

## Board meeting – 15 July 2024

### Summary minutes

---

**Date:** The Healthwatch Dorset local Board met on Monday 15 July at 10am, in Dorchester.

**Board members present:** Viv Aird (Chair), Margaret Guy (Vice Chair), Judy Crabb, Karen Sherman and Sue Warr.

**In attendance:** Louise Bate, Healthwatch Dorset Manager and Jon Turner, Healthwatch England.

**Apologies:** Amanda Brown.

**1. Declaration of interests:** There were no declarations of interest and no comments on previous meeting notes (May 2024 – agreed).

#### **2. Our area and population/Delivering Healthwatch:**

- The number 1 issue local people spoke to us about last year is dentistry, closely followed by GP/primary care services, a smaller proportion of people talk to us about hospitals, mental health, children's services, social care, care homes, pharmacies etc.
- Last year approx. 2000 people contacted us for advice and information or to tell us about their experience.
- BCP is home to just over 400,000 people, the population has grown by 5.6% (21,306 people) in the last 10 years. Around 87,000 residents are aged 65 or over. Around 70,000 people identify as a minority ethnic group, an increase of 60% since 2011.
- Dorset is home to just over 379,000 people, Dorset has a high proportion of residents who are aged over 65 years. Around 112,300 residents are

aged 65 and over. This is a growth of 25% since 2011. 6.1%, around 23,000 people, identify as a minority ethnic group.

- Evolving Communities hold the HWD contract for the next 5 years.
- New contract arrangements are similar to previous contract, we report on impact, case studies, engagement, volunteers and the local board.
- Annual report recently published.

### **3. Healthwatch England Priorities and general direction of the network:**

- The system is more flexible now in seeing how HW can contribute to public health services, rather than only listening to people's experiences.
- Jon spoke about the direction of the network and HWE priorities, sustainability and proposal for HWE to commission the service
- Would HWE get more funding to invest into local HW's?
- Local HW's know their service area well, how could this be impacted if HWE commissioned?
  - What a reasonable ask is from a service with current funding levels that works across health & social care.
  - Importance of prioritising activities, not forgetting social care.
  - Seldom heard groups and HW's role in reducing health inequalities.
  - Influencing at ICS level.
  - Focus on outcomes and impact rather than activity and outputs
  - Collaboration – across the network and locally with partners. HW as a focal point that facilitates bringing others together.
  - Boards and volunteers that reflect and represent the local population.
  - Embedding a culture of listening within healthcare system.
- HW not just reposting that they spoke to a wide range of people, but focusing on whether people have a different set of experiences

### **4. Visioning Exercise:**

- Youth Voices, important that we are listening to young people, which can help improve health outcomes.

- We have had strong news stories about specific services, including NHS Dentistry, and the impact on children and young people.
- Would need to be specific and measurable.
- Is there anything we can do to improve self-help? E.g. young people, older people and carers. Looking at outcomes, rather than outputs.
- 'growing up healthy and aging well.' E.g looking at younger and older people.
- HW is the champion for the people, so it's important for people to feel that they are given a voice and have been heard.
- Also looking at access to services e.g. parking at hospital, transport, digital navigation issues, inequalities and social mobility

## **5. SLOT analysis:**

- **Strengths:**

- Renewed contract, being able to build on existing relationships
- Experienced board members from different backgrounds and geographical communities
- Good reputation
- Covered difficult themes and topics and got results
- Strong volunteers base tackling difficult topics
- Good proportion of young volunteers
- Good relationship between staff & board members
- Highly competent staff team
- Everyone involved in HWD has a positive attitude towards making change.

- **Limitations:**

- Don't fully reflect the demographics of our area
- Small Size of team and capacity compared to the past.
- Maintaining volunteers
- Limited by how much feedback we get from the public
- Our social media activity and what it achieves.

- Our lack of resources for promoting ourselves to the public
- Budget available for projects.
- We don't have senior system 'champions' that quite work for us.
- **Opportunities:**
  - Primary care could be more bought-into what we do
  - Political change locally – new relationships and new interests
  - New model of working within Dorset Healthcare
  - Breaking barriers between acute and community
  - Budget for adult services may be open for new initiatives
  - Focus on integrated neighbourhood teams
  - Change to family hubs
- **Threats:**
  - Amount of high-profile fundamental issues with healthcare.
  - We don't know how HWE approach to taking on commissioning will turn out. Would it make us less relevant to local authorities?
  - Risk that a new national government might not be as interested
  - Crowded space around public involvement and VCS sector
  - Lack of understanding about statutory role of HW
  - Restructure of two public health teams

## **6. A Culture of listening:**

- People want to know how their experience and feedback will bring about change.
- If we didn't choose their personal priority, how the priorities that are chosen make sense.
- Looking at finding at least one a priority that is more universal than specific, that will impact many.
- People and their negatives turned into a positive
- Are there partnerships we can put into place to cover different areas?
- Embedding the culture of listening in our local area.

## **7. Confirm next steps:**

- Draw up a list of people we want to engage with in developing our strategic plan.
- Louise, Margaret and Viv to meet additionally.
- Another session with Jon to help with next stage of drafting
- Think about where we want to target recruiting volunteers (new volunteer officer coming in soon)
- More face-to-face meetings

Viv Aird, Chair of the Board, thanked everyone for their time today and the group agreed the date for the next board meeting, Monday 16 September 2024, as an in person meeting.

---

### **For further information:**

Phone: 0300 111 0102 (freephone)

Email: [enquiries@healthwatchdorset.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchdorset.co.uk)

Write to: Healthwatch Dorset, The Bridge, Chaseside, BOURNEMOUTH BH7 7BX.

Web: [www.healthwatchdorset.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchdorset.co.uk)