

## **Sensory Impairment Partnership Board Notes**

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2023, 11:00am–1:00pm, online via Zoom.

- Pre-meeting for Independent Members from 10am.

### **Useful Acronyms**

ASCF – Adult Social Care Forum

ICS – Integrated Care System

RNIB – Royal National Institute of Blind People

### **What we talked about**

- 1) Welcome, Introduction and Apologies
- 2) Notes for 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023 recapped and Action Log Updates
- 3) Feedback from Independent Members:
  - ✓ Podiatry NHS Care
  - ✓ Ear Wax Removal
- 4) GP Appointment Access – Primary Care Network, Joanne Fallon
- 5) Feedback from other meetings:
  - ✓ Adult Social Care Forum,
  - ✓ Healthwatch Health & Care Forums,
  - ✓ Personalised Care for Health, Working Group.
- 6) Update from Commissioner – Madeline Hill
- 7) Sensory Service Update – Helena Melbourne
- 6) Reviewing Priorities for 2023 to 2024
- 6) Any Other Business:
  - ✓ Healthwatch Summit postponed until Autumn 2023.

- ✓ Silent Buses
- ✓ 'Have A Go Day' – Sports Day
- ✓ Deaf Blind UK
- ✓ End of Life Workshop

## **1) Welcome, Introductions, Apologies – Mick Scadden (Chair)**

Mick Scadden Chairing and Caroline Tyrell-Jones for Healthwatch welcomed all to the meeting, introductions and apologies given. Graham Lewis thanked CTJ for attending, explaining that due to health reasons was joining the meeting from home. Rebecca Spalding-Green requested permission to record the meeting via Zoom/ on a dictaphone for the purpose of the minutes.

## **2) Notes for 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023 recapped and Action Log**

### **Updates – Graham Lewis**

- **121)** Following E-Scooter and Street Charter discussions from independent members on the lack of public understanding about where you can/ can't cycle or use E-Scooters and why. GL has arranged a meeting with Cam Cycle to talk about working collaboratively. Local elections out of the way, so looking for council contacts to get the Street Charter going.

### **Comments, Questions and Answers**

BR mentioned RNIB have produced a document called 'Key principles of Accessible Street Design' that has been signed off by loads of other disability and related organisations. The next

part is coaching councils in adopting these principles. **Action: GL and BR to discuss further and link work up.**

- **128)** Sharing info about East Cambs Access Group through the other Partnership Boards to encourage new members.
- **129)** GP surgery accessibility feedback given to ICS after last meeting. Joanne Fallon attending today to discuss further.
- **130)** Circulated Social Care Support contributions and financial assessments info.

### **3) Feedback from Independent Members**

#### **Podiatry NHS Care**

Visually impaired and blind patients are unable to get basic podiatry care from the NHS, despite being offered the service in the past. MS reported after years of using the service he was recently told no longer eligible as he does not meet the criteria, and refused treatment. MSs circumstances have not changed.

GL confirmed basic podiatry (ie regularly cutting toenails) is not part of the criteria for the NHS and Healthwatch have been advised patients should discuss with their Practice Manager to get a referral for the exceptions rule.

The board asked why visually impaired and blind patients' podiatry needs dismissed as exceptions to the rule? **Action: JF to investigate what is the criteria for podiatry services and diabetes criteria for podiatry. And ask what is in place for patients with sensory impairments?**

Through many discussions with surgeries HM has found patients with type 1 diabetes are allowed access podiatry services but patients with type 2 diabetes or anyone else are not eligible for this service.

VS highlighted the costs to patients not receiving podiatry services (especially significant considering many people with sensory impairments receive benefits), ie instead of district nurse popping by for free, having to pay for a service and the travel to and fro. Leading patients to financially prioritise which health aspects they choose to focus on. Supporting this, JC has no feeling in legs and pays £60 every 3-4 weeks pays for her feet to be massaged and toe nails to be cut.

VS added she has type 1 diabetes and has been refused podiatry services but will revisit the surgery and share her progress. **Action: Review VS podiatry NHS experience.**

## **Ear Wax Removal**

AW mentioned many people tell Deaf Blind UK they are unable to access ear wax removal services in GP surgeries. PMC explained there is no official recognised safe procedure for doctors to follow in removing ear wax and that is why it is no longer a service offered by NHS. Patients instead having to use private services, which many patients struggle to afford.

## **4) GP Appointment Access – Primary Care Network, Joanne Fallon**

Joanne Fallon was unable to attend the last meeting, so instead the board discussed concerns around GP accessibility and GL emailed those on.

- In today's pre-meeting it was discussed how signing in screens placed surgery receptions are not viable for visually impaired patients, alongside muted tv screens used to advise patients when to go through to the doctor. Whilst audio only announcements ie with no visuals exclude people with hearing impairments.
- There is a presumption that visually impaired or blind people, only go out with carers and equipment that helps them access any information, causing laziness in procedures by not providing information in accessible formats.
- Many reports of problems booking lobotomy appointments at doctors, with patients being forced to take themselves to Hospitals to get the procedure done.

## **Booking Appointments**

Access to healthcare and appointments is a national problem, practices are under pressure, haven't got enough appointments and this does have a negative impact on patients access and experience.

## **Digital Exclusion**

JF recognised appointments perspectives practices need respect that not everyone are able to use surgeries digital tools. And practices are expected to ensure all patients can access the

surgery and appointments in alternative ways. Part of encouraging more people to access services online is to reduce the 8.30am mad charge on the phonedlines/ to reception face to face so that those who need to phone can get that priority through a quicker service.

### **Waiting Room Equipment**

Regarding audio announcements and signing in screens, surgeries should be talking to you about this, taking notes to make the surgery accessible to you. And if this is not happening, feedback as discussed below.

### **Telephone Service**

Regarding telephone access the NHS recovery plan, only just published, has laid out a new plan that will be rolled out to improve access. Still have to recognise part of the problem are staff shortages especially in telephony and reception triaging.

### **Awareness Sessions**

Regarding the DeafBlind UK who have been trying to get practices to sign up for awareness sessions, do hold regular webinars with practices so could arrange for training in one of these sessions. **Action: GL to send email introductions between JF and Andrew Barnes, DeafBlind UK.**

### **Complaints**

JF mentioned that for individual surgery complaints with doctors surgery, best method is to speak to the practice manager first. Or

if not satisfied with response from them can contact ICB patient experience team, who will investigate and work with the practice to resolve issues.

Action: JF unsure about why patients reporting issues with phlebotomy appointment access, will investigate and report back.

### **Comments, Questions and Answers**

RNIB have launched 'My Info My Way Campaign' in preparation for the relaunch of the accessible health information standard. Lots on website from professionals and patients who are struggling to get communications met in health and social care settings. Including a survey for people to document experiences of what has worked, doesn't work and a report that found that over 70% of people who are blind or partially sighted are not able to access their health information in a format they can understand and read. Action: GL to arrange introductions, between Bernie Reddington (RNIB) to share resources around implementing the new access health information standard with JF (ICB) and Madeline Hill and Commissioners.

Past Healthwatch work identified an issue with notes added to patient records at doctor surgeries regarding disabilities were not transferring to hospital patient notes. GL added other Partnership Boards reported this is still an issue, for carers and people with learning disabilities, where that information is not

being passed on. MS asked what was the current situation?

Action: JF will investigate and feedback.

## **5) Feedback from other meetings – Graham Lewis**

### **Adult Social Care Forum (ASCF) – Graham Lewis**

- Discussed the various Partnership Board 2023 priorities. Highlighting the different task & finish groups and continued focus on communications.
- Discussed highlights from all the Partnership Boards, to assist in raising awareness of.
- Working on letters on patients health making them more accessible and looking at how to ensure people receive information in the format required. Next focus to be websites.
- The Council's Recognition Policy has been drafted, focused on how to appropriately recompense people for volunteering their time and efforts.

### **Personalised Care for Health Working Group**

- GL circulated an e-mail from Personalised Care for Health organising a task and finish group. Let GL know if interested and will pass details on.

### **Health & Care Forums Updates – Graham Lewis**

- Public place based meetings, every 2months, bringing together service users and service providers – like the hospital trusts, care teams and the ambulance service.



Discussing different topics, wanting to hear local people views about how things are working. With a regular agenda item discussing patient experience and services through the Patient Participant Group (PPG) voice. Healthwatch actively encourages people to join their doctors surgery PPGs, to attend these forums, network and share feedback/ ideas.

- If you would like to join regular mailing lists for any of the Health and Care Forums, let us know.
- **Both Huntingdonshire and Cambridge & South Cambs Health and Care Forums** - had interesting presentations Cambridge Cancer Research Hospital NHS Trust gave an update on their plans and Herts Urgent Care (HUC) about NHS 111 and.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

- **Peterborough Health and Care Forum** - Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2023, 10-12. Foyle Room, The Fleet Community Centre (ICA), Fletton, Peterborough, PE2 8DL. Presentations from Tracey Dickerson from Disability Peterborough and Hayley Stock to give a brief overview of the NHS Reservists.
- **Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Health and Care Forum** - Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2023, 10-12, Cherry Trees Club, St Matthew Street, Cambridge. Agenda tbc.
- **Fenland and East Cambridgeshire Health and Care Forum** - Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2023, 10-12. In person meeting at the Queen Mary Centre, Wisbech, PE13 2PE. Agenda tbc.

## **7) Update from Commissioner – Madeline Hill**

- Madeline Hill explained as this the first Sensory Impairment Board she had attended, she was here to listen to the boards feedback and offer general updates. Adding for future meetings she was happy to tweak and adjust the updates according to what the board would prefer to learn about.
- ‘Individual Service Funds’ now live in East Cambs and Peterborough, for those who have agreements with providers in place any practitioners can refer people who would like more choice and control but who are not comfortable with a direct payment or employing PAs.
- Survey released for professionals and service users, asking thoughts on a new place based approach and proposed changes to how home care is commissioned and structured.
- ‘Care Together’ rolling out, GL confirmed in chats to arrange attendance and discussion of at future meeting.
- Have taken note of the podiatry and ear wax removal service need and will take to the care together micro enterprise approach.

## **8) Sensory Service Update – Helena Melbourne**

- Rebecca Marr replaces Charlotte Salf as Sensory Service Manager. RM already manages Occupational Therapy Team so exciting news.
- Difficult year so far, relying on 3 members of staff but good news is that staff on long term sick leave are doing phased returns.

- Waiting lists grew during this time, currently waiting list is 75 people. New people now waiting 16/17 weeks, unless extremely urgent. HM apologized for these delays but do continue to triage to other organisations such as RNIB, Cam Sight, Deaf Blind UK etc during this waiting time, so that actions are being completed.
- Helena Melbourne announced she was 'hanging up her boots' and leaving the service July 2023. The board thanked HM from all the people who had benefited from her person centered approach and all the hard work she has put in.

### **9) Reviewing Priorities for 2023 – 2024 - Graham Lewis**

Reviewing the progress of the 3 areas to raise awareness on and get some actions for:

- ✓ The use of modern technology that maybe detrimental to the visually impaired. Have a developed a positive relationship with Voy, with feedback being welcomed and used. Also worked with police on social media notifications about the illegal use of E-Scooters. Whilst Starship Robots gave a presentation, regarding the pilots in Cambridge and Cambourne. Attending this board specifically to listen to people with sensory impairments, experiences and concerns to better improve the service.
- ✓ GP appointment accessibility – JF from ICB attending, listening, feeding back and investigating points raised.
- ✓ And Street Charter discussion and development in the area.

### **10) Any Other Business**

## **Silent Buses**

MS mentioned that silent electric buses have been brought into service in Cambridge this week and was concerned for people with sensory impairments. BR suggested that RNIB and board members do a reccy to see what they are like. **Action: GL to investigate this, as part funded by combined authority.**

## **'Have A Go Day' – Sports Day**

British Blind Sport are organizing a 'Have a go day' for Cambridge and will either be 15<sup>th</sup> or 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2023, more details online.

[BBS Have a Go Days - British Blind Sport](#) Involves many organisations and sports.

## **Deaf Blind UK**

Have received 3 years worth of funding to deliver a project around making existing social groups deaf blind friendly and accessible. Asking any existing social group that would like to become deaf blind friendly, or if you know of someone who potentially cant access a group, to get in contact. Aiming to increase the array of opportunities for people living with these impairments. Looking to set up a website to pull all this information together, where people can access whats in their area. **Action: GL asked AW to send information over and can share with other Partnership Boards.**

## **End of Life Workshop**

VS mentioned that because of her experience as someone with sight loss and losing her partner, she is keen to help others as there is a lack of help available and with the huge amount of

paperwork to deal with. CTJ mentioned the Healthwatch Summit will have a workshop focused on end of life, and would be really good for VS to get involved with.

VS recommended people revisit courses that are available after a positive experience in attending an RNIB sight loss course, finding it very useful.

VS mentioned her experience of trying to open up a new bank account in the branch. Finding that most banks and accounts are now set up online only feels this excludes so many people. And the only account could access in branch, receives considerably lower interest rates than online accounts which cant access.

## **Annual Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Summit – Postponed**

The decision has been made to cancel the Healthwatch Summit on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2023 and postpone until October, with details tbc. This is due to the booked venue in Ely no longer being able to meet our needs. An access lift to the upper floor needing to be replaced and unfortunately, the work involved cannot be carried out in time.

## **Meeting Type Preference**

Board discussed whether to do face to face meetings as well as hybrid. Will continue with hybrid meetings from Maple Centre, and all are invited to attend in person, whilst the meeting will remain hybrid to support people who need to access it that way.

**Date of next meeting**

**Date:** Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

**Time:** 11am to 1pm,

10am onwards Independent Members Pre-meeting.

**Venue:** Online Via Zoom.