Healthwatch England Committee Meeting
Held in Public

Online on MS Teams and in person in
Room Thames 34, 2nd Floor 2 Redman Place, Stratford

Minutes and Actions from the Meeting No. 44 – 20 September 2023

Attendees
- Professor David Croisdale-Appleby – Chair (DCA)
- Phil Huggon – Vice Chair and Committee Member (PH)
- Belinda Black – Committee Member (BB)
- Helen Parker – Committee Member (HP)
- Andrew McCulloch – Committee Member (AM)
- Danielle Oum – Committee Member (DO) Online
- Lee Adams – Committee Member (LA)
- Pav Akhtar – Committee Member (PA) online
- Jane Laughton – Committee Member (JL)

In Attendance
- Louise Ansari – Chief Executive (LAN)
- Chris McCann – Director of Communications, Insight and Campaigns (CM)
- Gavin MacGregor – Head of Network Development (GM)
- Ben Knox – Head of Communications (BK)
- Sandra Abraham – Head of Operations, Finance and Development (SA)
- Will Pett - Head of Policy, Public Affairs and Research (WP)
- Felicia Hodge – Committee Administrator (minute taker) (FH)
- Carmen Fuertes-Riestra – Strategy, Planning & Performance Manager (CFR)

Guests
- Jon Turner – Impact Programme and Regional Network (Northwest) Manager (JT)
- Adam Webb –Chief Operating Officer, HW Bury, (AW)
- Ruth Passman – Chair HW Bury (RP)
- William Howard– Senior Research Analyst (WH)

Apologies
- Sir John Oldham – Committee Member (JO)
- Umar Zamman – Committee Member (UZ)

Item	Introduction	Action
1.1	**Agenda Item 1.1 – Welcome and Apologies** The Chair welcomed Committee members, in particular JL and other attendees. Apologies from UZ and JO were noted. **Agenda Item 1.1 – Declaration of Interests** There were no additional declarations of interest.	
1.2	**Agenda Item 1.2 - Minutes and actions from 20 September 2023 Committee Meeting** The minutes from the meeting held 23 May 2023 were accepted without amendment. There were no outstanding actions from the meeting held 23 May 2023 and all were marked as complete and addressed within the agenda.	

	Matter Arising	
	There were no matters arising.	
1.3	**Agenda Item 1.3 – Presentation by Jon Turner Annual Report Impact** JT informed the committee of the positive trend of increased reporting of outcomes in annual reports from the network from 50% to 92% over a period of 2 years, and the steps that will be taken to increase the focus and support the network to demonstrate impact for local communities. The committee were asked to note the presentation. JT provided examples of the impact recorded by a number of local Healthwatch (LHW) annual reports 2022/2023 covering topics such as accessibility to dental services for deaf people; improved GP services including assessment of home visits; partnership boards to help improve the lives and wellbeing for people with neurodiversity and learning difficulties; improved mental health support for schools and pregnant women and mothers; pre-planned respite care in care homes and better optical and audio care, to name but a few. JT explained that the assessment of reports has helped incentivise the reporting and delivery of impact and including collaboration to influence communities to talk and ICSs listen and act. HW have taken the principles of the social return on investments and more sophisticated methods used by other organisations to help shape the way they communicate with different audiences. Using Theory of Change methodology, LHW are setting out what impact they are aiming to achieve from projects with improved emphasis on outcomes rather than outputs. The committee acknowledged the work that has gone into the improved reports and made the following comments and suggestions: • Templates for LHW use were greatly appreciated. • Strong emphasis on focus on outcomes rather than output welcomed. • Suggested further exploration of the literature and methodologies that could be used in expressing impact. **The committee noted the presentations and thanked JT.** **Agenda Item 1.3 – Presentation by Healthwatch Bury on Primary Care** Adam Webb (AW), Chief Executive Officer, Healthwatch Bury, Ruth Passman (RP) Chair Healthwatch Bury. AW shared the outcome and impact of a year-long project undertaken by HW Bury with the help of other charitable organisations, covering access assistance in the form of a drop-in service for vulnerable people and those from marginalised groups who were struggling to navigate health and social care system. Areas covered were: • Access to GPs and other health services. • Access to interpreters and translators • Guidance on how the treatment pathway operate. • Areas covered outside of health and social care included housing, claiming benefits, welfare, and social prescribing. Impact and Outcomes: • Continuance of the drop-in service in a safe space leading to increased trust within the community. • More agencies involved in a joined-up approach leading to better knowledge and representation of marginalised groups and their needs. • Other agencies using behavioural model and framework being created to use with other disadvantaged groups. • The outcome was presented to the local Health Scrutiny Board and was noted by an MP from the shadow health team. • Time saved by GP services due to drop-in centres.	

	The committee welcomed the multi-disciplinary approach and the way the project shared intel with the Health and Wellbeing Board and local group decision makers. They acknowledged that work is still ongoing to involve partnerships and the input from housing associations. **The Chair thanked Adam and Ruth for their focus on what is a real problem and for building trust in the community. The committee noted the report and were impressed with HW Bury's commitment to continue to provide the service despite lack of funding.**	
1.4	**Agenda Item 1.4 – Chair's Report** The Chair gave an update on his activities since joining Healthwatch. He conveyed that he is passionate about Healthwatch and privileged to be appointed Chair of Healthwatch England. He mentioned the warm welcome he received from the Healthwatch staff, committee and network and gave special thanks to his EPA, Josephine Buckle, for the support she has given him since his arrival. The chair expressed his thanks for the leadership of Sir Robert Francis and to Belinda Black for stepping in as interim chair and for remaining on the committee. The chair said he would visit about 30 local Healthwatch (LHW)to learn more about them and how they were dealing with local issues. Referring to the recent conference, the Chair commented on the warmth of welcome extended and the positivity expressed by the network and the deep issues and solutions that were constructively brought to the attention of the panels and HWE CEO. **The committee welcomed DCA and noted the report. They expressed their pleasure in seeing the chair getting out and visiting LHW**.	
1.5	**Agenda Item 1.5 – Chief Executive's Report** LAN presented the CEO report detailing Healthwatch activities since the last meeting in September 2023, highlighting the following areas. The committee were asked to note the report. LAN welcomed DCA as chair and was thankful to BB for acting as interim chair. LAN reported that feedback from DCA's visits to the network has been very positive. LAN highlighted the work that has been done to understand the impact on the public from industrial action in the NHS. HWE have been engaging with NHSE and unions to try to mitigate the negative impact on patients. LAN reflected on recent events relating to patient safety and in particular the Lucy Letby case and campaign by Merope Mills (whose daughter died of sepsis aged 13), to introduce "Martha's rule". LAN stressed that while there are areas of good practice there is a need for a listening culture to be embedded across the Health and Care system. The Chair expressed his delight in the attention that has been given to the work that HWE had carried out on the impact of cancellations on patients. The committee raised concerns about the impact on equity that the shortage of some medications is having on people's lives, in addition to the physical and mental impact of users. The committee noted that although more general data is being shared by the network, there needs to be more demographic data recorded, and they would like to see collection of this reinforced. **The Committee noted the report**	
1.6	**Agenda Item 1.6 – Committee Members Update** Nothing to report	
1.7	**Agenda Item 1.7 – Presentation on Primary Care**	

	WP and WH provided the committee with details of plans for one our Primary Care projects, related to public experience of pharmacy. The committee were asked to note the presentation. WP highlighted that at the HW conference Professor Kamila Hawthorne articulated the pressures that GPs were under as the most common gateway to the Health and Care system and resulting public dissatisfaction on access GP services. One of the key elements of the NHS Primary Care Plan published May 2023 focuses on relieving GP pressure by increased use of pharmacies. Healthwatch will investigate how this approach affects the public and gauge their awareness and use of the services offered. 12 LHW are being commissioned to perform in-depth interviews as part of the project. The project is expected to report in March and results will be shared with NHSE and other stakeholders. The project will ensure that it engages with people who do not commonly access pharmacies such as young people, and those with who face barriers to access such as those facing geographical barriers, and people from minority ethnic backgrounds. The committee acknowledged that it would require a considerable cultural shift if England is to see the use of pharmacies comparable to how they are used in other European countries. **The committee noted the report and requested reports by email when milestones are reached.**	
1.8	**Business Items 2023 - 2024** **Agenda Item 1.8 (a) - Delivery and Performance Report for Q1 2023/24** SA updated the committee on our performance against our KPIs and Business Plan for Q1 2023/24. The committee were asked to note the report. SA reported the following performance update: • 7 KPIs complete • 2 KPIs complete but below target • 7 KPIs on track • 2 KPIs not on track include data on demographics shared by LHW and media reach in Q2, whilst higher than in Q1 is lower than expected. • 3 KPIs report not yet due SA reported that Business Plan had 5 projects not on track, but mitigations are in place to address these, and 2 projects will be reported on later in the year. All other projects have been completed or are on track. The Chair and the committee were assured that mitigations are in place to bring projects back on track, and that delays to projects which were mainly due to staff capacity or situations outside of HWE's control. **The committee noted and approved the report.** **Agenda Item 1.8(b) – Business Plan 2023/24** SA presented the committee with an extension to the 6 months business plan (approved by the committee in May 2023), to the end of Mar 2024. The committee were asked to note the changes to the annual plan and approve the extension. AM stated that they would have liked to have seen mention of EDI training in Section 10 to include induction of values and behaviours of the organisation. LAN assured the committee that while it was not explicitly referenced in the plan, this aspect was outlined in the operational plans supporting the business plan and strategy. The committee was also reassured that there has been extensive EDI training conducted, along with a staff survey to monitor outcomes and identify additional training requirements.	

	LA suggested that an outcomes column be included in future business plans to enable observers see what has been achieved. DO gave a reminder that as this was an extension of the plan already approved by the committee, there should not be any significant changes to it until a new plan is compiled. **ACTION – SA** to investigate the inclusion of outcomes and achievements in the business plan. **The committee noted the changes and approved the extended business plan.**	**SA**
1.9	**Agenda Item 1.9 – Audit, Finance and Risk Sub Committee (AFRSC) Report** AM had acted as chair at the AFRSC meeting in July and gave an overview of subjects covered at that meeting, He reported that: • An internal audit programme was discussed but the sub-committee decided that this would not be necessary as there are sufficient assurance mechanisms in place to ensure good practice. • The AFRSC requested utilising the risk register to prepare a management assurance framework that would trigger the potential for an internal audit, for annual review by the committee. • Financial procurement is on track. • The level of staff turnover was discussed. • Committee transition and the processes for retiring the outgoing members was also discussed. The Chair stressed the need to look at skills and competences of future members and any mentoring required in that area. He thanked AM and HP for chairing the meetings when required and praised SA for her clarity in financial and risk reporting. The AFRSC members echoed this praise, and the committee expressed their assurance of the support being received from CQC, who are represented at the sub-committee meetings. **The committee noted the report**	
2.0	**Agenda Item 2.0 – Forward Plan** The Chair requested thoughts from committee members and the executive team as to what topics they would like to see on future agendas, either at the meetings or in a workshop. Suggestions were: • Healthwatch Culture. Where should Healthwatch aim to be in 3 years' time. • Consider what patients, the public and carers would like to see over the longer term and how Healthwatch can assist in empowering them to become involved in their own wellbeing and health decisions. The committee were asked to feedback ideas to the executive team for testing. • With the general election in the offing, consider what commitments Healthwatch would like to seek from political parties. • Update on at least one priority project at committee meetings • Investigate if more can be done with key influencers. i.e. ICS's and help LHW engage more with their local MPs. **ACTION – LAN** to consider a new vision for Healthwatch and prepare further Committee discussions on this. **The committee and executive team noted the suggestions and the Chair asked that any further ideas or suggestions be directed to him or LAN.**	**LAN**
	AOB No other business was discussed	

	Questions from the public There were no questions from the public.	
	The Chair ended the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. Meeting concluded.	
	The next meeting will be held 28 November 2023 in Stratford, London Guests can join in person or online via Teams. Details to follow.	