

**Healthwatch Coventry Steering Group Pre-Meeting  
Minutes  
Britannia Hotel, Fairfax Street, Coventry, CV1 5RP  
At 10:00 am on 1 August 2023**

**Attendees:** Stuart Linnell (Chair), Catherine Smith, Steven Hill (C&W Mind), Rose O'Malley, David Spurgeon, Ghulam Vohra, Mia Hutchinson, Noreen Bukhari (FWT)

**Staff Present:** Ruth Light, Fiona Garrigan, Ridhwana Sheikh

**Apologies:** Sue Ogle (VAC), Christine McNaught (FWT), Claire Dale (Carers Trust HofE), Last Mafuba, Yasmin Taha

## **1. Welcome Introductions**

Stuart Linnell (SL) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

## **2. Annual meeting feedback**

The Group discussed the write up of the group discussion exercise held at the Healthwatch Coventry annual meeting in July. They reflected on what people had said they value about Healthwatch and what people said in response to questions about involving and engaging people in NHS and care services and examples of where this worked well and where it did not. It was noted that the different tables answered these questions in different ways with some people focusing on their recent experiences of using health services.

The Steering Group agreed for the write up to be published after the headings are clarified to show the discussion topics more clearly.

The group also received a report of the collated evaluation forms from the meeting. Members said the feedback was positive and it was a good event and well organised.

More people were booked to come to the event than did so. A teacher's strike was announced two weeks beforehand, meaning some people did not have childcare to attend.

<b>Action</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Report of the meeting to be published on the Healthwatch Coventry website</li></ul>

### 3. Feedback on development, meetings

RL gave an update about the outline plans from the City Council for the recommissioning of Healthwatch Coventry. The council is proposing an open tender process in the autumn, and this would see the decision being known in January 2024.

Members discussed the implications and queried how the Steering Group would be involved as the group has an independent role.

SL noted that local councillors are well informed about Healthwatch now.

Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• SL to raise the role of the group with the commissioner</li></ul>



SL and RL fed back from recent meetings including one with the Chief Executive of the ICB. The group discussed matters related to access to GP appointments and the most recent feedback revived from local people.

SL shared information about the GP extended hours service, which provides appointments in the evenings and weekends through hubs booked via GP practices. Some local people don't know about this service or that they can ask if there is an extended hours appointment they can have.

The results of the national GP satisfaction public survey are out. When averaged across Coventry and Warwickshire these show a higher satisfaction than the national average. However, the group thought this was not necessarily a reflection of people's experiences. For some GP practices the sample size is small, and some people would not be able to complete the survey for example due to a language need. A lot of people don't have the voice to raise their experiences.

### 4. Any other items

None.

**Healthwatch Coventry Steering Group Meeting  
Minutes  
Britannia Hotel, Fairfax Street, Coventry, CV1 5RP  
At 11:00 am on 01 August 2023**

**Attendees:** Stuart Linnell (Chair), Catherine Smith, Steven Hill (C&W Mind), Rose O'Malley, David Spurgeon, Ghulam Vohra, Mia Hutchinson, Noreen Bukhari (FWT)

**Staff Present:** Ruth Light, Fiona Garrigan, Ridhwana Sheikh

**Other Attendees:** Alison Cartwright Hayley Best (UHCW), Adele Tidman (UHCW)

**Apologies:** Sue Ogle (VAC), Christine McNaught (FWT), Claire Dale (Carers Trust HofE), Last Mafuba, Yasmin Taha

## **1. Welcome Introductions**

Stuart Linnell (SL) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

SL asked if there were any declarations of interest. There were none.

## **2. Minutes of the previous meetings**

Minutes from the previous Steering Group meeting in June were approved as an accurate record.

There were no matters arising.

## **3. Maternity and Neonatal Services**

A presentation was given by Alison Cartwright (AC), Chief Performance and Delivery Officer, Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) about the local work to respond to the national plan for recovering access to primary care.

AC presented figures related to GP services highlighting that more appointments are being delivered than in 2019. Around 18,000 appointments a month in Coventry 23% more than 2019. Patients' needs have changed due to longer NHS waiting lists, managing long term health conditions and mental health impacts.

AC highlighted workforce challenges in the area meaning that there was a lower number of appointments than the population level needed. For all roles

in general practice the level of the work force was below average per 1000 population. Employing and retaining staff in these areas seems to be difficult.

One of the key ambitions is to tackle is the 8am phone rush at GP practices. They aim will be to see the urgent patients on the same day and the non-urgent patients within 14 days of them contacting the practice.

The delivery plan has four areas of focus:

1. Empowering patients – focus on empowering patients through use of technology – such as seeing records in the NHS app (70% of GP practices to be using by November 2023). Also self-directed care eg to physiotherapy and podiatry.
2. Implementing modern general practice – digital phone systems (all but four GP practices already have this in Coventry); more online booking of appointments; and new care navigator role.
3. Practice based plans that address individual practice issues.
4. Building capacity – larger multi-disciplinary teams; buildings issue some practice buildings are not big enough so more sharing across Primary Care Networks (PCNs).
5. Cutting bureaucracy – focus on how primary and secondary care communication to reduce hospital requests to GPs for referrals and tests. Reducing GP sign off for patient certificates.

The process is for each PCN to produce a plan for review by the ICB, which will produce the ICB plan by 30/9/23. Plans are to be delivered by end of March 2024.

SL asked what was happening to try to retain more practice staff in Coventry.

AC aid there is ICB work including a Training Hub for primary care, and portfolio careers development.

SH commented that trained voluntary and community sector staff were often taken on by the NHS and they could be a feeling the GP practices want to control service by employing staff. AC said Integrated Neighbourhood teams are working on this.

GV said it is important to think of the long-term picture regarding staffing by ging to things such as job fairs and recruitment forums aimed at 6<sup>th</sup> formers. AC said work with schools and universities is ongoing. Coventry and Warwickshire have the highest number of GP training places.

DS asked how does the ICB support GPs, is there a team for this? How can you make becoming a GP more attractive?

AC replied the ICB has a primary care team made up of 17 people. Coventry and Warwickshire have the highest rate for GP training and medical training. Though they are trained here, we are only retaining 20% of these staff.

NB asked, how can patients have a say in these plans? There is inequity in how GPs operate and between PCNS. How can the needs of people be more equally met whilst also addressing different needs.

AC said the ICB looks at a range of performance measure for practices. There isn't an element of patient engagement in these plans as the plans are for NHS England.

MH asked about accessing pharmacy and how is the ICB supporting pharmacies in this? AC said from 1<sup>st</sup> April the national contract for pharmacies has been given to the ICB. This has given more authority to the ICB to help co-ordinate and make changes. It has given them more access to the knowledge and information for pharmacies too.

D Saunders asked what patient impact assessment will be on these plans as they are coming from the top down to change in different localities. AC said there is an element of the indicators is to consider the impact. Number of actions that will change the way they tackle the 8am rush. RL added there is a need to put a patient lens on these new policies and actions to see how it will actually work.

DS said receptionists need to be given training in a more care navigated role as they seem to be the gate keepers to seeing a GP.

MH queried how the 8:00 am phone rush for appointments came about, why do practices require people to only call at 8:00 am. People shared their different experiences of contacting GP practices. Some could call at any time in the day and others were required to call at 8:00 am or 8:30 am. AC said this process came about to manage demand.

#### **4. Healthwatch activity**

RL presented the activity report highlighting key areas of work completed since the last Steering Group meeting. This report is now being shown in the new format that was agreed at the last Steering Group meeting.

RL highlighted that the Healthwatch Coventry annual report was published before the deadline meeting our statutory requirements.

Work has focused on the new work priorities and holding meetings to get some outcomes from previous work.

A pilot Enter and View visit was completed at UHCW yesterday by Fiona and Ruth B and volunteers, which is being written up.

Authorised Representative volunteer training has been held we are in the process of completing DBS checks.

We are working on our community outreach targets such as the non-moored boating community.

Ruth confirmed she has made links around the Community Diagnostic Centre, which is being built in the Paybody building near the City of Coventry health Centre. The contractor has been identified for this piece of work and we will be able to provide some input for this around September/October time.

Figures regarding our Infoline and our overall reach were shared, and it shows that the reach is higher compared to last year. This shows we are engaged with the public.

## **5. Reports from meetings**

Reports from Steering Group Reps who attended external meetings were shared and noted.

DS said he was concerned there isn't representing Healthwatch at the Scrutiny board meeting. RL shared the concern and said she was looking to meet with the chair of the Scrutiny Group. Sd asked if members of the group to consider the role.

## **6. Health and care system updates**

Members noted a paper giving summary information on key areas of work and service developments with a local impact. The information is largely taken from the ICB Board papers. Main issues to note are, the diabetic eye screening service will be going to a new provider from October. The integrated care plan has been published which is to deliver the integrated care strategy.

GV commented when the plans are published and delivered in this structure the understanding is lacking for the public and does not allow room for questions. It uses a lot of the national targets within the plan but does not include the patients in particular areas.

## **CQC inspection findings and Pharmacy changes**

The groups also noted a summary of recent CQC inspection findings and a summary of pharmacy changes.

## **Primary care Gynaecology Service**

This service has been introduced to tackle the backlog in this area. There are three clinics been set up around Coventry and Warwickshire. The service in Coventry is based at Allesley Park Medical Practice. The referral to this service can be done directly from the GP.

## **Policy and national developments**

Information was provided on the Healthwatch England campaign for NHS dentistry, figures from the GP patient survey and the impacts of NHS strikes on patient care.

## **7. Items for information**

SG members received web links to useful information and reports covering:

- a) NHS Launches Long Term Workforce Plan [NHS England » NHS Long Term Workforce Plan](#)
- b) [The NHS at 75: a letter to party leaders | The King's Fund](#) ([kingsfund.org.uk](https://kingsfund.org.uk)) Kings Fund and Nuffield trust joint letter to leaders of all political parties about the future of the NHS
- c) [NHS at 75 Insights Report | National Voices](#)
- d) West Midlands Mental Health Commission final report <https://www.wmca.org.uk/what-we-do/wellbeing/west-midlands-mental-health-commission/>  
Report from National Audit office: [Access to unplanned or urgent care](#)

## **8. Any Other Business**

There was none.

## **9. Date and time of future meetings**

Next Steering Group meeting is on 3 October 2023. Members meetings start at 10am. Meeting in public starts at 11am.

### **Date of future steering group meetings are:**

- 5 December 2023

All meetings to be held at the Britannia Hotel, Fairfax Street, Coventry, CV1 5RP.