

Minutes of Board Meeting held on 02 September 2020

Context

Due to the Government restrictions and need to social distance, this meeting took place virtually over the ZOOM platform. Board members, commissioners and members of the public were asked to read all the papers and submit any questions on these, in advance of the meeting.

As this is a public meeting, ZOOM is used as it does not need a license and can be accessed for free. The public were made aware of the meeting via our Events Page and social media posts. Spaces to attend the meeting were made available to the public to observe the meeting.

Present

Board Directors: Frances Russell (Chair), Jeremy Gardner, Steve Cooper, Alan Pickering, Martin Phillips (all Independent Board Directors), Mark Sharman (Help & Care Member Director), Emma Leatherbarrow (Help & Care Member Director)

In attendance: Sally Dartnell (Chief Officer), Katrina Broadhill (Operations Lead), Dr Stephen Horsley (WSCC Interim Director of Public Health).

Apologies: Linda Cairney, Helen Goodman (Independent Board Directors), Amanda Jupp (WSCC Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care and Chair of the West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board), Niki Lewis (WSCC Commissioner).

1. Welcome

FR welcomed all to the meeting and thanked the Board members for their continued support and involvement.

2. Approval of Previous Minutes

Approved and no matters arising.

Update on action 13: *KB to speak to the team about carrying out a review of GP websites and out-of-hours messaging, similar to the work we are doing for Dentists.*

KB advised that this was discussed and after reviewing a sample of GP websites it was clear the system was using standard communication about COVID-19 on GP practice home pages. For this reason, it was felt our resources would be better used to support the system to communicate with the public via social media etc.

However, we are following up on the dental work to see if our co-designed web/message checklist has made a difference. We are also producing a briefing on the insight we have on access to GP consultations during the pandemic, to support the engagement work around digital consultations.

3. Reports

Insight and Impact

The *Insight into Action Reports* served to provide up to date information to the system and public through the Lockdown.

In line with the new contract, the decision was taken to incorporate insight, performance and impact reporting into a single document going forward. The team also produce reports/case studies (published) and briefings (non-published) on specific topics or providers.

It was decided that our formal submission (October 2019) report to the Independent Children and Young Peoples' Review of Emotional and Mental Health Services which has been delayed by the system in Sussex, is now too outdated to publish. The publishing of the report was held back to give the Review panel time to reflect on its content. The Review has now published its [Foundations for Our Future - Commitment to improving the emotional health and wellbeing of children & young people](#) and the governance timeline for approving the findings and recommendation. Instead, we are publishing insight that is relevant to supporting the implementation of the recommendations and looking at how we can add value to the next steps to make the most of what local people have told us about their experiences.

Question: EL asked how do we demonstrate to the public what we have done with the insight included in briefings?

Answer: KB gave the example of the recent dental briefing that has been shared with the system and we are awaiting a response later this month, we will put this in our Heads Up that goes out 9 September. We are likely to include this in our next Impact and Performance Report.

Performance Report

SD confirmed that the Contract Performance meeting with the WSCC Commissioner on 4th August 2020 had agreed the new single Impact and Performance report covers all requirements detailed in the new contract specification.

Board members also fed back that this format provides all relevant information to enable them to scrutinize the work of Healthwatch West Sussex. It was agreed that going forward this report will be known as the *Impact and Performance Report*.

During the period it was necessary to change priorities due to COVID and in line with the recommendations from Healthwatch England. It seems timely to also review the future priorities for our local Healthwatch and an informal board workshop will be held in October to do this.

The first quarter Performance Report demonstrates despite the Lockdown and pandemic, the team has continued to engage and gather substantial insight in order to influence the current and future plans for service provision in the Integrated Care System and thus positively impact the experience of local people in accessing and

receiving health and care services. The team adapted quickly and have worked tirelessly to meet an increase in workload and the huge challenge presented by COVID-19. This demand has led to us escalating over 40 issues to the system and some nationally. These are detailed in our Escalation Log which has proved a useful tool. The board agreed to continue the use of this log beyond the pandemic.

The Board congratulated the Team on their flexibility and commitment, to the point FR has raised concern over the need to ensure that staff maintain boundaries around their working hours to maintain mental wellness. It was acknowledged that the Board's investment in building community partnerships over the last two years has paid off with strong and supportive links with hundreds of community and voluntary groups and organisations enabling two-way flow of trusted communications and information when many traditional face to face engagements couldn't take place.

Healthwatch West Sussex work with Voluntary Action Arun and Chichester, Horsham Council's Voluntary Service and Mid Sussex Voluntary Action has produced valuable intelligence. The reports and case studies reflect the responsiveness and risks of delivering support to residents during the pandemic. This reporting also provides insight as to what may be needed going forward, feeding in to help shape the *Reset and Recovery* work across our integrated care system.

Escalation Log

The Board is asked to note the content of the log, in particular the successful impact recorded, but also that there have been some notable exceptions.

Board discussed the issue of the outstanding escalation around Financial Assessments and it was agreed to consider next steps outside the meeting. MP raised concern that in another role he is coming across some significant issues with care and support assessments. KB confirmed that community partners are still raising concern over the financial assessment process.

Office

FR updated the Board that the team are now fully home-based and Healthwatch no longer has an office at the Billingshurst Centre but has a West Sussex address:

Healthwatch West Sussex
PO Box 1343
Crawley
West Sussex
RH10 0QH

KB confirmed that Help & Care undertook a Data Impact Risk Assessment and there are no risks to data security because of the move.

Annual Report

This was published in June 2020 based on the Healthwatch England template. It has been shared with all stakeholders and published on the website.

In addition, a separate, shorter, Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service reflective report was published which gives an overview of the holistic nature of the service. Advocates support people to resolve issues sometimes through formal complaints and at other times in other ways. It also covers the learning this service can provide to the system and has been shared with Trust complaints teams.

Community Partnerships Annual Report

SD said it was very much appreciated that 3 WSCC cabinet members provided a joint statement to introduce this report. The feedback has been incredibly positive and reinforces that for a small investment there can be big gains. Emily King (WSCC Community Partnerships Lead) had asked for our Grant Application Model and appreciates the simplicity of it.

SD said that we did not have the funds to award grants going forward but she has had some conversations with WSCC about the possibility of being able to continue the work in the future.

Question: Is there any carried forward funding for community group projects?

Answer: Board discussed the importance of recognising the vulnerability of the VCS and the challenging position they are in financially. It was noted that this sector is not like the commercial sector, as organisations are often dependent on fund-raising and much of this has not been possible during the pandemic.

MS said that VCS needs to look at the NHS as well as Local commissions, particularly as the NHS is realising a shift towards social prescribing and the importance of this sector. NHS fear that social prescribers will have nowhere to *prescribe* to.

KB reinforced the role of Healthwatch in amplifying the impact on individuals and the system that gaps in the VCS could create and this was raised at the recent Health & Wellbeing Board Business Planning meeting.

4. Financial & Performance Sub Committee Report

FR reported the sub-group had met virtually to give oversight to the Healthwatch West Sussex operations and finances.

AP reported that the pandemic related changes to operations meant the CIC was underspent on expenses and Help & Care was slightly overspent but that this should balance over the year.

SC confirmed the risk register was fully updated.

5. Independent Director and Staff Feedback

FR set the context that operationally, Healthwatch West Sussex was being asked to participate in many more meetings as a result of the pandemic. An action was agreed to review this as it is significantly above commitments used for the new contract, we are a small team and need to manage the demand within limited resources.

5.1 Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB)

Initially, the decision was taken to freeze meeting due to COVID-19. Business planning meetings have taken place during Lockdown and a seminar took place in July. Healthwatch asked for the newsletter to continue.

The seminar was chaired well by Amanda Jupp, presentations were engaging and offered valuable discussion. Whilst creating difficulties, the pandemic has led to technological innovation in being able to hold these meetings virtually.

SD stated she is concerned that the new Children's Sub-Group of the HWB

still has no date for the first meeting.

Healthwatch West Sussex flagged to the HWB Planning meeting the high levels of insight about access to dentistry and the vulnerability of the VCS as future topics for this board.

5.2 Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee (HASC)

KB updated that this committee was also initially frozen during lockdown, but that Healthwatch have input into the scope of the committee's task and finish group that is looking at the impact of COVID changes. We will take part in the group discussions going forward.

The first HASC meeting since Lockdown is scheduled for 9 September 2020.

5.3 Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB)

MP reported that the Board produces three-monthly Spotlights and the last one featured Healthwatch, and there was a good section in the SAB Annual Report about our role.

There is a meeting next week, after a four-month gap but MP has been attending virtual sub-group meetings. The Board's current concern is around care homes in terms of both care and low bed occupancy in some homes which may lead to issues with ongoing financial viability in some cases.

MP also updated that as part of his Impact Initiatives work he has been working with Bryan Lynch from Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust on the topic of Adult Autism Gap, e.g. people with Autism are being discharged from their acute hospitals and then not being supported in the community. A meeting with Alison Nuttall (WSCC Lead Commissioner) has been scheduled to raise this concern.

5.4 Communication and Engagement

KB reported that Healthwatch in Sussex leads meet with Jane Lodge (ICS Communications Lead) weekly to discuss projects and work plans. She has been pushing for a shared effort to be given to creating a regular coming together of communication and engagement leads (network) in West Sussex, as evidence shows the value of this in East Sussex. There have only been a couple of meeting for West Sussex.

5.5 Stroke Task & Finish Group

JG stated that the Stroke Executive Oversight Group was put on hold but met again at the end of July. The case for change was discussed and it was decided that it was still fit for purpose (since the pandemic). JG pointed out that the way it is written does not make it easy to recognise why things need to change, and there needs to be clearer communication. The document is now going through governance for approval.

Sitting alongside this is now a Comms and Engagement Group, which is meeting on 10 September and JG will be taking part in this. The group aim to move the case for change into a plan for action.

JG reported that Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust's figures have held during COVID, but it has been reported that the quality figures

appear to be going down in Surrey & Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust -
so the system is looking at this.

DRAFT

5.6 Cancer Board

SD updated that there have been monthly virtual meetings. The Board are acutely aware of the referral slowdown from primary care and dentistry and planning and working hard to deal with diagnosis, screening, waiting lists and treatment reconvening, with lots of partnership working evident. The members have embraced local Healthwatch insight and collaborating with us on comms and engagement. Looking at creating short video messages around *it is safe to access support, attend appointments etc.*

Working to get all levels of screening back to pre-covid levels by October 2020. There is innovation in reshaping roles and the way services are delivered.

Healthwatch West Sussex is the lead Healthwatch for Sussex. The Cancer Alliance covers a wider regional area.

Healthwatch in Sussex ran a Cancer Q&A webinar on 10 June, and the recording/reports/presentations from this have been accessed by high numbers since. Have offered the comms and engagement team to run more webinars.

KB said that we have a small amount of insight that demonstrates people are having virtual consultations regularly and that risk assessment of delaying treatment, against the risk of catching COVID is taking place. KB asked the Board to encourage people to share their stories. AP agreed to share his experience.

5.7 Local Outbreak Engagement Board

KB advised that she will be attending the next meeting this afternoon.

SD said that she attended the first meeting, which was Chaired by Amanda Jupp and that we had been involved in shaping the Local Outbreak Plan, which had a very tight turnaround.

Stephen Horsley (SH) asked if it would be helpful to give an update on the COVID infection rates locally and this was welcomed.

SH states that the number of positive COVID tests in West Sussex was slightly up and in the last 7 days there have been 44 positive results. This equals a rate of 5 per 100k, which is good compared to the national rate of 12 per 100k. Mid Sussex has the most and this is being closely monitored.

6. Policies and procedures update

SD reporting there were no policies and procedures to update.

7. Questions

None in addition to those asked earlier in the meeting.

8. Future Board meeting dates:

Board Meeting dates	Board Workshop
Wed 18 November 2020 (revised date).	14 October (for priority review/setting)
Wed 10 February 2021	
Wed 12 May 2021	

Action Plan

Item Number	Action required	By Whom	Notes/ Completed
14	Board members to consider how to react to outstanding issues on the Escalation Log and to feedback ideas to SD or FR.	ALL	
15	Add a legend to the Escalation Log to explain the RAG rating.	KB	Complete
16	Amend the title of the performance report	KB	Complete
17	Board to review the meetings/boards attended during October workshop	ALL	