

## Approved Board Minutes- Approved at August Full Board Meeting

### Minutes of the Board Meeting held on the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021

#### Board members present:

Dr LN Murthy, Mr C Cunnington-Shore, Mr B Jackson, Mrs M Mitchell, Mr J Welch, Mrs J Evans, Mr D Scott

#### Apologies:

Apologies from Brian Jackson who is attending the Path to Excellence meeting

#### In attendance:

David Logan, Project Lead  
Claire Sisterson, Volunteer Support Officer  
Denise Rudkin, Research and Information Officer  
Toni McHale, Project Manager  
Georgina Cowey, Support Officer (Minute Taker)

#### Guests Present:

Amanda Healy, Director of Public Health

#### Item 10/21: Welcome/ Declaration of interest

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

No changes to declaration of interest were made.

#### Item 11/21: Notes from Previous Meeting

The Board accepted the notes from the previous meeting as a true record.

The Board sent some questions to Carol Gaskarth following the presentation given at the last Board meeting to seek some more detail. The request has since been withdrawn.

It was agreed by the Board that notes from the last twelve months will be uploaded to the new website in the new format as a PDF file to be consistent. A note will be added to the website that members of the public can request notes from meetings held any earlier.

#### Item 12/21: Board Performance Measures

Dave Logan, project lead, updated the Board about meeting with the commissioner to discuss the quarter 4 report. The commissioner is happy with the work Healthwatch County Durham has carried out during the difficult times regarding the pandemic. Concerns were raised about engagement moving forward regarding Enter and View visits, public engagement and integrating back into the office.

The Board passed their thanks on to the volunteers for all the work they have carried out throughout last year during difficult circumstances, as well as the team who have adapted well to new ways of working.

Using technology moving forward will continue to be an important part of working. Volunteers have raised worries around the divide of individuals who are online and those who are not getting bigger, so it is important that non-technological ways of working be prioritised just as much.

Some Board members expressed their concerns for people who have been isolated over the last year who may have lost confidence with communicating/ socialising.

Promoting/ re-launching Healthwatch County Durham once places open back up was discussed, including the possibility of putting posters up in supermarkets, community centres etc. to reach more people who are unaware the service exists, which is something the volunteers could assist with.

Accessibility around the new website was raised. It was confirmed that the new site meets AA standards, which matches the Healthwatch England website.

### **Item 13/21: Final Draft of Annual Report**

Final version of report is to be submitted on 30<sup>th</sup> June via Healthwatch England website. Denise R explained that some of the team are on annual leave before then, so the draft needs to be finalised in plenty of time.

Report is shorter than usual due to ongoing restrictions but is still a reflection of the hard work carried out by the team and volunteers. It was considered that a more condensed version of annual reports might be taken forward by HWE as they can be just as impactful on presenting work and outcomes achieved.

### **Item 14/21: Quality Framework**

It was suggested that annual review dates could be proposed periodically for the Board to review so that the document stays fresh and up to date, and could be added to the Board agenda on a bi-monthly basis.

Outstanding items highlighted during the last meeting and are part of the action plan are:

- Healthwatch County Durham complaints policy to be reviewed
- Conflict of interests register needs updating, and a policy has been formed to go along with it
- Risk register for the Board is being developed, which will be addressed at future meetings

It was decided at the last meeting with Delana that the QF document would be reviewed at least quarterly, as it is important items are regularly revised and it is a 'living' document. Identifying measures will be useful moving forward.

Denise R thanked the Board for their contribution to the QF document.

The Chair thanked Denise R for her continuing work on the document, which is now a considerable size with a vast amount of information.

### **Item 15/21: Presentation from Amanda Healy, Director of Public Health**



DPH AR  
Presentation - Healt

Amanda explained that the uptake of healthy food and the healthy weight initiative is an issue that is being looked at nationally. Public Health are also in contact with other public health teams and local authorities across the North East to tackle concerns at a more local level, and to introduce more targeted policies and procedures. Public Health are looking to work with food retailers moving forward. A 'healthy standard' is going to be introduced across County Durham.

Following Amanda's presentation, it was asked whether the recycling of packaging from take away establishments has been considered due to the big increase of uptake of take away hot food. The Healthy Weight Alliance has been continuing to meet during Covid-19, and Amanda will take the recycling issue that was raised to their next meeting.

The Chair asked if there are any specific areas in County Durham, which have 'higher' levels of concern regarding health needs and whether there are any opportunities for Healthwatch to help with these. Amanda explained that as part of the County Durham plan, certain towns and villages were targeted for regeneration to target inequalities across the region. A health and wellbeing checklist has been embedded within these developments, so that any negatives against health are mitigated against and any positives are maximised. Some Eastern regions in County Durham remain the biggest challenge. Some specific work in Horden is taking place which Healthwatch County Durham may want to get involved with.

Domestic abuse across County Durham has been a key issue over the pandemic. More funding and resource is going to be allocated to focus on this growing issue of concern. Amanda suggested that this area of work may be something that Healthwatch could be involved with in the future. Amanda said she is happy to come back and have more in depth conversations with Healthwatch County Durham in the future.

The point was raised that many pieces of information that were provided throughout the pandemic were not easily accessible for individuals with mobility or sight issues, and it was asked how this would be addressed if another pandemic was to happen again. Amanda explained that lessons have been learnt and best practice is being shared within organisations, so that skills can be utilised and plans can put in place.

Claire mentioned that recycling of pharmaceutical packaging could possibly be a piece of work for the volunteers in the future.

It was highlighted how important the feeling of a 'joint up' approach from local people in communities, neighbourhoods etc. which came as a result of Covid, has helped people work together and communicate more effectively. The feeling that this should not be lost when moving forward was emphasised.

It was asked how Public Health are going to act on what has been learnt from the pandemic and how any local recommendations are shared with national bodies. Amanda clarified that the local resilience forum have carried out feedback sessions to highlight lessons learnt which has been captured and shared with local partners. Public Health have also done something similar. Gathering information throughout the pandemic has been important to support any public enquiries. Any specific issues have been raised at Health and Wellbeing Board, where local Councillor Hovvels has written to the government about these. Issues have included testing, track and trace and car sharing.

#### **Item 16/21: Briefings Correspondence and to receive reports (For information)**

Accessing GP services report was mentioned at the PCC meeting and was very well received. It was suggested that a few recommendations and/or actions could be fed back for the Board to see to in the future.

Jim highlighted that the meeting he attended regarding Sunderland and South Tyneside informed him that at the hospital in Sunderland, volunteers are gathering inpatient feedback about the meals they are receiving whilst under their care. Jim also raised a concern that technology on mobile phones, tablets etc. needs to be accessible as it can put people 'off' using these methods going forward. Jim's observations were well received at the meeting.

#### **Item 17/21 AOB & Feedback:**

Claire presented the idea that volunteers should have some guidance on how to be using any equipment that are loaned from Healthwatch County Durham, and explained that it would be beneficial for volunteers to sign an agreement to say they understand appropriate use. Claire has a

spreadsheet which logs who has the equipment which was formulated at the beginning of the pandemic. Document for ICT volunteers was endorsed by the Board. Murthy asked for clarification on what would happen if equipment was used inappropriately, and what the implications would be for Healthwatch. Toni and Dave are going to look in to this further and look into 'cleansing' IT equipment in between each use.

The Chair received an email from Michael Laing (Director of Integrated Community Services) regarding the document about restarting of the integration programme, which looks at 12 specific areas that the County Durham integration Board want to look at. The Chair asked that if there are any areas that the Board would be interested in working on, to let him know so that a response can be sent to Michael.

A conversation around Board recruitment highlighted that correct procedures must be followed, including reviewing the skills matrix and looking at governance procedures.

**Healthwatch County Durham  
June 2021**