

Sensory Impairment Partnership Board Notes

22nd May 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
- SIPB – Sensory Impairment Partnership Board

What we talked about

- 1) Welcome, Introduction and Apologies – Mick Scadden, Chair
 - 2) Thursday 22nd February 2024 Notes Approval and Action Log Updates – Graham Lewis
 - 3) Independent Feedback – Voting, Travel Assistance, GP Accessibility & Stagecoach
 - 4) Sensory Services – No attendance. **ACTION: GL to circulate update Ronak Gosai PCC**
 - 5) Commissioning Updates – Jessica Weeds CCC (Micheil Wilson, PCC sent apologies)
 - 6) Sensory Impairment Priorities 2023/2024 – Graham Lewis
 - 7) Healthy Places Joint Strategic Needs Assessment- Bryn Hilton, Public Health
 - 8) Any Other Business – Prosthetics Department move from Addenbrookes
- Next meeting Thursday 22nd August 2024, venue and time TBC.

1) Welcome, Introductions, Apologies – Mick Scadden (Chair) and Graham Lewis

- Mick Scaddon, Chair and Graham Lewis, Healthwatch welcomed everyone to the meeting, including Bernard and Helen attending their first Sensory Impairment PB.
- Rebecca Spalding-Green requested permission to record SIPB for note taking only.

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

- GL recapped meeting Thursday 22nd February 2024. Board agreed notes.
- Action Log Highlights (see Action Log for all updates).

3) Independent Member Feedback

Voting Concerns

- With the general election looming, VS expressed concerns that many visually impaired people are unable to vote in secret, feeling forced to use postal voting.
- VS noted issues at polling stations where staff were untrained in using templates, leading to a chaotic experience, including the destruction of her voting paper.
- Highlighted RNIB's campaign focus on enabling secret votes for visually impaired.

Luton Airport Travel Assistance – Vera Shilling

- At Luton Airport, VS experienced significant issues with travel assistance. Upon checking in her luggage, she asked about travel assistance and was vaguely directed to a location without any escort.
- After eventually finding the Travel Assistance desk, she was again vaguely directed to security, with no one offering to escort her.
- VS found the situation impossible to manage on her own and ultimately gave up trying to get the help she needed.

GP Accessibility Standards and Healthwatch Survey – Paul McCloskey

- Approx 5 years ago, a Healthwatch survey revealed many GP surgery websites did not meet accessibility standards for visually impaired and people with learning difficulties.
- PMC suggested a new Healthwatch survey to ensure adherence to Accessible Information Standards, noting improvements needed for plain and simple text on websites.
- Issues discussed of GP surgeries outsourcing website design, often neglecting to ensure adherence to accessibility standards.
- VS questioned why GP surgeries with visual screens in waiting rooms don't also provide audio options, considering many patients have hearing or visual impairments.

Stagecoach Audio Announcements – All

- Many members reported issues with hearing audio announcements on Stagecoach buses.
- Concerns were raised about drivers being untrained in using the technology and unaware of its importance for sensory impaired passengers.
- GL confirmed talks ongoing with Stagecoach. Will pass on feedback (Action Log point 139).

4) Sensory Service Updates – No attendance.

Cambridgeshire County Council Sensory Services Team

- Jess Weeds CC Commissioning attended and shared update (see below).

Peterborough City Council Sensory Services Team

- Ronak Gosai sent apologies and an update. **ACTION – GL to circulate update.**

5) Commissioning Updates – Jessica Weeds (Cambs CC)

Contract Updates

- End dates approaching for current contracts with CDA, CamSight, and Hunts Blind.

- Task & finish group covered both Cambs & Peterborough and had valuable feedback on improving services. (Anyone who didn't feedback encouraged to get in touch).
- Decided to extend contracts slightly, for more co-production with service users.
- Focus on developing specifications to meet area needs within Place Based Model.

Transport Update

- In Fenland, transport services commissioned for older people has been underutilized.
- This transport service has now been opened up to Sensory Services, specifically CamSight and CDA, to assist people in attending their events. Group organizers will book and arrange transport rather than individual service users.
- This change aims to better utilize existing resources and support sensory-impaired individuals in participating in community activities.
- **ACTION - Share leaflets and information for circulation.**

Comments, Questions and Answers

- Q** Is the service free for passengers? **A** It's believed to be free or have a very limited fare.
- Q** Will the extended service for people with sensory impairments continue long-term?
A Funding is expected to last for 3 years with re-evaluation at that time.
- Q** Can service support people traveling to activities outside Fenland, ie to Kings Lynn?
A Fenlands area is primary focus, but there is likely some flexibility for those in rural areas to access local towns.
- Discussion - Ting Bus Service mentioned, with uncertainty about its coverage areas.
- ACTION - GL to investigate and clarify coverage areas.**

6) Sensory Impairment Priorities 2023 to 2024 – Graham Lewis

Technology – e-scooters and robot delivery systems

- Engaged with Voi (E-scooters) and Starship (Robot delivery systems) to support them whilst ensuring the needs of people who have sensory impairments are considered.

Virtual Wards (Hospital at Home scheme)

- Met with Northwest Anglia Foundation NHS Trust to hear about their scheme.
- Looked at equipment, offered suggestions on how it could be made more accessible.
- Connected with RNIB to work together on info/ support for people.

GP Appointments

- Problems with telephone system, online appointment systems etc.
- Issues with electronic sign in and audio announcements in GP surgery
- Raised with Joanne Fallon at the ICS

Street Charter

- Contact made with Cambridge City Council who are exploring this.
- RNIB are launching a document

7) Healthy Places Joint Strategic Needs Assessment- Bryn Hilton, Public Health

What is a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)?

- Joint = Multi-agency working (local/ combined authority, ICB, academics, public etc)
- Strategic = Aiming to influence whole local system (not just a single organisation)
- Needs Assessment = Reviewing the health status of a certain group/ groups with respect to a specific topic ie older people, disabilities, carers needs.
- The Healthy Places JSNA aims to create system-wide recommendations for healthier, accessible, and inclusive communities in Cambs and Peterborough.
- By reviewing broader health determinants: Community, environment, local economy impact. And analyzing data, assessing service provision, engaging stakeholders, identifying gaps, and sharing recommendations.

JSNA Timeline

- March/ April - Community Survey (closing date Monday 15th April 2024)
- April, May, June - attending Healthwatch Partnership Boards, Health & Care Forums.
- June/ July - pulling together, creating, bringing JSNA to Health and Wellbeing Board.
- Autumn 2024 - Agreed recommendations to form actions in Cambs & Peterborough.

Community Survey Results

- Survey "Can residents access things they value in their local built environment?"
- Received 762 responses, with fairly proportional distribution across Cambridge and Peterborough, although Fenland area slightly unrepresented.
- Age - Mainly between 35 -75 years, with limited input from younger demographics.
- Gender/ Ethnicity - Majority female, 90% white, lacked ethnic minority representation.
- Disability - 23% reported having a disability, higher than national average 18% approx.
- Employment - Primarily professionals 75% in professional/ supervisory positions.

Findings

- Asked participants to rank the importance and accessibility of local themes such as healthcare, community spaces, travel, healthy food, community buildings & leisure.
- Found people with disabilities consistently reported lower accessibility across all eight themes compared to those without disabilities, across different districts.

Board Discussion from Sensory Impairment Perspective

Walking and Street Environment

- MS - Walking in Cambridge is challenging due to shared paths with E-Scooters, mobility scooters, posing significant risks as they are silent and lack consistent regulations.
- WW - Post-COVID outdoor seating expansions obstruct pedestrian pathways, complicating navigation for those using canes or guide dogs. Correct barriers are not always implemented, creating additional obstacles.

Transport and Linking Services

- Public transport reliability is decreasing, particularly in rural areas, increasing isolation. Suggestions included integrating bus services with local park-and-ride systems to improve efficiency, hindered by bureaucracy and funding issues.

Rehabilitation Services

- Well-funded & resourced rehabilitation teams are crucial. Timely access to rehab services after sight loss improves mental well-being and reduces long-term social care costs by promoting independence and learning necessary skills, such as navigating bus routes.

Safe Walking Areas

- Identifying safe walking areas like Milton Country Park is important. However, reaching these areas involves stressful and unsafe practices like using floating bus stops, which require crossing busy cycle paths. This added stress often deters people from accessing enjoyable green spaces. The mental burden of navigating these challenges can lead to avoiding such outings altogether, opting for less stressful but less fulfilling activities.

Shared Spaces

- WW - Shared spaces, where pedestrians and traffic coexist, though reduced, still pose risks in residential areas and parks. Not creating these spaces at all would increase confidence in navigating neighbourhoods and green spaces.

Accessibility Audits

- One professional/ volunteer conducting accessibility audits is insufficient.
- Local authorities need to employ multiple skilled personnel to ensure comprehensive and accurate accessibility evaluations. And diverse perspectives are needed in planning applications to address different impairments and disabilities effectively.

7) Any Other Business

ACTION – GL to circulate information on recent Adult and Social Care Forum meeting and Healthwatch Health and Care Forum Updates.

ACTION – GL to circulate information regarding the move of prosthetics department from Addenbrookes Hospital.

Date of next meeting

Date: Thursday 23rd May 2024.

Time: 11am to 1pm, (10am onwards Independent Members Pre-meeting).

Venue: To be confirmed.