



**Minutes of Healthwatch Cornwall Board meeting  
Wednesday 22 July 2020, 10am  
Via Zoom**

**Present:**

Directors: Jon McLeavy (JM) (Chair), Amanda Stratford (AS), Roger Sinden (RS), Christine Hunter (CH), Deborah Came (DC),

**Apologies:**

In Attendance: Anne Oliver (AO)

**PART 1: In public agenda**

1. **Welcome and Introductions**
- 1.1 JM welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologised for the technical issues that had prevent MA from joining the meeting. It was agreed to hold the meeting via Microsoft Teams in future rather than Zoom which should overcome these issues (if they remain virtual meetings due to guidelines present at the time). As previously this meeting is being recorded so the audio can be uploaded to the website.
- 1.2 Items for Part 2 of the agenda were agreed
2. **Apologies:** John Evers (JE) Margaret Abban (MA), Babs Roundsvell (BA). AS also advised that Michelle Hooker who was due to co-present the report on Engagement and Volunteers was absent through illness so the Engagement part of the report would be postponed although Rhiannon Pring would still present a report on Volunteers; the Board were in agreement with this.
3. **Questions and comments from the public:** None
4. **Conflicts of Interest:** None declared.
5. **Advising of any other business:** None declared that would not be covered under the standard agenda.
6. **Minutes of the last meeting: 22 April 2020:** Minutes were agreed and ratified as a true record.

**7. Actions / matters arising**

- 7.1 Agreed to take off recurring Action requiring Public facing administrative items for the Board meetings to be available at the next meeting and circulated In advance to HWC and personal e-mail addresses of Board Members from the Action Log.
- 7.2 MA is still unable to access her Healthwatch e-mail; AO advised this would resolved once MA and AO can meet face to face to identify the precise reason for the problem. DC commented that every now and then she has problems with her equipment blocking information from our server, AO to link DC with NCI (IT support) to see if this can be resolved.
- 7.3 The most recent Register of Interests has been circulated to the Board, this was agreed as out of date. A new Conflicts of Interest policy with suggested forms for a new Register of Interests was circulated. RS noted that the wording on the agenda item was incorrect - the Register is not a conflict in itself, it is an absolute document - the Conflicts of Interest policy or statement requires Directors to consider situationally whether the interests stated on the Register require a Director to absent themselves from any point on the agenda. This was noted and agreed. The documents themselves are correctly named.
- 7.4 AS confirmed the finance sub-group met to review the revised Budget, which was subsequently approved by the Directors via e-mail.
- 7.5 AS advised that Mentor had responded to the Board's query over the non-contractual status of the Capability Policy reviewed at the Board meeting in April. It was agreed that the policy would remain non-contractual to ensure we remain covered by Mentor's legal advice, but that the Board would not seek to make any changes within it without consulting staff.
- 7.6 AO advised that the Health & Safety Policy is now referenced in the Employee Handbook and a link provided to the actual Policy.
- 7.7 The existing template for Directors to complete following attending meetings was circulated prior to the meeting. JM gave an overview to the Board that this had been used previously but the process had fallen into disuse. The Board felt the re-introduction of this document would be useful, in the short-term AO to prompt Directors by e-mailing prior to attending meetings as detailed on the Representation List; AO to provide Directors with a memory stick with all relevant documents for them to access where required, and investigate how Directors could access a designated space on the network to access document when needed in the future.

- 7.8 Recent updates which are sent to the Team fortnightly have been circulated to the Board, AS advised that a new document is close to finalisation which will become the new way of keeping the Team updated. The front sheet of this which gives the headline information of current work being undertaken will be shared with the Board, who can then follow up with individuals for more information on areas of specific interest.
- 8. Covid-19 update**
- 8.1 AS advised that since April staff have continued to work from home, and our service delivery has focused on supporting the Health & Care system's Covid response, being represented on Cornwall Council Mental Health Suicide Prevention and End of Life (EoL) cells as they are our key focus areas; also the Mental Health Surge Planning task & finish group and being part of the Voluntary Sector Emergency Response Alliance (VERA).
- 8.2 More latterly the aim is to focus on recovery rather than response and by the end of July, when the Council's response structure is "stood down" we will be sitting on the Community & Well-being Recovery cell as well as the Local Outbreak Engagement group.
- 8.3 AS continues to sit on the Leadership Group meeting which receives regular updates from health and social care throughout the County, she continues to ensure people's experiences are being considered.
- 8.4 As of 1<sup>st</sup> week July there were 848 cases and 141 deaths recorded, these are cumulative figures. The last week on week figures are 12 cases and 1 death, the trend is definitely down.
- 8.5 As a member of the local outbreak engagement group that has been set up chaired by the leader of the Council, with the aim of having a clear understanding of what the Council would do in the event of an outbreak in Cornwall, similar to that experienced by Leicester, we seek to ensure communications for the public are accessible.
- 8.6 The Council provide a regular update, there is a link on the website for any member the public to sign up to receive this.
- 9. Adoption of Voluntary Sector Alliance agreement**
- 9.1 AS presented the contract formed by the Volunteer Sector Forum (VSF) who are the umbrella body for the voluntary sector within Cornwall who set up VERA at the start of the outbreak - as a single point of contact for

the Council and health services to reach out to the voluntary sector; and to link voluntary organisation to prevent duplication of resources.

- 9.2 VERA first met daily, then twice weekly and now meets once a week. AS advised it is interesting and active, with broad representation including representatives from Volunteer Cornwall, Age UK, First Light, and mental health and housing organisations.
- 9.3 The proposal to the Board is that we be part of this Alliance, not as a service provider but in our role as a critical friend. After discussion with Healthwatch IoS and JM, AS has asked that a sentence be added to the agreement to be specific about our role with the Alliance.
- 9.4 RS noted that we need to be wary of possible conflicts of interest as other members of the group are service providers; JM said that the IoS voluntary sector have also found VERA to be useful although Healthwatch IoS agree with being specific about our role; DC said that the group needed calling out over the lack of Plain English in such a wordy document - smaller and mutual aid groups could well feel excluded.
- 9.5 Agreed that the board is supportive of joining the Alliance subject to the document being re-word the document in Plain English. AS to action and recirculate amended Alliance Agreement to the board for approval by email in due course.
10. **Finance Report - Budget 2020/21 Q1**
- 10.1 JM expressed thanks on behalf of the Board to Adam and CRCC for the work on the budget figures.
- 10.2 AS noted these are figures for Q1, there will be re-forecast at the end of Q2
- 10.3 Income is on budget; expenditure overall is lower mainly due to a drop in staff expenses and bills for premises during the lockdown - there is a slight overspend on equipment due to the need to purchase a new laptop for SJ to enable him to have appropriate access to graphics packages essential for his work.
- 10.4 Overall the budget is healthy and where we would expect it to be.
11. **Risk Register**
- 11.1 AS presented an updated Risk Register to the Board and highlighted the proposed changes although with recent events she recommends that one of

the proposed items for removal namely inability to meet demand, should now be left in.

- 11.2 A new risk has been added with a capacity issue around Research.
  - 11.3 Governance standards has been downgraded to green.
  - 11.4 Recommended for removal - admin resources as new Admin Officer in place; Business Continuity plan as now in place; office move as no longer moving this year.
  - 11.5 The Covid risk has been downgraded as we have found our way of working, although AS does have some concerns around staff resilience which she will highlight in her report.
  - 11.6 Suggested to add a new risk for working arrangement disruption.
  - 11.7 RS raised the matter of data protection in relation to working from home, there is an obligation on staff to maintain this. AS said that if we move to a more structured way of working from home we would need to look at our Homeworking Policy. We are currently in a transition period, so this can be added to the Risk Register. JM and AS are currently acting as Data Protection Officers. Agreed that the current statement that is due to be circulated to staff around working from home (focusing on display screen equipment) should include a form for them to complete saying they understand the requirements as outlined in the Data Protection policy to act as a gentle reminder to staff and to give the Board re-assurance around this issue.
  - 11.8 AS clarified that the proposed move this year will not now take place and an extension to the lease break point as been negotiated until July 2021.
  - 11.9 JM asked if we need to keep an eye on the Cornwall Council contracts in the light of funding shortfalls following Covid. AS believed this could be taken off the Risk Register as she has had positive meetings with all contract officers.
  - 11.10 Agreed that under Influencing we should add the VERA agreement as it is a potential risk as raised in point 9.4 above, then this can be monitored by the Board.
12. **Policies**

## **12.1 Equality & Diversity**

- 12.1.1 Due for review under cycle - AO apologised for any confusion, she had circulated the policy from 2017 that according to the cycle was up for review, but this has in effect been superseded by the policy in the Employee Manual which she has confirmed with Mentor is up to date according to our legal requirements..
- 12.1.2 DC recommended that the legal policy is the one to follow and to adopt as our E&D policy and procedure; a re-worded version of the 2017 policy should be reflected in our Business Plan and training programme as how we “live” the policy.
- 12.1.3 RS recommended we have a method by which we review, measure and endorse our actions on E&D.
- 12.1.4 Agreed to circulate to the Board the policy that sits within the Employee Handbook by e-mail so that it can be formally approved; and to add an action to have a procedure to sit below it taking into account comments in 12.1.2 and 12.1.3.
- 12.1.5 DC asked if the Handbook (and the policies contained within it) are also applicable to volunteers. AS confirmed the Handbook is for staff; volunteers have their own Volunteer Handbook which is currently under development.
- 12.1.6 RS raised the issue of self-employed contracts which had occurred in the past. AS confirmed no staff are under this type of contract but would expect any future employees under a self-employed contract to be bound by the policies within the Handbook. Agreed HC would not engage such a worker as a matter of course but would be agreed on a case by case basis and would need discussion first.

## **12.2 Information Sharing**

- 12.2.1 This is an unamended policy that is being presented to the Board for approval under the cycle of policy review.
- 12.2.2 Formally approved by the Board.

## **12.3 Register of Interests / Conflicts of Interest policy**

- 12.3.1 The current Register of Interests is out of date, a proposed new policy and new format was presented to the Board for approval.
- 12.3.2 Approved subject to the change in wording as discussed in 7.3 above.
- 12.3.3 Noted that AS as CEO has oversight of register, in the event of AS having a conflict of interest, JM as Chair would arbitrate.

## **13. Presentation of Volunteer development**

- 13.1 Rhiannon Pring (Volunteer Officer) joined the meeting accompanied by Jody Wilson (Engagement & Volunteering Manager) and shared a presentation on how the work she has done since joining HC.
- 13.2 The 3 year development plan (2019-20) is guided by Investors in Volunteers principles.
- 13.1. Current focus is young champions; more specialist roles; and increasing visibility.
- 13.4 Volunteers in the main have adapted and changed in the current climate, Rhiannon is increasing social media posts but face to face is still the best way to recruit.
- 13.5 Rhiannon is keen to refresh the website and keep volunteers updated regularly.
- 13.6 New volunteers are provided with a Volunteer Pack - this is where HW policies are included - they are put on a memory stick and volunteers are asked to e-mail to confirm they have read them, this is then recorded by Rhiannon. The pack covers any support needs they may have and clear expectations - although there is no contract, they are free to leave at any time. However, they do sign a Volunteers' Agreement and training covers Health & Safety, Confidentiality and Safeguarding.
- 13.7 Training is an ongoing area of development and volunteers have access to the Council Hub which covers Safeguarding and gives access to a range of other training opportunities.
- 13.8 Rhiannon is trying to be as flexible as possible regarding communications and work for volunteers - for example some are reviewing on-line reviews of social care.
- 13.9 Jody added that she wished to publicly thank Rhiannon for her work, since her arrival our ideas are finally coming into fruition; she has been an immense support to Georgie Watson and the Maternity Voices Partnership; and she has coped well with the changes over the last 3 months.
- 13.10 JM added his thanks on behalf of the Board, the presentation had been extremely impressive.
- 13.11 DC asked about the potential from getting volunteers from those wanting experience to get back into employment, Rhiannon said there are

possibilities for an Ambassador role as such volunteers would be likely to be short-term.

- 13.12 RS noted the fact we were following Investors in Volunteering standards very gratifying and that they are useful to follow.
- 13.13 Jody noted that she has learned today at the VERA call that there are lot of schemes coming in with some significant funding for 16-25 year olds, and Rhiannon is well placed to look at these.
- 14. **Directors' reports from public meetings attended**
  - 14.1 JM advised the Health & Social Care Overview Scrutiny Committee meets next week, which he will be attending..
  - 14.2 Directors reported no other meetings with public issues to bring back to the Board.
- 15. **Operational update**
  - 15.1 AS presented the dashboard for the first quarter of 2020/21.
  - 15.2 AS advised that she had collated feedback from Healthwatch's in the south west which had been fed back to HE and this has now been co-ordinated by HE and she will share with the team.
  - 15.2 Contract meetings have taken place.
  - 15.3 AS has delivered an Influencing webinar in partnership with Healthwatch Warwickshire.
  - 15.4 AS is now representing HC on the Senate Board, the Leaders' Group and HC is also on 3 delivery boards - Collaborative Communities (AS); One Vision (JW) and Planned Care (to which we have just been invited).
  - 15.5 AS conducted a staff survey around working from home and / or returning to the office. 60% were either vulnerable themselves or caring for a vulnerable person. 95% were happy with the support from HC - AS followed up on the member of staff who wasn't happy and there were no further issues (the staff member wasn't sure why they had answered the way they had).
  - 15.6 A Covid risk assessment has been carried out for returning to the office, and cleaning and sanitising equipment has been provided. Some members of staff have issues around returning to the office - public transport caring and family issues - although 4 members of staff are now working in the office once a week.
  - 15.7 AS does have concerns over staff resilience. The survey, while massively successful with over 1800 responses, has resulted in a considerable amount of work for the Research team with 24 open questions to be coded and

- quantified. Other team members are helping, as are Public Health, but more support is needed. This has been the main focus of service delivery as there is no face to face contact.
- 15.8 The long awaited NHSE Specialist Dentistry report has still not been published. Jo Smith has conducted a visit to follow up on HC recommendations in a complementary report regarding facilities at Harleigh Road Dental Practice which will be shared with the board in the next fortnight.
  - 15.9 ASK Cornwall now has 200 members and the partnership with EPIC is active.
  - 15.10 We have been invited to take part in a piece of HE research around Covid discharges, we were chosen because we are a rural Healthwatch with an improving Acute trust. We are utilising Natalie Swann's Keeping in Touch days to carry out interviews.
  - 15.11 We are facilitating work in collaboration by Co-Create around focus groups examining the impact on during Covid on engagement and public participation.
  - 15.12 Stephen Jobling has been active in providing signposting on the website and producing the Annual Report.
  - 15.13 The Healthwatch Cornwall Enrich Conference has been moved to next year - all major suppliers/partners have agreed to carry forward the deposits we have paid.
  - 15.14 HR issues - both members of staff on maternity leave are using KIT days, Nuala Kiely has returned to work after a period of sick leave, AS has received two resignations recently - Tracy Hitchens who has set up ASK Cornwall is to move to retirement on a full time basis and Jo Smith has accepted a role at RCHT as Commissioning Manager which is excellent career progression for her, it highlights how her confidence has grown with the organisation.
  - 15.15 Priorities for the next quarter are local trends; survey feedback and recruitment.
  - 15.16 RS said that the workload and staff resilience were his main concerns, AS confirmed that the Employee Assistance Programme has been renewed and she is aware that it is being used.
  - 15.17 JM asked that if any Directors have queries or questions on the dashboard to approach AS directly.
  - 15.8 Premises issue had been covered earlier in the meeting.
  - 16. **Any other business:** None declared.

**17. Date, time, location of next meeting**

17.1 20 October 2020 venue to be confirmed 10am - 12.30pm

**Acronyms:**

CEO Chief Executive Office

CRCC - Cornwall Rural Community Charity

E&D - Equality & Diversity

EoL - End of Life

EPIC - eHealth Productivity and Innovation in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly

HC - Healthwatch Cornwall

HE - Healthwatch England

IoS -Isles of Scilly

VERA - Voluntary sector Emergency Response Alliance

VSF - Voluntary Sector Forum

**ACTION LOG:**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE</b>
Draft minutes circulated within 4 weeks of meeting.	AO
Upload audio of meeting to website	AO
Arrange for next meeting in Teams (if unable to meet face to face)	AS/AO
Liaise with NCI to resolve DC's intermittent access problem	AO
Sort out arrangements for Directors to have access to template to complete after attending meetings	AO
Provide memory stick for documents Directors need to access; longer term investigate access to folder on network	AS/AO
Circulate front sheet of update summary for Directors	AO
Feedback to VERA re agreement and circulate amended version to Directors for approval by e-mail	AS
Revise Risk Register	AS
Circulate extract of E&D policy from Employee Handbook to Directors	AO
E&D procedure to be added to Business Plan	AS