













Healthwatch Hertfordshire Board Meeting
10am on Tuesday 25th August 2020, at
Virtually via Zoom

Board Members: Eve Atkins until 11:30am, Maryrose Brennan, Meg Carter, Brian Gunson, Sundera Kumara-Moorthy, Steve Palmer, Jayne Taylor, Michael Taylor, Virginia Kirri-Songhurst	
Executive Team: Geoff Brown (Chief Executive), Chloe Carson (Research Officer) for the Speaker session, Nuray Ercan (Head of Governance and Operations), Alice Lovell (Volunteer Coordinator and Team Support Officer) for Agenda item 5, Zac Schenn (Comms Officer), Priya Vaithilingam (Head of Research and Engagement)	
Visitors/others: Ted Maddex (HCC Commissioner)	
Apologies: Alan Bellinger, Leslie Billy (Viewpoint), Shanie Hutton (Hertfordshire County Council Community Wellbeing Team) Kristy Thakur (HCC Commissioner)	
<p>1. Welcome, apologies and register of interests</p> <p>Steve welcomed everyone present. He also welcomed Zac Schenn who started this week as Communications Officer.</p> <p>Apologies as above.</p> <p>Steve reminded everyone that it is important to declare any personal and/or professional interests. Declarations of interests to be added/removed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steve - member of Patient's Association • Steve - member of Chatham House • Jayne - remove daughters employment at Leonard Cheshire <p>Action: Nuray to update the register of interests document with the above information.</p>	 HwH-CID-01 Conflict of Interest I
<p>2. Minutes of 25th February 2020 and outstanding actions</p> <p>The minutes were approved as an accurate record and the outstanding actions tracker was reviewed.</p> <p>Re Dual Diagnosis - Geoff updated that there is going to be a deep dive into substance abuse services and this gives us an opportunity to raise issues that have come up relating to the protocol and other issues raised with us re experiences of this service. Geoff is in contact with Jane Padmore to understand what the process is and to ensure we are involved. We're also discussing this service at our regular upcoming Chair/Chief Exec meeting with HPFT so we will follow up on other outstanding issues.</p> <p>There are separate issues between what we did in recommending the implementation of the protocol which was monitored formally quarterly through formal meetings with the Trust. However we did not envisage monitoring progress longer term. We are less aware on what has happened over the last year and the Carers in Herts review of the protocol is helpful evidence.</p> <p>Re Continuing Healthcare - Board agreed that this is an area to keep a watching brief and would like more information. Board agreed that receiving a briefing paper would be useful.</p>	 HwH-10 Board Minutes 25.02.20 DF  HwH-SD-009 Outstanding Action
<p>3. Chair's update</p> <p>Steve raised that it is a strange time at present with the first wave of COVID-19 at its tail end but prompting a second wave in winter. As services start to recover and normalise there is an emerging focus on issues that were impacted by the pandemic eg. complaint management, cancer care, public health, mental health. From a Healthwatch prioritising perspective this has had an impact on patients and we will need to assess what/where are able to get involved in to have greatest influence.</p>	

<p>Steve confirmed that he has written a paper on holding to account which he will share with Board for discussion at the September Strategic Board Meeting.</p> <p>Brian has circulated a paper on social care and Steve encouraged Board members with social care expertise to input into this also.</p> <p>In response to Maryrose’s question about Healthwatch England and their priorities Geoff added that we have been identified as a high performing Healthwatch and recently had an interview with them to discuss what success looks like locally. Healthwatch England have raised a number of national issues about the sustainability of the health and care system. They are very keen to hear about patient experiences especially during COVID-19 and as services move back to normal this patient perspective is central to what happens next. They are keen to hear about positives and concerns (both immediate and longer term). One concern raised with us is the impact on the frail who have become frailer over this period.</p> <p>It was noted that Steve would raise an item under Part 2 today.</p>	
<p>4. Chief Executive’s update</p> <p>Geoff introduced the various documents which report up to the end of June 2020. There was a significant shift in this period to focussing on communications and information giving to respond to the public’s need during the pandemic. This was discussed with commissioners at the time and they were happy with this as it also aligned to shifts that other voluntary sector organisations had made.</p> <p>Our focus now moves into hearing experiences of the public, and our three coronavirus surveys were launched to enable this. They will give us an important steer on what issues to focus on going forward. The surveys have also strengthened our relationships with other voluntary sector organisations and with district councils. We have been able to show a great reach into communities, more in-depth involvement across localities and age ranges. We have also had a stronger impact through social media as our contract monitoring return measures. We have also now virtually reconvened all holding to account meetings and they have enabled us to discuss the impact of covid, pressures on their organisations and how they are returning services to normality. Humanising recovery and ensuring the patient voice is still heard within this new environment is important.</p>	 HwH-12 Contract monitoring Projects  HwH-13 PIR Quarter 1 Apr-June 2020 July  HwH-14 Voice Contract Performance  HwH-15 Communications Co  HwH-16 Compliments Qtr 1 A
<p>5. Highlights document</p> <p>Alice talked through the highlights document drawing out the main themes in comparison to last year’s highlight report and stating percentage increases were applicable. Overall the areas are on par with last year’s achievements however two areas which have grown are signposting and engagement through events, specifically through the research and engagement activity/project work as an additional category of engagement.</p> <p>In response to Steve’s question about staffing signposting and the expertise for dealing with the complexity of cases during lockdown and to date Priya outlined that we always review expertise in the team and they are available to be contacted for additional information by the signposter. Alice is our signposter trainer and she deals with a lot of signposting cases herself and has expertise and is supported by Priya and Nuray.</p> <p>Board thanked Alice for her presentation.</p>	 HwH-17 Highlights from the Year 2019 2
<p>6. Policy sign off - none at this time</p>	
<p>7. Enter & View Report Sign Off - none at this time</p>	

<p>8. Finance</p> <p>In Alan’s absence Geoff highlighted, as within the Chief Execs update above, the picture is currently positive. Working from home and reduced activity for volunteers has meant that expenses and associated costs are under budget. We anticipate that the financial position won’t be very different at year end and we expect a similar amount coming in through income generation as we achieved last year.</p> <p>We have had a conversation with commissioners as to whether we can look to use some reserves to get income in through interest (interest rates have gone down), and this is being explored.</p> <p>The Board asked after Alan and Geoff gave a brief update. It was noted that the Board asked for their wishes to be passed onto Alan and his wife.</p>	 <p>HwH-18 Management Accou</p>
<p>9. Board Advisory Committee</p> <p>Maryrose highlighted that the draft minutes have been circulated. At its meeting the Committee talked about ideas for the content of the Strategic focused Board meeting and Maryrose suggested that the draft agenda is circulated prior to the meeting so that Board members can feed into this, so that it is focussed.</p> <p>Steve confirmed that he had been in discussions with the Executive Leadership Team with regards to this and added that there may be areas that were raised that won’t be covered due to prioritising and looking to achieve most impact.</p> <p>Action: Nuray to circulate a draft agenda for the Strategic Board Meeting</p>	
<p>10. Strategy 2020-24</p> <p>Geoff reminded the Board that at the away day last year, the Board looked at the previous Strategy and Boards contribution from this session has been built in to the new strategy. There has been a re-write of other sections to take account of where the organisation currently is. The Strategy embeds the values of the organisation and the strategic direction Board looks to go, as well as highlighting the fundamentals of what makes us the Healthwatch we are.</p> <p>Board signed off the Strategy subject to the following additions being incorporated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under ‘Improving Outcomes’ - add follow up to recommendations • Holding to account - system recovery 	 <p>HwH-19 Strategy 2020-2024 reviewed</p>  <p>HwH-20 Overview of Ops Dashboard C</p>
<p>11. Any other business including questions from the public - none</p>	
<p>12. Coronavirus survey findings</p> <p>Chloe and Priya presented alongside sharing slides. Priya introduced by giving some background information. In response to what we were hearing from the public during the early part of the pandemic we created three surveys (shielding, mental health and health and social care more generally) to learnt more about these experiences. The surveys ran from early May - end of July and achieved 667 responses collectively. There is a huge amount of support and interest from partners on the findings.</p> <p>Priya talked through the limitations of the surveys: although there was an option to request the surveys in a different format all respondents completed it online - further work is being done focussing on those who feel they are digitally excluded to understand their experiences. Additionally we are working with partners to understand the experiences of the learning disability community.</p> <p>Chloe presented on the key findings and overall messages and then went onto more detailed findings of each survey. Overall people told us how valuable they found the County Council/Herts Help in providing information, advice and practical support. Negative feedback was with the caveat of understanding that services were under a lot</p>	

<p>of pressure. Communication from providers were very mixed and those shielding had a much poorer experience re this. 80% of respondents to the MH survey and 55% of respondents to the shielding survey said that COVID-19 has had a negative affect on their mental health. People felt that changes to services such as virtual appointments were positive but were also keen not to completely replace face to face contact with a clinician. People’s experiences differed across services, particularly around dentistry and HPFT. Chloe talked through key themes and issues including communication, access, technology and feedback through our signposting service.</p> <p>Priya closed the session by highlighting next steps and confirmed that a full report is in progress and will be sent to Board shortly for sign off. Once recommendations have been agreed, the operational team will plan future work taking forward the themes and learning from the analysis from the surveys. We will be sharing findings with partners and through our holding to account meetings and through future projects.</p> <p>Board asked if they could be sent a slide deck with key messages for them to promote and share at their community groups and meeting. Priya confirmed that she would look into doing this.</p> <p>In answering Brians question Chloe confirmed that there were some findings of some small community groups helping their residents as well as mention of voluntary organisations: NHS volunteers, reach out and Herts Mind as being very helpful.</p> <p>Responding to Meg’s question about satisfaction around the number of responses, Priya said that she was happy with the response rate and that within research if you start to hear exactly the same thing repeatedly e.g. no new information or themes are observed within the data (defined as data saturation) you can be satisfied with the response rate/data collected. The caveat to this is that we could not supplement the surveys with face to face engagement due to COVID-19, meaning that some communities were excluded so we are working to bridge this gap.</p> <p>Priya confirmed that responses reflected a good cross section of age and from across the county although very few children or young people responded. With this in mind we have had conversations with Carers in Herts and other organisations to understand the experiences of young people.</p> <p>Geoff invited Ted to talk about how the voluntary sector has shifted its role and how he has managed this nprocess over the past few months. Ted firstly gave credit to Healthwatch for they way we’ve shown great flexibility and this has been a lesson for commissioners in trying to use any flexibility going forward to ensure contracts aren’t too rigid. There has been a huge response from larger organisations such as Carers in Herts, Herts Help and Age UK and also from small strat ups and community groups too. Ted commented that the survey interim reports are brilliant and these are being discussed and said that there is a lot to learn about communication and involving patients early in communicating changes results in a more positive response.</p> <p>Board thanked Priya and Chloe for a very clear presentation with lots of food for thought for the Board and for the whole system.</p>	
<p>12. Closed Part 2 item - Visitors left the Board meeting.</p>	

Next formal meeting of the Board: Tuesday 17th November 2020.