

Healthwatch Telford & Wrekin

Joint Chair's Report – Public Board – Monday 13 April

Introduction

The Board last met for its public meeting on 2nd February and heard from Paul Taylor, Director of Adult Services, and Telford & Wrekin Council on the provisions of the Care Act; prior to the Board we had met our Commissioners from the Council with Parkwood Healthcare for our quarterly Monitoring & Novation meeting on the 26 January. At the meeting, in addition to our usual KPI report we presented a Volunteer Development Strategy, a way forward on signposting, our January trends analysis, an Enter & View status report, details of past & planned community engagement events, a detailed breakdown of representation meetings attended by staff & board members. These include: the Health and Wellbeing Board, Scrutiny, meetings with the Telford CCG Board, with SaTH and on a wide range of other health & care issues. We also provided a detailed report on the work being planned for novation (independence from Parkwood Healthcare) including board membership, company status and solicitors, our new independent bank account, plans for the new (ground floor, larger) office at Meeting Point House, and our plans for HR and payroll. Additional information on our plans for IT and communications together with the data Feedback Centre were lodged with the Council. We also provided a budget for 2015/16 and left the meeting, hopeful that the Council would proceed with the planned novation date of 31st March 2015 with a similar level of funding for our operations & novation costs as received in 2014 – 2015. Although we were aware of press reports of government reductions to Local Authority budgets.

February & March

The last two months have been very frustrating for our staff and the board. Great efforts have been made to ascertain the Council's budget position for our work in 2015-2016, Parkwood Healthcare have reminded the Council of the Contract position that exists between them. The Board has worked closely with Parkwood and also written to the Council to seek an urgent meeting to discuss options. At a later stage we heard that the commissioners were looking at a "savings plan". We have also made representations to Cllr Derek White, Chair of Scrutiny, who we know has done his best. At all times the day to day work of Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin has continued and this has again been a busy period despite the funding & novation issues. The board has been meeting almost on a weekly basis for discussion meetings to monitor developments and maintain momentum. We have received some indications of the likely funding position and we hope that at least this is confirmed by the public board.

Martyn Withnall RIP

We are very sad to announce that Martyn Withnall a former leading member of our board died suddenly on the 28 January 2015. Martyn lived in Newport and actively represented local health cases. Martyn had held a senior post with the Post Office and more recently with Telford & Wrekin Council. He ran his own transport consultancy business and was a leading member of Newport Rotary and the Food Bank and Crisis Network. The board and staff attended Martyn's very well attended funeral at Telford Crematorium.

New Board Members

After the sad news above we are pleased to welcome two new board members. Mark Boylan runs the Green Gym, which is part of the Wildlife Trust. He has also worked with Cap Gemini and in local publishing. David Jeffries is a leading member of Rotary and has worked in procurement, sales and marketing in the motor industry, publishing and engineering and has his own benchmarking family. Our new members join Jane, David, Carolyn, Gill, and Barry, so we now have a very strong team and we hope to welcome back Charles Hanon as our Hon. Treasurer shortly.

New Sub-Committees

Given the work needed on novation and to improve the running of Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin, the Board has agreed to operate with four new sub-committees to fully utilise the skills of the board:

Enter and View	This is already a well-established sub-committee, receiving information from the Care Quality Commission, Safeguarding & local intelligence to plan enter & view visits to care homes, hospital wards and other public health facilities and to produce reports & recommendations. Carolyn Henniker chairs this sub-committee.
Finance & Income	This is a very important sub-committee for the future. It will deal with all finance & budget matters as well as audit, insurance, tenders and contracts and income generation and HR finance issues. We hope David Jeffries will agree to chair this sub-committee.
Operations & HR	Also a very important sub-committee as we set up the new HR arrangements for novation. But this committee supports the Chief Officer with the day to day running of HWTW, including the core work programme and projects, and any potential new activities. Gill Stewart chairs this sub-committee.
Youth Sub-Committee	This is a very exciting new initiative to involve young people through engaging with academies and colleges and holding bi-weekly meetings to develop youth champions to become active volunteers and leading on projects and activities relating to young people e.g. CAMHS and mental health. Joint chairs will be Barry Parnaby and a young chair of the network, who will also in future sit on the HWTW board.

ICT, the Feedback Centre, TRAQS & Future Fit

One of the areas of frustration in the last two months has been the delay in proceeding with our providers LHM and Shropshire IT to get our Feedback Centre and new ICT systems up and running. This despite the Board holding competitive interviews to select providers on the 30th January.

This is important as securing independent contracted work and selling data we collect through engagement are important to our new business plan and direction. We have recently secured contract opportunities with the TRAQS service and with Future Fit to engage with protected groups and other hard-to-reach communities.

Quality Reports and Priorities

At this time of the year the hospital and other provider trusts produce Quality Reports, which set out progress on past priorities and ideas for the coming years priorities. One of the HWTW chairs attended a meeting with SaTH and the Community Health Trust, Healthwatch Shropshire, and the Powys Community Health Council to discuss their suggested priorities for the future. SaTH had attempted to involve all the provider trusts but only the Community Health Trust has responded. Issues discussed included: end of life, dementia care, safe and effective staffing, patient relatives and carers, mental health and learning difficulties, sepsis, acute kidney dialysis, the Sign up to Safety (national priority), Noise & Lights at Night, and the discharge pathway. Other issues were cancelled operations, admission avoidance, prisoner health, appointment pathways, and mealtime issues.

We await further information on the finalised priorities from SaTH and the Community Health Trust and other providers.

CCG Roundtable Priorities

HWTW recently met with the CCG Roundtable and Dr Mike Innes, Chair of the CCG, to discuss closer working and joint priorities. Those of the Roundtable are largely shared with Healthwatch and include Better Care and Future Fit, accident & emergency attendance, influencing the CCG, development of GP Patient Participation Groups, missed GP appointments, bed blocking & hospital discharge, teenage pregnancy, and mental health.

External activities

Jane has attended two conferences; one with the Local Government Association regarding relationships between Healthwatch and funding provider local authorities, networking with other Healthwatch organisations using different approaches to funding was useful, as was the information on local authority viewpoints regarding the roles and responsibilities of Healthwatch across England.

Also attended was the NHS Citizen conference in Leeds where there was an opportunity to put views forward to NHS England board members and staff, as well as other patient groups and organisations including NHS Citizen, to look at a range of issues relevant to the future systems and funding within the NHS in England. A separate report is available from HWTW office.