

Chief Executive's Update

FOR DISCUSSION

Note: This paper is paired with Appendix B. Annual Compliance tracker at the end of the paper pack.

Operational and staffing activity

The organisation continues to work effectively, and deliver its commitment to supporting Hertfordshire residents in getting their voices heard. Furthermore, transition into externally provided support with payroll, invoicing and accounts management has been successful, and the financial procedures are being updated alongside. Work is currently live on finalising our FY 25/26 accounts, and management accounting practice has strengthened our operational oversight.

Team members are continuing to deliver high quality work in support of the program of work agreed at the last board meeting. Our active recruitment is ongoing, and we are looking forward to welcoming two new Research and Community Engagement Officers to the Research team, whilst the Head of Community Engagement and Research (Jennie Buckland) has now been in post for one month and is mobilising on the program of work. We have also welcomed a new Team Support Officer, as well looking imminently to onboard a part time Community Engagement Manager and a part time Research and Community Engagement Support Officer – both working in partnership to increase our in person presence and work with system stakeholders to strengthen community voice.

Given the significant external and internal dynamic context and change, we have strengthened our focus on compliance and governance, continuing to update and review our policies. Appendix B. Annual Compliance Tracker provides an overview of our efforts, ensuring our Board and the public have visibility of this. We have also updated our Health and Safety Handbook and DBS Policy (more on this later in the paper pack), completed Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Self-Assessments for all staff, and updated our events risk assessment.

Governance activity

Members of our Board were invited to attend a discussion about our annual report and AGM on the 7th of May, as these are two key activities we undertake on an annual basis. However, given our current operating circumstances, it was important to reflect on the approach we may like to take this year, and which opportunities and challenges might be at play.

It was discussed how important it is to continue to illustrate our value to the local system, and there was support for a five year 'retrospective' which clearly demonstrates our impact, to be produced alongside our annual report this year. Trustees wanted our independence and trust with local communities to be strongly communicated, and to consider ways of representing the 'glue of the system' function we deliver, our unique added value and how we brought about change.

Trustees also discussed our annual general meeting, and whether a different approach might be needed this year – in particular, we discussed whether the typical 'showcase' which accompanies our AGM each year might be helpfully held later in the autumn, when the legislative picture is clearer. This will be considered further, and key stakeholders informed in due course.

Lastly, given the importance of our annual accounts process, trustees are asked to note the following upcoming timelines for their review and feedback on the accounts, in particular noting the optional meeting where any queries can be raised prior to their endorsement.

Summary

Board to receive via email:

- Healthwatch Hertfordshire Ltd Annual Accounts
- Healthwatch Hertfordshire Trading Ltd Annual Accounts and minutes of the Annual Directors' Meeting

Ad Hoc Board meeting re accounts (optional, for any queries)

Board to provide any feedback on annual accounts via email

Accounts published online (as part of papers for AGM)

AGM – Final sign-off of accounts

Timing

Week of 16th June

18th June, 12h00

22nd June

2nd July

9th July