slower pace.
 - iii. CEO advised that the whole team is currently at or over capacity. KF is taking on an additional day at HW. CEO directed board to see workplan to see quantity of work. He advised that he does not plan to take on any new work for the team in the next 3 months as there is no capacity. There were discussions around going over budget to employ a manager.
- e) The Chair relayed that people have been offering praise for the 2022/23 HWBH Annual Report, notably at the HOSC meeting.
- f) LC is working on a performance report.
- g) CEO provided an overview of the latest unannounced CQC inspection of UHSx. He advised that HW was not informed about this inspection when we should have been, we found out via the trust. AB has had comms with CQC and escalated with HWE.
- h) Council elections: The Chair advised there are 38 new councillors. CEO & the Chair been invited to present at the next Green councillors meeting. We would like to share our work programme and engage with councillors and encourage them to act as ambassadors on our behalf to have their constituents to engage with us. CEO had feedback from one councillor, where we were congratulated, and they asked how they could spread the word.

Item 3 – Approval of change of Board meetings to quarterly

- a) CEO explained that other HWs do not meet as often as every other month, most usually, this is quarterly. It is difficult to find board meeting spaces

and time consuming to coordinate. The higher frequency of meetings increases work load for staff already at high capacity.

- b) The Chair stated that moving to quarterly does not preclude meeting for extraordinary meetings.
- c) The board had no objection to meeting quarterly. There was a discussion around what the role of the board is, what the purpose of Board meetings is and how to ensure they are providing strategic direction. CEO advised that members can have more specific roles and examples include Board members who lead on finance or are involved in the staff remuneration committee.
- d) CM suggested meetings could correspond with the quarterly accounts. CDC suggested making the quarterly meetings around decision making and approving, which include proposals for projects and plans. It could be a review point.
- e) The Chair suggested there could also be a subcommittee to support to the retender process with its own cycle.

Action 3: Board members to nominate themselves for more specific roles and have a conversation about how they'd like to be involved with the team. Help to provide more specific expertise when the team does not have capacity.

Item 4 – Staff team projects update

- a) MK holding focus group for women's health strategy project. £500 for this which could lead to further work on larger bit on women's health. (Edit: this is no longer going ahead).
- b) HWE recognised the value of deliberative engagement techniques utilised by HW in a recent outpatients transformation project. MK's bid to deliver a training session to the rest of the LHW network was successful and the event will take place in September. £300 income.
- c) MK presented findings from the deliberative engagement outpatients report to the participants. The deliberative process involves informing & involving participants (n=31) at every stage as you go along. MK has taken their feedback and now amended recommendations to the NHS based on their input.
- d) The Chair congratulated MK on the work.
- e) MK won bid for pharmacy work from HWE. The funding is £2500 for the completion of three interviews: one with a member of pharmacy staff and two with a service user.

- f) LC and KA working on project looking at digital exclusion amongst older BME people (65+) in Brighton & Hove. They are currently recruiting, although this is tricky. £21k income.
- g) LC working on a Health Count questionnaire testing (involves participants giving feedback on the questions rather than answering the survey). Twin recruitment with the project with KA, trying to access to hard-to-reach groups. LC needs 15-20 responses by October 2nd and asked for any contacts the board members could share.
- h) CEO raised that HWBH and the other HWs have been discussing access to pharmacies. Issues with GP work being pushed onto pharmacies as they are also struggling to recruit. The council is keen for work to be done in this area.
- i) There are also talks of work with East Brighton Food Cooperative to develop and trial a different way of supporting communities at the local level via their Food Banks.
- j) CEO advised there are ongoing discussions with universities on improving digital records for patients.
- k) HW has taken Young HW(YHW) in-house. CEO and LC have been having various discussion with different CYP leads within BHCC and NHS Sx to identify projects. Commissioner suggested the RuOK service (drinks/drugs service) and we have since developed an agreed project outline which will seek to understand barriers to accessing the service amongst LGBT CYP. HWBH has ringed-fenced funding for YHW and this project will cost £3k.
- l) The Chair passed on thanks to the whole team for their hard work.

Action 4: The Chair suggested putting something on the radio to help with recruitment of older BME digital exclusion project. AW offered to put LC in touch with multicultural groups. AW suggested contacting TDC.

Item 5 – Finance Report (paper)

- a) CM outlined that there has been good performance to date. Turnover was over slightly at £4k up on budget.
- b) CEO advised on partnership costs, for example the money to fund YHW projects (£3k). This will be invoiced in Nov/Dec.
- c) CM advised that there have been lower costs for the ICS funded role to date but the budget will cover funding expected and unexpected future costs. This new role is proving to be very helpful at strategic level. There is

established regular reporting upwards so the whole system knows what HW are doing. There is also an offsite meeting once a quarter with HW Sussex.

- d) There was discussion around the idea that we should be on ICS boards and how we can create more impact by sitting in more reference groups which sit directly below and feed up into boards.

CLOSED AGENDA ITEMS

(Not open to members of the public)

Minutes of the agenda items discussed under the CLOSED AGENDA are not published

Meeting closed

End of minutes