

Healthwatch Hertfordshire Board Meeting
10am on Tuesday 21st November 2023,
Virtually via Zoom

Board Members: Eve Atkins, Alan Bellinger, Brenda Davies, Jan Taylor, Neil Tester (Chair)
Executive Team: Geoff Brown (Chief Executive), Nuray Ercan (Deputy Chief Executive - Governance and Operations), Natalie Stone (Finance and Resources Manager)
Visitors/others: Susan Ebanyat (HCC Commissioner), Joy Hale, (Integrated Care Board),
Apologies: Alex Booth, Fiona Corcoran (Deputy Chief Executive), Ramone Nurse, Steve Palmer

1. Welcome, apologies and register of interests

Neil welcomed everyone present and communicated apologies, as above.

2. Minutes of 22nd August 2023 and outstanding actions

The minutes were approved as an accurate record and signed off.

Geoff and Neil updated Board on the status of items within the action tracker. It was agreed to defer action 1b. until the April 2024 BAC meeting when there will be more progress/information.

Geoff updated that we have had a meeting with commissioners and a paper went to their Board determining our contract from April 2024 onwards. Their Board agreed for us to be in a single tender situation and not competitive. This is now going through legal processes to ensure this is an appropriate way of dealing with our contract.

Neil highlighted that this news is a tribute to the quality work the team produces and how relationships have been managed.

3. Chair's update

Neil referred to his report circulated as part of the meeting papers. He highlighted the change in governance with Steve stepping down as Chair but remaining a Trustee and Neil assuming the Chair. Also that Ramone will be taking a break from Board and will be back in the New Year. Board formally recorded their thanks to Steve and noted Ramone's break from the Board.

Neil also highlighted that since writing his update there has been more worrying information on the NHS funding position which makes us think about what that means for local systems and providers. This is an issue we will cover at the Strategic Board Meeting in December, to work out what role we can play in helping people navigate through this.

Whilst preparing for the Primary Care Board, Neil has been pleased to see that the recommendations that have come from the reports that we and HwEssex have been commissioned to do have been formally built into the monitoring process.

Geoff and Neil wrote to the Chairs and CEO's of Trusts and the ICB about Letby and we are coordinating with Scrutiny on this. We have been getting very good responses and Neil be meeting with Geoff to work out what is published on our website and further updates to Board.

[The recommendations from Neil's paper were noted and agreed.](#)

4. Chief Executive's update including: Organisational performance and contract monitoring

We have circulated the contract monitoring documents for quarter 2, as usual. The Organisational performance Red/Amber/Green (RAG) rated document has been produced for Board to monitor performance. The PIR will be discussed under Part 2 as it could potentially be identifiable.

Geoff updated that it has been another positive and busy quarter. The return details the range of projects and research that we are doing as well as showing an increase in signposting numbers. There is also a positive response in terms of the range of compliments we have received. At last week's meeting with commissioners we talked about the demographic information that we provide and Susan's team will also be using the added element of the demographic information of people taking part in our research to ensure that we're reaching out and hearing as many voices as we can.

Susan, HCC Commissioner gave an update and explained that receiving demographic information informs and enables them to understand if they need to commission services for a specific area. They are coming to the end of the commissioning year and Susan updated that she took the recommendation for a single tender action for the HwH contract to the Adult Care Board and this was approved. The next stage will be to work with HwH to renegotiate the contract terms and conditions as well as review the contract specifications. They have asked legal for a short extension which they are awaiting to hear back about.

Recruitment update

We had 133 applicants for the Research Officer post and we were able to appoint Sam Foster who is joining us on 4th December. He brings strong research skills and is an expert by experience.

5. Finance – Management accounts as at September 2023

Alan gave an overview of the Management accounts as at September 2023. He explained that:

- We have an overspend on staff costs
- We have made savings in non-staff costs
- We had an increase in funding from HCC which is included
- Anticipated revenue generation is 67k
- We expect to break even at the end of the financial year and reserves will remain at 370k

Alan added that the accounts at the half year mark are looking positive.

[Board noted the management accounts.](#)

6. Meeting dates for 2024

Nuray introduced the paper and updated Board on the doodle poll results. It highlighted that the majority of Board found Thursday AM meetings most preferable. Board agreed to the meeting

dates outlined within the schedule circulated however a meeting clash with the 7th March Board meeting date will mean that a new date will be circulated by email outside the Board for agreement. After discussion it was agreed to keep the start time of online meetings at 10am to enable everyone to attend.

Action: Nuray to send a new March 2024 meeting date to Board for agreement.

7. Speaker ideas for 2024

Reflecting back to the conversation at BAC about getting someone from the NHS to talk to Board about the challenges they face and also about how they ensure the standards are the highest as well as dealing with the pressures, Geoff suggested that Teresa Murphy, Director of Nursing at East and North Herts NHS Trust would be keen to talk on this.

Board also discussed and suggested the following themes:

- Revisit social care challenges – head of service level
- Mental health (pending what Jo covers in her session later)
- Place & the ICB set up (Elizabeth Disney, Director of Operations)

Board members were encouraged to email Geoff, Neil and Nuray with any further suggestions.

8. Board Advisory Committee (BAC)

Alan updated that the Board Advisory Committee had a really good discussion on budgets and plans for next year. There was also an item on health system pressures.

9. Any other business including questions from the public - NA

10. Part 2 – Closed

Speaker session: Joanna Marovitch, Chief Executive, Hertfordshire Mind Network Chair, Herts & West Essex VCFSE Alliance On the achievement of the Alliance and the work of Herts Mind Network

Joanna Marovitch talked to her presentation – if you would like access to her presentation please email info@healthwatchhertfordshire.co.uk to request a copy.

Next formal meeting of the Board: To be confirmed