

**Healthwatch Hertfordshire Board Meeting**  
**10am on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2023,**  
**Virtually via Zoom**

**Please note:** It will be assumed that reports will have been read prior to the meeting

<b>Board Members:</b> Eve Atkins, Alan Bellinger, Alex Booth (left at 11am), Brenda Davies, Ramone Nurse, Jan Taylor, Neil Tester (Co-chair)
<b>Executive Team:</b> Geoff Brown (Chief Executive), Fiona Corcoran (Deputy Chief Executive), Nuray Ercan (Deputy Chief Executive Interim), Natalie Stone (Finance and Resources Manager)
<b>Visitors/others:</b>
<b>Apologies:</b> Joy Hale, (Integrated Care Board), Steve Palmer

**1. Welcome, apologies and register of interests**

Neil welcomed everyone present and communicated apologies, as above. Neil took the Chair in his official capacity as Co-chair.

It was noted that Board expressed sympathies for the families that have been affected in the Letby trial. This will be discussed further under agenda item 4.

**2. Minutes of 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2023 and outstanding actions**

Geoff updated Board on the status of items within the action tracker. Action 1b has impacted by changes to ICB governance and pressure on NHS staff.

[The minutes were approved as an accurate record and signed off.](#)

**3. Reviewing the year: Annual report**

- **Tackling big issues**
- **Addressing health inequalities**
- **Improving care and patient experience**

Neil introduced the item by creating space to reflect on the annual report and the three bullet points above; to think about effective ways of working and what we should focus on going forward to take into strategy discussions later in the year.

Geoff added context around how well that annual report has been received and the feedback and compliments received by various colleagues as well as from HwEngland about impact that we have had. He also gave two further specific examples of Chief Executives of Trusts who have emphasised the importance of our role and work which is indicative of the strong reputation we have in the system.

The three themes running through the annual report as above is also reflected in the holding to account role. He gave specific examples of themes within projects that have had huge impact. This is a strong base to work from so the focus is to develop and move forward, and if changes are proposed we ensure that we keep the strengths that we have built up.

Geoff and Fiona highlighted that the focus on impact throughout the annual report has really shone through and we are now focussing on evidencing this much more through our communications and stories.

The following points were raised re the annual report by various Board Members to 'bottle' for future use:

- It was noted that credibility is being shown by both evidencing methodology as well as reach, and getting to hear from the right groups of people.
- It is a really comprehensive report with outcomes and is easy to read. All the key information jumps out.
- It was agreed that the Exec Team would look at HwEssex annual report
- It summarises the maturity of the organisation; research is working effectively and is adding real value and our networking with other organisations – the more we can do this the more representative we can be
- Working with and through other organisations – VCFSE and broadening and deepening our existing community relationships and contacts through leaders
- A good balance of scale of input and the impact of the output
- Aim to tease out the learning and commonality across all of the projects we conduct and highlight this at a high level throughout the year

The Board also discussed thinking about the following more operational issues going forward:

- Engaging with patient participation groups – which Alan and Geoff provided some context on
- Communication to the general public
- The possibility of sharing the annual report with GP practices

Geoff concluded by saying that he agreed with the point made about us being a more mature organisation now. He has confidence in the Board enacting their role and throughout the years we have made tough decisions to stop certain activity that did not necessarily have the impact that other things we do have had. We have also had to make a decision to work on commissioned projects outside of our core funding and this model has helped raise our profile with partner organisations that we didn't have before as well as bringing extra revenue.

#### **4. Strategic developments:**

##### **• Chair's update**

Neil referred to his report circulated as part of the meeting papers and highlighted the various plans and frameworks. From these we now know what the key issues the system is going to tackle in the next 3+ years and this will be helpful for us in planning our own activity and how it fits into and influences it. He drew upon the sections on the AGM, annual report and the success of the cost of living report.

It was noted that Board Members found the Chair's written report really useful to have and thanked Neil for his broad activity in the quarter.

Neil updated that following the tragic events at the Countess of Chester hospital he and Geoff will discuss a way of making formal contact with each of the Trusts/ICB/CQC on HwH's behalf.

Action: Geoff and Neil to make formal contact with Trusts/ICB/CQC re Countess of Chester hospital

• **Chief Execs looking ahead**

We are likely to know by October what the new commissioning model looks like. There may be more duties written into the new contract.

The NHS is still facing pressures and there is still negotiation about pieces of work we are involved with. Other projects have already been secured so our financial position is looking good.

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

We have circulated the contract monitoring documents as usual. The Organisational performance 'rag' (red, amber, green) rated document has been produced for Board to monitor performance – this document is no longer produced for commissioners as discussed at the Strategic Board meeting in June. The PIR (periodic information return) will be discussed under Part2 as it could potentially be identifiable.

The performance is positive throughout the quarter. Compliments are high, we have met our targets in the organisational performance document and our work with other organisations is positive. The projects and activity document outlines active projects, comms activity as well as meetings that we have had in the quarter with organisations and holding to account meetings. Geoff emphasised that in the work that we do working in partnership with organisations adds value and is really important

Board congratulated the team on all the work that has been achieved.

In response to a query as to whether we are engaging with the same groups of people or whether with each activity we engage with different people Geoff confirmed that projects focus is different and we work with organisations who have good relationships with that community and therefore different people get involved each time depending on the focus of the project. Nuray added that with signposting we have a good reputation so people tend to remember us however the majority of contacts are new and unsolicited.

**6. Policy Sign off – Health and safety**

Board noted the Health and Safety audit and updates.

**7. Finance – Management Accounts as at June 2023**

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

- We have overspent in employments costs
- We have made savings in non-staff costs
- We had an increase in funding from HCC
- Our interests on reserves is overperforming our forecast
- Our budgeted deficit before revenue generation is 68k and we are forecasting significant income generation so our overall forecast deficit at year end will be much lower than the original budget forecast.

Board noted the management accounts.

**8. Board Advisory Committee (BAC)**

Alan updated that the committee had a really good discussion on health and safety issues. There was also an item on staff pressures; capacity versus demand and it was good to get Board's continued support for the team.

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

**10. Part 2 – Closed**

**Next formal meeting of the Board: 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023**

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