



Healthwatch North Somerset Directors Meeting

Tuesday 9th June 2015

at

**St Georges Community Centre, Willow Close, St Georges,
Weston-super-Mare, BS22 7XF, 3 – 4 pm**

MINUTES

Present:

Georgie Bigg (GB) [Chair]
Dick Whittington (DW) [Treasurer]
Tom Foot (TM)
Eileen Jacques (EJ)
Lance Allen (LA)
Tim Evans (TE)

In attendance:

Claire Malton (CM - Administration Officer, Healthwatch North Somerset)
Shaun Fitzpatrick (SF – North Somerset Council)
John Rose (JR)
John Gowar (JG)
Lorna Cryer (LC)

01-15 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Michelle Burnett and Celia Henshall

02-15 Declarations of Interest

The Directors confirmed that they had no interests to declare in the business to be conducted at the meeting.

03-15 Public Participation

LC enquired whether HWNS has any influence on the proposed 'downgrading' of the Accident and Emergency Department at Weston General Hospital (WGH) as mentioned in the presentation from SWAST before the meeting. LC added that the public were not informed of this action and expressed her concerns about the impact this may have on the existing over-crowding issues of A&E departments at Bristol Hospitals. GB advised that HWNS are in communication with Weston Area Health Trust (WAHT), have representation on the Board, and are involved with various groups at WGH.

Along with intelligence collected from the public, and connections with North Somerset CCG, HWNS is able to influence decision-making processes at various stages. JG asked if HWNS know how the decision was taken and by whom. GB replied that she did not, but acknowledged that clarification would be sought after this meeting.

Action: Liaise with WAHT to clarify A&E downgrading. Provide attendees with response. If the response from WAHT is insufficient, pursue further with NSCCG.

JG asked whether the minutes of the previous meeting were available on the website. GB confirmed that they were, in draft form, until they are approved at the next meeting.

04-15 Minutes of Meeting of 14th April 2015

The minutes of the meeting of 14th April 2015 were checked for:-

4.1 For accuracy

4.2 For matters arising

The minutes were agreed as a correct record and there were no matters arising.

05-15 Finance Report

DW explained that the annual inspection of accounts would take place shortly, by Mike Bowles as agreed by the Board. It is expected the draft accounts will be available by the next public board meeting. A small underspend is anticipated of approximately £4000. SF confirmed £147,000 grant for this year from North Somerset Council.

The under spend from 2013/14 is not included in these figures, and is allocated to two projects.

DW asked the Board to give consideration to the risk of the NSC contract ending in March 2016, and the costs of premises associated with this. The six year lease on the current office space, has a three year break clause (October 2016). If HWNS do not take advantage of this break clause, and the contract does not extend beyond March 2016, there will be 2.5 years left of the office premises lease to pay. GB suggested that, prior to the next meeting DW to review the potential implications of this and available options.

Action: DW to provide a risk assessment for the next Board meeting to include cost implications and options regarding the office premises lease.

TE enquired when the new HWNS contract will be announced, and to which organisation it will be awarded. SF advised that the new government had announced additional cuts of £250m to the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and £200m to NHS non-health services. The Emergency budget is set to take place on 8th July 2015. Subsequent to this, the council will meet in order to determine how this will affect local services. SF will be able to advise about general funding after this has taken place. By the next HWNS Board meeting in August, SF will have a better understanding, and will be able to provide a more informed response. GB reaffirmed the importance of considering the break clause of the lease as an opportunity to discuss the future.

Action: DW to arrange meeting with SF, prior to next Board meeting to discuss contract implications.

06-15 Director Co-option

GB explained that part of the agreed HWNS work plan for this year was to recruit new members to the Board of Directors. The role has been advertised through various channels. Lance Allen and Tim Evans had applied to join the Board and have been interviewed. LA and TE gave a brief introduction of themselves and how their relevant experience will contribute to their respective roles as Directors.

GB proposed that Lance Allen and Tim Evans be co-opted onto the Board of Directors. All members of the Board agreed. GB welcomed the new co-opted Directors to the Board. The formal process of being voted onto the Board will occur at the HWNS AGM.

07-15 GP Practice Survey Report

EJ explained that the GP Practice Survey Report carried out by HWNS had been made available to the public this week, and steps were being taken to publicise it. For example, BBC Points West has approached HWNS and would like to broadcast a feature on the outcomes of the survey. The results of the survey itself were

largely as expected, however the way in which it was received by GP Practices was surprising and interesting due to their joint response via the Avon Local Medical Committee (AMLC). EJ was confident that the recommendations proposed to GP Practices as a result of the report were reasonable, achievable and affordable, and would be followed up by HWNS in 6 months. EJ was positive about the work of Plum Communications & PR who have organised press releases and other work to raise the profile of HWNS.

GB formally thanked the HWNS volunteers involved in the distribution of the surveys, the collection and input of data. GB reiterated the importance of the upcoming work of HWNS and the role the reports play in this work.

DW suggested that the results of the survey were highly skewed by the older age group, who contributed the highest number of surveys. GB added that this age group might be one of the highest users of GP surgeries. DW considered the difficulties of including younger people and obtaining their responses. DW commented on the absence of data from some surgeries, and the implications of this. EJ informed that some surgeries chose not to distribute the survey to patients.

LA noted that most GP surgeries collected patient feedback in the form of the Friends and Family survey, which may interfere with a second, independent survey from HWNS. He suggested that HWNS could provide practices a service of managing patient feedback on behalf of GP surgeries. EJ added that the strength of the HWNS survey was that it was independent and added that work could be done to encourage GP practices to become more involved with HWNS work and such surveys. Meetings with PPGs would contribute to this, and consolidate working relationships with GP practices. SF pointed out that GP practices are individual businesses, and work with the CCG and public health with regards to contractual arrangements should be carried out in order to raise the profile of HWNS within GP practices and assure them that surveys are not intended to be critical, but constructive.

08-15 SEAP Complaints Report

EJ briefly summarised the SEAP Complaints Report for information. SEAP are the complaints advocacy organisation to which HWNS refer patients who would like to pursue a complaint.

09-15 Chief Officer Report

EJ spoke positively of the busy period between April and June 2015, and the work carried out by HWNS. DW questioned the relevance of quality accounts, their ultimate use, and whether they could be dismissed. GB supported this by adding that quality accounts aren't always representative of the service being delivered, and are not always reflected in the annual report. GB suggests that quality accounts may not be the most valuable way to review a service.

10-15 Any Other Business

GB announced the resignation of Nikki Williams from the HWNS Board, and formally thanked her for her work on the Board.

11-15 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 11th August 2015, Clevedon Community Centre, 2-4pm

Action Log

Action Number	Start Date	Details of Action	Person	Date to be Completed
1	09/06/2015	Liaise with WAHT to clarify A&E downgrading. Provide attendees with response. If the response from WAHT is insufficient, pursue further with NSCCG.	GB	11/08/2015
2	09/06/2015	Provide a risk assessment for the next Board meeting to include cost implications and options regarding the office premises lease.	DW	11/08/2015
3	09/06/2015	Arrange meeting with SF, prior to next Board meeting to discuss contract implications.	DW	11/08/2015

Approved	
Date	14 th July 2015