

Sensory Impairment Partnership Board Notes

Thursday 22nd August 2024, 11am-1pm. (pre meeting 10am onwards).

Hybrid Meeting (Zoom) held at Maple Centre, 6 Oak Drive, Huntingdon, PE29 7LB.

Useful Acronyms

CCC - Cambridgeshire County Council

PCC - Peterborough City Council

RNIB - Royal National Institute of Blind People

CDA - Cambridge Deaf Association

SIPB - Sensory Impairment Partnership Board

1) Welcome, Introductions, Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, introductions and apologies were noted. Healthwatch requested permission to record the meeting for note taking only.

2) Minutes of the last meeting and Action Log Updates – Graham Lewis

- Notes from May 2024 were recapped and agreed.
- Action Log Highlights and Updates.

121) Setting up a Street Charter – RNIB have been encouraging CCC and PCC to include key principles

134) Accessible Information Standards – RNIB are speaking with Integrated Care Board, who are looking at embedding the Standards in their governance.

139) This is ongoing, with RNIB setting up a forum and simulation event to raise awareness and try to tackle the problems. Stagecoach is attending the next VI forum where these issues will be raised also.

141) Members reported that taxi drivers are still not providing the service blind and visually impaired people are entitled to. **GL will raise this again with the Taxi Licensing Authorities.**

142) Sensory Services at Peterborough City Council have a sense that they are not receiving 'certificate of visual impairment' from Peterborough City Hospital. Carol Farrar and Warren Wilson to liaise and interact with the ECLO funded by RNIB. PCC Sensory Services get fewer CVI's than compared to other areas of the country. WW and CF will discuss outside of the meeting. Action was then closed.

3) Independent Member Feedback

Accessibility and Funding for Medical Appointments

- Concerns were raised about sufficient funding for services as people have been having difficulties getting appointments for blood tests at their local GP surgeries. There has been an increased use of a mobile unit at Park and Ride in Cambridge, Doddington Hospital and other remote facilities with poor public travel links.
- An independent Member has been refused blood tests at her GP surgery and sent to appointments in places they are unable to get to. This has meant they have not had the care they need. A District Nurse has explained to the member that they can only attend patients in their own home if they are completely housebound with no access to transport.
- Concerns were raised about inequality in accessing healthcare, not only for those with sensory impairments but also for people with other disabilities or financial constraints. CTJ agreed that Healthwatch would log these concerns.

4) Sensory Service Updates

Cambridgeshire County Council Sensory Services Team

- Rebecca Marr updated that the vision rehabilitation team will be fully staffed from October once Nicola Poole joins as Senior Specialist.
- Changes to Mosaic, the case recording system are nearly finished, and will help with intelligence gathering, analysis and feedback of data.
- Triage assessments continue to be extremely robust and look at all aspects of life affected by sight loss. They are carried out face to face where needed and the needs of the individual are taken into consideration.
- Signposting and referrals continue to take place to a wide range of organisations.
- Rehabilitation referrals have a waiting time of 2-3 months. The service is goal focused rather than time limited.
- Sensory awareness training for staff has been taking place and our Care Smart flat in a sheltered accommodation complex in Godmanchester is now also equipped with sensory aids for display and demonstration. This includes different technologies as well as equipment.
- World Sight Day is on the 10th October and we have big plans including raising awareness of eye health and staff workshops to raise understanding of the impact of sight loss and how to guide someone with sight loss.
- We have a new service leaflet being developed and tested by people with sight loss.
- We are developing a practice guidance factsheet on working with people who are deaf/blind for all adult social care staff to ensure they are meeting the statutory duties. Also being developed are communication kits for staff who carry out

assessments for people with sensory loss so that they will be able to communicate in a way to meet these needs of each person.

- Webinars are taking place working with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Domestic Abuse Partnership to raise professional awareness of supporting victims of domestic abuse who have a visual impairment.
- Working with County Council Highways on the redevelopment of St Ives town centre to put forward the needs of people with sight loss and feel this has been taken on board.
- A project looking at the social wellbeing of all people with social care needs has included working with researchers at Hertfordshire University. Sensory loss needs have been raised and a lot of focus has been on digital technologies. Also being explored is whether Navilens can be used on the communications at CCC.

Q. Can the Care Smart flat be used by the public also? RM will find out if this is possible.

Peterborough City Council Sensory Services Team

- Carol Farrer delivered the update and explained that they have recognised some difficulties for Peterborough bus drivers where English isn't their first language, and they struggle to understand requests from some passengers who have visual impairments.
- Ronak Gosai has been carrying out mobility assessments and guide training to volunteers of a local sight group.
- Current waiting time for a visual impairment assessment is around two months after triage for risk and need has been done.
- PCC currently has a recruitment freeze which has affected our ability to fill the post in the hearing impairment assessment team. CF to talk with the Cambridge Deaf Association meeting representative to see if there is a way to work together to help those most in need.
- However, there will be new full time sensory support worker joining next month in VI team.
- PCC also have a Smart Flat in operation and in use for people with sensory impairments. CF to provide RNIB with the details and contact information.

5) Cambridge University Hospitals (CUH) Outpatient Strategy Patient Involvement – Matthew Zunder and Jade Hunt

Context and objectives

- At CUH we are looking at making big changes to the way we run out outpatients services
- Outpatient attendances at CUH have increased significantly over the last decade – with a 25% increase in annual appointments. Waiting lists have been growing, even more so since Covid, and patients are often waiting too long for care

- The model for outpatients hasn't fundamentally changed in the last fifty years
- Many patients must travel far and wait months to attend appointments that only take minutes, and where they may have to come in again soon after for further tests
- We want to make the process more personal, efficient and patient-centred, improving the experience of both clinicians and patients

A presentation was given, and feedback invited. Discussions touched on:

- Whether services can be improved if they are more local to patients. Are public transport links being fully factored into the chosen locations. One stop clinic's sound great but can they be properly resourced?
- If there could be a patient management system that gives updates about waiting times for appointments and how to monitor and manage your condition while you wait.
- If the use of Artificial Intelligence and technologies such as the MyChart App, virtual appointments and uploading results by doing tests like blood pressure readings at home would work for people who have visual impairments. Would the appropriate equipment be provided. Does digital exclusion exist more for older people with sight impairments than younger people.
- Touch screens in clinics are not accessible to people who have sight loss, an audio alternative is needed. The need for receptionists still exists.
- The topic of improving services by researching what innovations are working well in other parts of the country and being more efficient.
- Accessibility needs are often overlooked and are lacking in many places including within clinics. This includes training and demonstrations for staff to better understand the needs of people with sensory loss.
- How the Accessible Information Standard would be embedded in the strategy. Information, letters and prescriptions are not always given out in an accessible format to patients with sight loss which results in missed appointments, medication dosage problems and difficulties following self-care advice.

Matthew shared his email details so that people could follow up if they wished and thanked everyone for their contribution. He will take back the comments raised about the service received to the Patient Experience Team at CUH.

6) Commissioning Updates

Micheil Wilson – Peterborough City Council

- We will be extending our contracts with Cambridge Deaf Association (CDA) and Camsight for two more years from April 2025.
- Improvements are being made to the accessibility of carer support which will include the use of the Bridgit App from October.

- Care in the Community contract including Care at Home is in the tendering process. We would like feedback on care needs and would like to hear your voice. We will send out links and details through GL.

Q. Voluntary organisations like CDA are helping to deliver NHS services but are underfunded. Is this recognised by those who in charge of the finances?

A. It is and the situation is a difficult one to balance due to budget constraints.

Q. Investment is needed to provide Sensory Rehabilitation Services as they are not protected as statutory services. RNIB are lobbying ministers to gain this recognition though the Out of Sight Campaign and would welcome any support.

A. MW and BR to have a follow up discussion. BR to send campaign details to GL who will share.

Karen Berkley – Cambridgeshire County Council

- Karen has taken over from Jessica Weeds and is working to get up to date on the contracts and exploring the information sharing routes through Integrated Neighbourhood teams.
- KB and BR to meet and discuss ways of working together.

7) Any Other Business

- RNIB talked about the redevelopment at Peterborough Railway Station and have been pushing the needs of those with sight impairments. A consultation meeting will take place on the 12th September at Sand Martin House and other meetings may take place. BR to send GL information to share. If interested in taking part, contact BR at RNIB.
- A discussion covered needs of sight impaired including location of taxi ranks, distinctions between roads and pavements and provision of services like cafes and seating. Can assistance marshals be used?
- RNIB – Peterborough VI forum will take place on 5th September at Northminster House.
- The Cambridge VI forum will take place on 8th October at Freemasons Hall in Bateman Street. Guides will be available from Cambridge Train Station.
- Next February in Oundle the Fen Tigers will be competing in the Goalball European Tournament. Free to all and there will be a shuttle bus from Peterborough train station.
- GL shared information about the current county wide Healthwatch Eye Care Survey and Enter and View programme. We have shared the survey but MK to share again.
- GL shared information about a survey on Life Transitions that is happening in South Cambridgeshire. MK to share the details.

- GL shared information about the Combined Authorities consultation for Independent Members about buses that takes place on the 17 September at the Maple Centre, Huntingdon.
- GL reminded all that the Healthwatch Cross Board Summit on Tackling Health Inequalities takes place on the 2nd October 2024. We would like to hear from as many Independent Members as possible.

Date of next meeting

Date: Thursday 21st November 2024.

Time: 11am to 1pm

Venue: Northminster House, Peterborough, PE1 1YN – In Person Only