

Healthwatch Kingston Board

25 January 2017

Agenda Item 6: Chair's Report

Report by the Chair of the Board of Trustees

Purpose

To update the Board on the Chair's involvement with local strategic partnerships, governing bodies, scrutiny processes and other matters of interest.

Recommendations

The Board is requested to note and discuss the report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 With every winter comes news of winter pressures for the NHS and attendant concerns about funding and filling key posts. This winter is no exception but nationally there is a sense that the breadth of concern is of a different quality than before, so part of Healthwatch's remit is clearly to be alert to local issues in our own general hospitals and the pressure on primary care. We will continue to make representations on behalf of patients and service users individually or collectively, and challenge both commissioners and providers as appropriate whenever we discover consumers being impacted negatively. This means living up to our title as 'Healthwatch' and making full use of the opportunities afforded to us through our statutory basis to investigate and build up an accurate picture of the local health and social care economy.
- 1.2 At the same time this report will note the way in which we, working with our Healthwatch partners in SW London, will aim to ensure there is a high degree of consultation about the local Sustainability and Transformation Plan which has the potential to have far reaching consequences for the local health and social care landscape.
- 1.3 This report will also describe the welcome news that the as a charity, the present group of trustees has been awarded the Kingston Healthwatch contract for the next four years by the council.

2. Winter pressures

- 2.1 HW representatives at the Health Overview Panel (HOP), the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) and the CCG governing body were appraised during the autumn of the

measures that Kingston Hospital, the CCG and Primary Care were taking to combat the anticipated pressures. Thus far services in Kingston have not been identified nationally as having unusually high levels of critical concern about service availability and capacity and there have been no emergency reports to any of the bodies above. However recent public statements on this from the hospital dated January 4th and January 7th suggested the hospital was operating at full capacity and encouraged those who did not need to attend A and E not to do so.

2.2 As chair I intend to ask a question at the HWBB on January 26th about current performance but in the meantime HWK would welcome observations from volunteers or members of the public about their experiences so we can get a real picture of how things are. Of perhaps more immediate concern is the current poor air quality that can have a dramatic impact on wellbeing and the HOP received a detailed report about the local plan to improve the quality in Kingston when it met on January 12th. This report can be accessed on the RBK website. We are aware that other groups are campaigning about this important topic and as appropriate we will share intelligence that we obtain to assist in this.

3. Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP)

3.1 This important national initiative will have significant consequences for our whole population and therefore as plans develop and are published by the CCGs in SW London, the role of HWK is to ensure that the quality of local public consultation is good and that the plans and options are outlined clearly. Simply put the STP is about a fresh consideration of the pattern of hospitals in SW London and a parallel emphasis on developing community based preventive services that will reduce demand for inpatient services. It cannot be denied that the plan is also designed to achieve substantial savings for the NHS.

3.2 We know that any discussion about changes to hospital services can invoke fierce and locally partisan feelings. This is for a number of reasons involving history, personal experience, and concern about the removal of a local facility. Across SW London there is therefore potential for each local authority area having a different view on plans from its neighbour. Therefore the SW London Healthwatches are coming to a view that it's not helpful to be seen to be in competition with each other to promote a particular hospital or other facility at the expense of another. Our approach is best characterised by aiming to ensure that as wide a number of residents know about the plans, that there is an ample variety of times, places and formats to learn more about the plans and comment on them, ensuring that the information about the plans is accurate and clear, and presenting evidence from local research and intelligence that may challenge the assumptions being made in the plan. In this way HWK will have hopefully contributed to enabling a set of reasoned decisions to be made which is reflective of public aspirations and concerns.

3.3 HWK is also pleased that Liz Meerabeau one of our trustees is the SW London Healthwatches' representative on the STP Programme Board which is the overarching body responsible for driving forward the plans. This will be a key area for HWK to focus on in the months ahead. Details of the SW London plans to date can be found

here: <http://www.swlccgs.nhs.uk/>

4. Healthwatch Kingston Contact 2017-2021

- 4.1 The board are pleased to announce that the charity Healthwatch Kingston has been awarded the contract for the delivery of Healthwatch services in Kingston for the next four years from April 1st 2017. This is the charity of which the current board members are trustees. This is a good result for Kingston as it means no interruption of service, and broadly the current staff team will continue in their posts. This decision by Kingston Council also means that that current partnership with Parkwood Healthcare will cease on March 31st and we will then become a fully independent entity. We are grateful to Parkwood for all their help and support in getting us to where we are today. We believe that our collective local contribution provided solid evidence of achievement and meeting the council's expectations over the last 3.5 years, so that as an organisation we were well placed to make a successful bid.
- 4.2 However much work is now required to achieve a smooth transition and board members would very much welcome the support of existing volunteers or new ones where relevant expertise is available. What may be required we will advise through personal contact or through the website. In due course we will publish our plans both for our regular work and then any necessary changes to our business planning and governance that stem from this decision.