

MINUTES
of a meeting of the Governance Board
17 January 2023
(13:30-15:45)
At Queen's Court

Present:

Anne-Marie Dean, Chairman
Ian Buckmaster, Company Secretary
Paul Rose, Non-Executive Director

Bev Markham, Community Support Officer
Carole Howard, Office Administrator

Jenny Gregory, Dawn Ladbrook, Di Old and Val Perry, Members

1 Welcome and apologies

All members were welcomed to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Carol Dennis and Ron Wright.

2 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations.

3 Minutes of meeting held 8 November 2022

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a correct record and the Chairman was authorised to sign them.

Arising from minute 10, it was noted that the Physiotherapy service was only available to patients who had had a stroke.

4 Finance Report

Monthly income and expenditure

The report for December was presented.

Spending in the month amounted to £12,685, which was above average for the year to date. Additional expenditure in the month related the December Awayday/Christmas function, overtime payments and Christmas gifts.

The position would continue to be monitored and reported monthly as the year progressed.

Since the report had been prepared, the payment of £5,000 from the LAS for the consultation project had been received, as had the final payment of Council funding for 2022/23. The £5,000 contribution from NHSNEL to cover the cost of supporting them was due soon. Further reports about the LAS project and the NHSNEL funding are referred to in subsequent minutes.

Currently uncommitted funds amounted to £4,436 but much expenditure remained to be met so the end of year position could not yet be forecast accurately (since the end of December, £5,000 had been received from the LAS, bringing uncommitted expenditure to £9,436).

Projects' proceeds

Members were reminded that £2,300 had been received for the work on the Care Home DES survey. The direct costs of that work had been to £387 and so £1,913 had been transferred to the general account. The direct costs did not include the cost of overheads including support work for the project and office etc costs, but they would have been met out of the general account in any event.

For the first phase of the Maternity Project, £610 was received, which covered the direct costs of the work involved. The likely income from the phase 2 work has yet to be ascertained.

5 Havering Place-based Partnership (HPbP)

The recent HPBP meeting had celebrated the work and progress achieved in the first few months (see appendix) – the Board were pleased to note the reference to the deaf and LD/autism services projects listed in fourth place.

Guidance had been given on Conflicts of Interest, which was particularly important as the Partnership involved new organisations with a wide membership and will deal with financial decisions that impact on local services and residents.

Among other issues, the following of particular concern to Healthwatch were:

- St George's Health and Wellbeing hub had been formally approved with due date for opening being Spring 2024. The possibility of using accommodation at the hub as a day hospital would be suggested to the project steering group and a briefing for the Havering Over Fifties Forum (HOFF) had been arranged. Arrangements were also being made for HOFF members to be surveyed about their understanding of the services available through primary care.

- A BHRUT survey of patients attending the Urgent Treatment Care (UTC) had found that many had advised they went there as they were unable to get face to face appointments with their GPs, which contradicts evidence of young people preferring non-face-to-face appointments.
- There was a need for more communications to publicise other options for patients to use as there were appointments running empty in GP extended access. As part of the BHR communications strategy, videos were being produced to increase patient awareness of where services could be accessed.
- There was a need to have conversations with PCNs on how to increase the uptake of the extend hours appointments. The new Primary Care Development Lead would be the link person.
- When the virtual wards went live around frailty and respiratory conditions, they would need to be used to the maximum capacity.

The Chairman now advised that members of Havering Over Fifties Forum (HOFF) had concerns about access to Primary Care. It had been agreed that representatives of the Partnership would attend a HOFF meeting to give an update on some of the new initiatives that had been put in place to increase access to Primary Care.

6 NHS North East London/North East London Health and Care Partnership

The Memorandum of Understanding with NHSNEL had now been signed and the complementary MoU between the eight Healthwatch in NEL was being finalised.

There remained uncertainty about precisely what NHSNEL would expect because of the MoU as they had still been unable to specify exactly what meetings they expected to be covered and how, as they had prioritised getting the MoU settled first. A further report would be made at the next meeting.

7 Safeguarding and Quality - update

Ms Old reported that attendance at Quality meetings was improving and more participants, including the CQC, were now attending them.

She referred to a particular home that continued to experience problems that were a concern to the Safeguarding and Quality team.

8 Engagement projects - update

- **Domiciliary Care**
 - The next group of surveys was still awaited.
- **Post Covid Syndrome (Long Covid)**
 - The report had been published and was available on the website.
- **Care Homes – Direct Enhanced Service (for GP cover at homes)**
 - The report had been published and was available on the website.
- **Supporting Equity and Equality in Maternity and Neonatal across NE London**
 - As mentioned previously, the work that had been done last year was to be supplemented by a second phase, which was now in hand. For this, further interview sessions with specific groups of mothers-to-be and new mothers were being arranged to ascertain why they had chosen the specific maternity facility they had used/would be using for the birth.
- **Services for the deaf**
 - This project was now underway. Meetings had been held with the four PCNs to outline the purpose of the project and of the Autism and LD project.

A meeting had been held with a local voluntary organisation for deaf people, Positive Signs, and a further meeting would be taking place later in the week of this meeting.
- **Autism and Learning Disabilities**
 - This project was also underway.
- **London Ambulance Service (LAS): Strategy Development**
 - As noted earlier, the LAS had paid £5k for this project. Working with the other Healthwatch in NEL (and from other parts of London), a questionnaire had developed by HW Waltham Forest, to whom a contribution of £400 would be paid.

Several public events and presentations had been arranged and a range of contacts had been asked to ask their members to contribute. There was also an article on the website, a message had been sent through the Friends' Network and a newspaper advertisement had been placed.

9 Use of Twitter

Although there had been a Healthwatch Havering Twitter account for some time, not a great deal of use had been made of it.

The Board noted that, in recent months, Twitter had become increasingly controversial. There appeared to have been extensive misuse of it, spreading malicious and abusive information, and circumstances giving rise to uncertainty about its future.

As of 10 January, there were 687 “followers” of the account (i.e. people to whom tweets would be sent) and the account was following 261 people (i.e. people from whom tweets would be received) although that did not mean that either followers or the followed would take an interest in what Healthwatch Havering had to say. There was no evidence that the presence or absence of tweets had had any great effect; no tweet had produced anything other than, at best, a brief reaction.

Following discussion, the Board **AGREED** to maintain the account, but with the current level of activity – i.e. no general use of it to send tweets but to do so when it is appropriate.

10 Inclusive social research practices

The Government had recently published a “Guide to inclusive social research practices”. Although aimed at researchers working within government departments, its message was relevant to all organisations that produced reports on social research issues, including Healthwatch.

The Board noted that, in general, those recommendations were already being followed and endorsed the guidance. There would always be instances where full compliance would not be possible but overall it was expected to be feasible to ensure that reports were produced broadly in line with the recommendations.

11 Next meeting

The next meeting was due on Tuesday, 14 February 2023 at the office.

_____ Chairman