# Minutes of a Meeting held on 7th July 2020
# by the Board of Healthwatch (UK) Wiltshire
# via Microsoft Teams Meetings

Present:  Rob Jefferson (RJ) (Chair); Julie Brown (JB); Irene Kohler (IK);  Hazel Dunnett (HD); Emma Leatherbarrow (EL); Joanna Wittles (JW); Andy Mintram (AM)

Apologies:  Richard Austin (RA);

Minutes:  Karon Van Den Bergh (KV)

**BSW Strategy**

This meeting would focus on the Digital Strategy for BANES, Swindon and Wiltshire (BSW) Sustainability and Transformation Partnership and all present were referred to the paperwork which had been circulated with the Agenda.

BSW intended to go forward with the digital strategy, using it for the benefit of the customers and not merely a cost cutting exercise.  The Board agreed to focus on proposals for 2020 and 2021.

**Priorities/Areas where it might impact:**

- Integrated Care Records
- Online appointment booking and consultations
- Shared diagnostic Information
- Transforming Out-Patients
- Pharmacy systems

**Issues identified:**

- Emergency calls taken by medical staff who did not have access to patient's notes.
- GPs with no access to video calling
- Differing IT training and options from service providers, depending on what technical backup they had access to
- The push for online consultations would not suit all of the Community
- Auto-messaging on the GP websites could be misleading

Covid-19 had highlighted the importance of the future implementation of digital strategy and although this could transform out-patient hospital appointments, saving a great deal of time, it was important to consider those that were unable to access this service.  The way forward for older people, those with learning disabilities, mental health issues and autism must be considered.  Those with serious mental health problems tend to be the poorest in society and they often have difficulty engaging with technology.

It was also important to consider secondary care.  Digital systems would be put in place to enhance the overall experience, but focus must also be placed on how all other patients, who cannot use digital, are supported to access health and social care services.

Forthcoming issues will include access to both hardware and software. Also, it must be remembered that some members of the Community do not want to access technology and it was important to support those people, providing alternative options and ensuring that there is a pathway through the system to suit their needs. The focus should be that each member of the community gets the right appointment for them, whether digital or face-to-face. Digital is good as long as the access for every service user is improved.

Connectivity could also prove a problem, some areas had failing internet and mobile service, making it impossible to hold a digital consultation.

It would be important to get feedback from all user groups including the elderly, those with English as a second language, boat people and those with learning disabilities, autism and mental health problems.

Virtual appointments have been deemed, through the period of pandemic to be a great success. Patients would not have been able to have consultations with GPs without remote appointments. The role of Healthwatch is to get feedback on all areas and to inform. Access should be improved and built on positive experiences. It should be a case of "access by default", proportionate to the level of need.

There was a need to highlight people who have been disadvantaged by the digital by default strapline, "The doctor will Zoom you Now". Comments should be sought as to how that has affected people individually. Healthwatch Wiltshire would be looking to be involved in all research going forward.

Healthwatch would be active, making approaches to BSW to represent Wiltshire and be included in feedback systems as well as online information. It was important to be included in the discussion from the outset.

This current situation is unprecedented and the response to it and the job Healthwatch does is extremely important but we need to be mindful that everyone is working under pressure and the future is uncertain. It is important to challenge, apply pressure and give robust feedback but to remember that everyone is working in difficult circumstances. All feedback we give is subject to change and it is important to keep this in mind. We have a role to play but that role might change in the course of the next 6-12 months.

Should priorities be modified, added to or reduced? Prior to Covid our priorities were access to primary care, autism and mental health. This does not require amendment but the actual piece of work we will complete will be different. It was also important to consider how our work impacts on the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Community (BAME). Consideration of the thoughts of those groups that are at higher risk of Covid must be sought. An Agenda Item would be added to the next Meeting - Anti Racism and the BAME Community to give time to consider this area.

All present would spend some time considering Paper 2, ICS Development Programme and Paper 4, BSW Approach to Reset, return any comments to KV to be considered further by RJ/JB.

**Approval of Minutes**

It was agreed that the Minutes of the Meeting dated 2nd June 2020 were considered a true and accurate record and could be published on the Healthwatch Wiltshire website for public information.

**Action Tracker Update – Points of Discussion**
  **(to be read in conjunction with corresponding numbers on Action Tracker Doc)**

2.  Chairs and Managers to meet on 4th August 2020.

3.  JB to return to next Board Meeting with a revised workplan.

5C.   Information to be taken from Annual Report
Four volunteers were currently working on an interest video, with a voice-over and some slides for people who were interested in volunteering.

7.   It was important to encourage people to call the advice Hub.  A web form was to be introduced, for staff and volunteers in the first instance.

9.  Simon Jacobs has taken over responsibility from Laura Mayes as Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Public Protection.

10.    JW met with Joanna Woodsford in early June to discuss her work involving children and young people. The current focus is on how the virus is affecting young people and how they are able to deal with mental health issues in the current climate. A project is being developed which will look into how young people are accessing care and information about a wide variety of mental health issues from Wiltshire based services.  JW has attended weekly meetings with Jo.W, a volunteer and their daughter, a young Healthwatch volunteer, and the project is taking shape.  A number of scenarios have been developed along with ideas to enable the project to reach as many young people as possible and young volunteers are being sought to carry out a mystery shopping exercise.  It is hoped that this work will be completed over the summer period and an App is being considered to seek the views of as many young people as possible.

**Healthwatch Update**
JB:  Volunteers have started to be involved in some of the virtual meetings.
Covid had taken priority on recent projects, four reports had been completed, each one having had one or two commissioners returning with comments.
Proposal shared with the Young People Commissioner who was supportive of the work completed.

IK:  Questioned key issues, asking if pharmacy services had arisen as a particular problem.  JB: Stressed that although some comments had been positive, a couple of common medications had been hard to get, for example, HRT patches and asthma drugs.   There had been a general slowness around ordering.   The Prescription Ordering Direct (POD) had been hard to reach, inconsistent and there had been long queues as pharmacies.   The positive comments were focused on excellent volunteers and delivery services.

AM:  Asked JB if she could identify which pharmacies had proved particularly difficult to access as it would be interesting to understand if these were specific chains or individual businesses.  JB:  Would look at the data and return to him with this information.

**Current and Emerging Themes**

None

**AOB**

None

**Date of Next Meetings 11<sup>th</sup> August at 2.00pm**
                           **15<sup>th</sup> September at 2.00pm**