

## **Minutes of VOICE Local (Healthwatch Bolton) (HWB) Annual General Meeting held via Zoom on 27<sup>th</sup> August 2024**

**Present:** Jim Fawcett (Chair), Ann Schenk (trustee), Kiran Syeda (Treasurer), David Kay (Barlow Andrews), Julie Darbyshire - (Chief Officer), Leah Payne (Senior IAG & Communications Officer), Yasmin Rahbar (Community Engagement Officer), Neil Robinson (Finance Officer)

**Apologies:** None

Leah Payne kindly facilitated the meeting.

### **1. Welcome**

Jim Fawcett chaired the meeting and welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

### **2. Minutes of AGM held on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

Minutes from 2023 AGM were proposed by Ann Schenk and seconded by Jim Fawcett as a true record.

Proposer: Ann Schenk

Seconder - Jim Fawcett

### **3. VOICE Local Trustees Annual Report 2023-24**

J Fawcett presented the Trustees Annual Report. It has been a difficult year for staff. Staff work in an admirable fashion, reports well received by Bolton Local Authority and Healthwatch England (HWE). Many comments on the usefulness of the work. Reaching out to more communities and seldom heard voices.

Finance is always an issue due to reduction in grant from Bolton Local Authority. HWE are investigating how Healthwatch are commissioned and may propose an alternative model with adequate funding.

Staff were thanked and Neil Robinson Finance Director. Thanks were also extended to Barlow Andrews and to the volunteers and the public who have shared their feedback.

AS commented - it is impressive what is achieved in 12 months, the reach and the comments made by other organisations. HWB is respected and well done to all the team.

### **4. Annual Accounts - David Kay (Barlow Andrews representative)**

Trustee report contains lots of info about structure, governance and activities.

Lots of information about what has been achieved - it is a very good read.

Examination report - indicates no issues with accounting records. Income down by 14.5k as expected by reduced grant. Expenditure is down by £6k and reduction was in staff costs - down by £6k. Overall position - net reduction of £9784 in reserves.

All reserves are unrestricted funds. Note to accounts summarises the movements on these funds. Balance sheet shows funds are represented by £3.5k of fixed assets - IT equip etc., and £75k net current assets (cash in bank).

Accounting policies are fine. Additional analysis provides more information about the accounts. Disclosures are also included where necessary.

Future income stream - JD reported that NHS Bolton want to commission Healthwatch Bolton for a project around the value of £15k.

AS commented - strength of understanding with GP Federation - good contacts and work done on primary care has been well regarded and well trusted.

KS - hoping proposal going forward is successful due to expenditure being high this year.

DK suggested getting income from elsewhere if possible, but it is difficult.

Proposal to reappoint Barlow Andrews - Proposer - AS  
Secunder - JF

## **5. Healthwatch Bolton Annual Report 2023-24- presented by Leah Payne**

Leah gave an overview of the highlights in the annual report:

**Information Advice and Guidance** - 223 people helped by providing information to access services needed. Empowering people and to navigate the NHS complaints system. Help to unpick complex issues and escalate where necessary. Top ten reasons: NHS dentistry is the number one reason people contact Healthwatch Bolton, but this number is reducing.

Also assisted 7 people undergoing **breast cancer treatment** needing a dental checkup.

### **Impact on health and wellbeing and not having access to NHS dentistry**

The report outlined the physical and mental impact that lack of access to NHS dentistry was having on people.

### **GP Access**

Two reports gathering over 500 responses, showed the experiences of people in Bolton when accessing their GP practice. Many people reported problems with communicating with their practice and getting timely appointments and who they might be seeing at the practice. The work also leads into a piece of work on the new workplan for 2024-25 looking at where people go for their healthcare.

### **Unheard Voices**

Engagement events also took place with Bolton Deaf Society, to gather feedback about experiences of using health and care services to which the report **Unheard Voices** was produced. The report outlined the following issues that D/deaf people have faced:

- GP Access
- GP practices ought to have a note in D/deaf patient health records.
- Lack of interpreters for health appointments in both primary and secondary care settings.
- Difficulty obtaining up-to-date information.

Responses have been received from Bolton Hospital and Greater Manchester Integrated Care Board.

Further engagement will be done with the group next year.

One further piece of work was completed which looked at experiences of using **Maternity Services** in Bolton. The report was quite negative with problems with staff shortages and communication issues. The post-natal ward was also problematic for many respondents. Again the report has been shared with commissioners and providers for response.

**Community Engagement:** lots of new contacts have been made and engagement with new groups in Bolton. There has also been partnership working with Bolton Local Authority engagement teams which has helped to reach more people in the community.

### **Menopause and Me**

This work looked at where women go for information and support for peri/menopause. The recommendations in the report have been discussed in the Women's Health Hubs network in Bolton with an action plan being developed to implement the recommendations. Outcomes from this piece of work:

- Network of community champions to be developed
- GP Training
- Information booklet produced
- Women's Health Hub information on all GP websites
- Information on Hormone Replacement Therapy on GP website
- Information on pre-payment prescriptions
- Talking therapies

Yasmin gave a brief update on the work of the women's health hub

### **Healthwatch in Greater Manchester**

Two year strategy for the network

Contributed to consultation

Pathways to Mental Health

Work on menopause

### **Newsletter**

Good feedback received on how informative this is.

### **Volunteers**

Thanks to all our great volunteers who support our work and trustees.

### **Priorities for 2024-25**

These have been decided on via the public consultation, and our IAG and Community engagement intelligence:

- Primary care - project in partnership with NHS Bolton
- Mental Health - Dementia project
- Patient choice - in partnership with Bolton Hospital
- Community engagement and IAG. Focus on men's health and neighbourhood teams

## **6. Meeting closed**