

Sensory Impairment Partnership Board Notes

Thursday 21st November 2024, 11am-1pm.

RNIB, Northminster House, Northminster, Peterborough, PE1 1YN

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.

- Present:
 - Independent Members from Cambridgeshire x 3
 - Independent Member from Peterborough x 1
 - VCSE sector representative x 2
 - Peterborough City Council Commissioning x 0
 - Peterborough City Council Service delivery x 0
 - Cambridgeshire County Council service delivery x 1
 - Cambridgeshire County Council Commissioning x 0
 - Speakers x 1
- Apologies were received

2) Healthwatch Strategy Consultation – Jess Slater CEO Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

- Jess introduced the strategy development and explained that this was one of a number of stakeholder discussions that will help shape Healthwatch's strategy for the next five years.
- Discussions centred around questions that included:
 - What do you understand about Healthwatch and its role?
 - How can Healthwatch make a difference for you and help address your needs?
 - How can we ensure your voice is heard?
 - What are your priorities for Healthwatch and how would you like to get involved?
- Jess also asked about what people wanted from the Health and Care Forum's and Partnership Boards.

- The stakeholder sessions are taking place until the end of January 2025. The Strategy will be drafted during February, approved in March and will run from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2030.

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

- Notes from the previous meeting were recapped and agreed.
- Action Log Highlights and Updates.

121) Setting up a Street Charter – It was asked if the SIPB still had the right approach to finding a way forward. Street Charters are organized by district councils, which aim to manage street furniture like cafe seating, advertising boards, etc. However, the councils are struggling to get adequate engagement.

- There was debate about the challenges posed by cyclists, e-scooters, and other vehicles in pedestrian areas. Some felt the focus should be on the truly dangerous issues like fast-moving e-scooters, rather than trying to clear all obstacles.
- Suggestions were made to use more visual cues like flower displays to help guide pedestrians, rather than just trying to ban all obstacles. The inconsistent layout and rules in different areas was also noted as a problem.
- There was frustration expressed about councils not properly consulting disability groups when making changes to the built environment. Examples were given of changes that were made without adequate input.
- Ongoing issues were discussed, like problems with audio-visual announcements on buses not working consistently, and the need to keep pushing for the accessible information standard to be implemented.

ACTION (121) – Graham to Invite Liz Owen from ACCESS to a future meeting.

ACTION (139) – All to continue to flag up issues with the audio-visual announcements on guided buses in Cambridgeshire and report to Graham for collation.

4) Independent Member Feedback

Funding for GP Surgeries and Primary Care Services

- Concerns were raised about insufficient funding for GP surgeries and primary care services. PPG representatives are reporting that staff in surgeries are losing their jobs, and this has a negative knock on effect to the service. Also causing difficulties is information sharing across GP's and hospitals due to different IT systems. Can these systems be simplified to benefit everyone who uses them?

- **Q.** Can this Healthwatch revisit their previous survey of GP surgery website information that was carried out in 2020. Accessibility Standards are still not being adhered to, and the report did require a follow up.
- **A.** Graham will pass on the question to management.

Signposting within Organisations

- Irritation was expressed that some services who offer signposting can give out information that is out of date, wasting time and causing frustration for the person who has received the information. No particular service was identified and the difficulties for organisations to keep on top of changes in a sector that sees a lot of change to services was acknowledged.

5) Sensory Service Updates

Cambridgeshire County Council Sensory Services Team

- **Rebecca Marr** updated that the sensory services at Cambridge County Council, noting full staffing but ongoing underfunding. The team now includes a senior vision rehabilitation specialist and two assistants but faces challenges with staff sickness. The waiting list for rehabilitation services stands at 38 people, with a three to four-month wait.
- The team is currently promoting their services and developing new practice guidance and communication kits for adult social care staff.
- With the introduction of the shared care record, access to both health and social care records is allowed when consent has been given to this team. This is helping to provide a more joined up service and save time.
- There are financial challenges being faced by the council, so there is a focus on prevention and early intervention to save costs in the long run.

Peterborough City Council Sensory Services Team –Carol Farrer

- Carol was unable to attend in person and provided an update that Graham will circulate.

6) Commissioning Updates

Peterborough City Council – nothing presented this time

Cambridgeshire County Council – nothing presented this time

7) Terms of Reference Review – Graham Lewis

Graham led the discussion, and the following areas were agreed. Time did not allow for the whole document to be reviewed.

- Question: Should the reference to "ensuring a sensory impairment services strategy is co-developed, co-produced and implemented" be removed, as it is no longer relevant?

- Answer: Yes, the group agreed to remove that task, as there is no longer a separate sensory impairment strategy, and these services are now integrated into the council's early intervention and prevention support.

- Question: Should the purpose statement be narrowed from "people with disabilities" to "people with physical disabilities and sensory impairments"?
- Answer: The group discussed this and decided to keep the broader "people with disabilities" wording, as the board covers a range of disabilities beyond just physical and sensory.

- Question: Should the requirement for 50% independent members be removed or revised, as the board currently does not have that level of independent representation?
- Answer: The group agreed to review the membership and potentially revise the requirement, rather than removing it entirely, to ensure there is appropriate independent representation on the board.

- Question: Should the clause requiring 2 meetings notice for the chair to resign be removed, to allow more flexibility?
- Answer: Yes, the group agreed to remove that clause, as it could be overly restrictive if the chair needs to resign for health or other reasons.

ACTION: Graham to bring any other points that need to be addressed to the membership via email.

8) Any Other Business - none

Date of next meeting

Date: Thursday 20th February 2025

Time: 11am to 1pm

Venue: TBC