

Engagement Annual Report

Purpose

1. This report provides an update on Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Engagement activities, including the Adult Social Care Partnership Boards, for the period 1 November 2019 to 31 October 2020.

Key issues

2. Face-to-face engagement activity had to cease during March 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
3. During the pandemic we were able to quickly move much of our engagement activity online, including our health and care forums and Partnership Boards. Our ability to successfully engage with people in this way gained positive recognition including being selected for the development of an online engagement training module by Healthwatch England.
4. Following the introduction of the Greater Cambridge Health and Care Forum in February 2020, we now have four established health and care forums across the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough areas which bring together members of the public with representatives from providers of health and social care services.
5. Following the successful merger of all five Adult Social Care Partnership Boards, these have been able to continue with meetings being held online during the pandemic. This has allowed most although not all of our independent members to continue to participate.

Action required by the Board

The Board is asked to:

- Note the report

Author

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Overview of Engagement activity, November to March

6. Some highlights of our engagement activity during this time are given below.

New Contacts

7. During this reporting period the Engagement Team, assisted by our volunteers, attended a number of new venues and met with groups we had not previously engaged with where we were able to explain the role of Healthwatch and hear people's experiences of using health and care services. These included:
- North Cambridgeshire Hospital (Wisbech)
 - City Care Centre (Peterborough)
 - Chorus Homes (conference style event)
 - The Golden Years Group (Barnwell, Cambridge)
 - Women's Resource Centres in Cambridge and Peterborough
 - Working with Everyone Health on a stand in The Grafton Centre, Cambridge

Mental Health

8. We attended The Lantern Initiative, aimed at reaching out to the Muslim Community in Peterborough to encourage people to talk about their mental health, also an OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) event run by Rethink, held in Cambridge. At this event we heard how difficulties in accessing healthcare services to help with the condition can negatively impact people's lives.

Young people or people with LD/Autism

9. We attended the following groups/events to hear experiences from young people or people affected by learning disability or autism:
- Peterborough Regional College Wellbeing Fair
 - PARCA Youth Together event
 - Pinpoint Conference (parents of children with disabilities)
 - John Mansfield Campus, City College, Peterborough - we had help from some of our volunteers who are Access Champions to run a stall and chat during breaktimes to students who had a learning of physical disability or where English is not their first language. Teachers brought classes along to speak to us in small groups which allowed us to explain our work and gather experiences.
10. During the period to March we also attended Peterborough City Hospital, Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, Camsight events, Parkinsons UK events, Diabetes events, golden Age Fair, Healthy Fenland, Women's Guilds and older people's groups.

11. Prior to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, we had planned activities for engaging with people affected by specific conditions including Lupus, Fibromyalgia and sensory impairment as well as other opportunities and events which unfortunately were unable to take place. We have plans to pursue opportunities for engaging with some of these groups in other ways including online.

Our volunteers

12. Our Engagement team have worked closely with our Engagement Manager to become much more actively involved in the recruitment and development of our volunteers. This work was positively recognised in our recent assessment leading to us gaining the Investors in Volunteers quality mark. The teams have worked closely to ensure regular contact has been maintained with our volunteers, with regular telephone calls and online meetings. This has led to our volunteers remaining engaged and taking part in a number of remote engagement opportunities, also project work such as our GP website survey work.
13. Our network of volunteers is now much more representative of our diverse population, with volunteers being recruited from a more diverse range of ethnic backgrounds, also young volunteers and those with learning difficulties who are able to offer a variety of different perspectives, assisting us in engaging effectively with different groups.
14. We are planning work to find out more about the individual skills and interests of our volunteers, enabling us to fully utilise these skills and in doing so offer more engaging opportunities and a better overall experience for our volunteers. We are also looking at creating new volunteering roles and the recruitment of volunteers with specific skills which will be valuable to the organisation as a whole.

Engagement activity from end of March to October 2020

Health and care forums and Wheelchair User Forum

15. In February 2020 we introduced the Greater Cambridge Health and Care Forum. This forum has quickly become established, meaning we now have four health and care forums, allowing local people across the whole of our area to attend their local meeting to hear updates about health and care services and share their experiences. Regular meetings for all of the forums have taken place using online platforms since the onset of the pandemic.
16. The health and care forums are well attended by both members of the public and representatives from health and care providers who provide valuable updates on their services. All meetings now benefit from regular updates from their local healthcare Trusts, with opportunities to ask questions and raise issues which are then followed up at future meetings via an action log. At the meetings we hear valuable feedback from people using health and

care services. Our regular contact with the CEO of Little Miracles, a charity for families of children with life limiting illness has brought various issues to our attention which we are able to feed back. This has led to us hearing from more parents who are in contact with the charity.

17. The health and care forums have been successful in connecting people with organisations, also connecting different organisations together. We have responded to requests from academics running national studies. One example of this is a recent request from the University of Hertfordshire who were carrying out a 'Food and Covid' study who attended all four forums and gained very valuable feedback to assist with this. Recently Cambridgeshire County Council attended all of the forums to ask for feedback about domiciliary care services.
18. The Wheelchair User Forum has continued to meet on a regular basis. This is attended by AJM Healthcare who are currently the Wheelchair Service provider. They have brought issues such as Personal Wheelchair Budgets to the Forum and respond to concerns raised during the meetings.

Enter and View

19. Unfortunately, the current pandemic has meant that we have been unable to continue with our programme of Enter and View activity, including completing remaining planned visits to care homes in Cambridgeshire. It is planned to resume this activity as soon as we are able, in line with feedback we receive about services.
20. In the interim we are planning to follow up on our previous visits, including seeking updates to planned works set out in action plans we had been provided with in response to the recommendations we had made in our published reports.

Partnership Boards

21. Following the successful merger of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Partnership Boards, the pandemic caused a temporary interruption to some of the early meetings following the initial national lockdown at the end of March. Work then took place to communicate with all of the Boards in turn to establish appropriate practices for holding meetings effectively before they were resumed online. Most of the Boards were able to quickly adapt to being held online although the Learning Disability Partnership Board was unable to meet as a whole for a longer period due to some Independent Members not having adequate support to enable them to take part.
22. Most of the Independent Members of the Partnership Boards have been able to take part in online meetings fully, however there we are aware of some instances of digital exclusion. The Partnership Development Manager has been working with other team members to look at ways to overcome these difficulties although some of the potential solutions are subject to being

affected by further periods of lockdown. Over the coming months we are seeking to find ways to allow people to join our meetings either virtually or in person when this is once again possible.

23. The Partnership Boards are frequently appropriately consulted with to provide input on a variety of issues. An example of this was an approach made to the Sensory Impairment Partnership Board to gain insight into how people affected by sensory impairment would be additionally impacted by Covid-19 and whether they were able to access help provided via the Hubs.

Other work carried out by the Engagement Team following the outbreak of Covid-19

24. The Engagement Team is currently short-staffed although a vacant position for a Digital Engagement Officer is currently being recruited to. Currently whilst face-to-face engagement is not possible both the Engagement Manager and Engagement Officer are actively involved in the successful running of the health and care forums and establishing them as an effective way for us to engage and listen to experiences.
25. Since the onset of the pandemic, the Engagement Team have worked closely with the Communications Team to extend the reach of our Covid-19 Survey into community groups we wished to hear from. The team also assisted in producing leaflets about the surgery which were distributed to foodbanks, Fenland Community Transport and the Library at Home service.
26. The Engagement Team have been pursuing opportunities to engage digitally with other organisations at a time when it is not possible to meet face-to-face. They recently attended an online 'coffee morning' event with Steel Bones' an organisation which works with amputees and are planning regular attendance at similar events involving our volunteers.

Future plans

27. We plan to build on our new-found digital engagement skills to ensure none of this learning is lost as and when we are able to resume face-to-face engagement. This includes seeking to find solutions to allow people to join our meetings either digitally or face-to-face. We are also planning for a more 'blended' approach to engagement, carrying out face to face engagement to ensure we are speaking to those we are unlikely to hear from by digital means, whilst also exploring further opportunities for online engagement.
28. We will seek to share our learning in digital engagement with other organisations where appropriate with the aim of encouraging them to engage in this way.
29. We are seeing an increased number of approaches by health and care partners such as the Clinical Commissioning Group, NHS England and Improvement, also organisations such as the Cancer Alliance, researchers

from Anglia Ruskin University and University of Hertfordshire to help with reaching people for projects they are working on. Our Engagement Officer has been involved in an initiative through Peterborough City Council for Community Leaders. This has enabled us to promote our work but also introduce health and care partners to this group which will enable better links to minority ethnic communities.

30. We are working on mapping our engagement contacts over the next year to ensure we are engaging in a structured and planned way with existing contacts but also identifying groups we have not yet contacted. We are planning to involve our volunteers in this work.