



Community Partnerships Update

March 2018

Since formation, Healthwatch West Sussex has been working collaboratively with a growing number of community organisations to influence better health and care outcomes for patients and carers. This ambition has gained more traction since the recruitment of our **Community Partnership Co-ordinator** in February. We are now able to actively investigate more ways to work in partnership with Community and Voluntary organisations to strengthen our reach, and capture stories, and insight, to raise awareness and to increase the impact of patient and carer voices from our communities.

Collaboration between statutory health service providers, local authority and community and voluntary organisations has grown in importance, due to intense financial pressures requiring new models of working in a rapidly changing environment. A 'one size fits all' approach is unlikely to work, especially when supporting a diverse population including those in 'harder to reach communities' who experience poorer access to services and support to successfully manage their health needs¹. Healthwatch West Sussex endeavour to ensure that the Consumer Voice is represented as changes are developed and implemented.

One aim is to better understand and influence the strategic direction of Health and Social Care provision. Meetings with four of the six **Principle District Officers of West Sussex Community and Partnership Team**, has provided valuable insight into some of the local challenges, and an up to date perspective of progress by district, as well as gaining valuable local knowledge, for which we are grateful. This also gives us a greater understanding of the West Sussex County Council approach to, 'people and place' and the interconnectedness of service provision, as detailed in the report '[Unlocking the Power of Local](#)'.

Many community and voluntary organisations are unaware of our unique role; of ensuring that local people's views, experiences, and concerns are captured to ensure better outcomes for consumers that are equitable and targeted at the right people, very much, the right time in the right place and at the right level. A plan has been developed using a mixed methods engagement approach and this is progressing well. In the first two months our Partnerships Coordinator has:

- Contacted 52 community and voluntary organisations
- Spoken by telephone with 11 telephone community and voluntary organisations
- Met with 14 community and voluntary organisations
- Agreed 18 future meetings with community and voluntary organisations.

She has been targeting pathway networks and collaborations, such as **dementia, homelessness and foodbanks, and learning disabilities**. Other areas include housing associations, wellbeing teams, and specific health conditions and this will be on-going. It has been fantastic to have had the opportunity to meet with so many professionals, passionate about delivering high standards of service and support, and we look forward to enabling groups of organisations to work on projects in partnership together.

We are delighted that even before specific new projects are identified, we are already seeing positive outcomes from these meetings for our wider engagement team; meeting with local support groups to provide presentations, capture stories and insight and raise awareness of our **Information & Advice Helpdesk, Advocacy**, and **#ItStartsWithYou** project as well as more people signing up to our 'Heads Up' newsletter. Two organisations (Worthing Homes and Age Concern Hassocks), have circulated a Healthwatch article in their bulletin with a combined circulation of over 4,800 and 470 Healthwatch and advocacy cards have been distributed to members. We have also been developing our [Community Partnership page](#) webpage.



Our current partnerships include:



Age UK Horsham - following the publication of [our report Insight into Hospital Admissions for older people in the Horsham District](#) (resulting from a collaborative partnership with Horsham Older Peoples Forum, Horsham District Health & Wellbeing Hub and West Sussex County Council), the Horsham Council Wellbeing Committee held a workshop in December to identify and take action for next steps. Amongst other things, a new “Bag Tag” is now being developed to help improve hospital admission experiences for patients and family/friend carers.



Aldingbourne Trust - [a short film has been released to raise awareness of the Health and Care issues facing people with Learning Disabilities](#), their families and carers with the aim of gathering more evidence and insight from this part of the community who are seldom heard. We encourage this film to be used with any relevant community networks and providers to raise awareness and help tackle inequalities. A follow up project is being planned.



Carers Support West Sussex (Jennie Musgrove, CEO) - we continue to work collaboratively on several topics including our listening tours. This is having a positive impact on the number and quality of stories we collect.



Community Based Solutions Consortia - Healthwatch West Sussex are part of a consortia of Community Organisation Chief Execs (including Aldingbourne Trust, 4Sight, Independent Lives, Age UK West Sussex, Carers Support, Sussex Oakleaf, Independent Lives and Crossroad Care). A significant collaborative event is being planned for later in the year.



Midhurst Parish Church - we are working in partnership with Midhurst Parish Church who run the Midhurst Foodbank. The project is to deliver two focus groups with users of the foodbank to capture users’ health and care experiences.



Pathfinder West Sussex (Mental Health Alliances) continues to develop. The Healthwatch West Sussex People with Lived Experience have now completed their involvement and provided Pathfinder’s leaders with formal, written feedback which we have been led to believe has been well-received. We are keen to continue to support the vital work of this partnership as it continues to evolve.



West Sussex 4Sight (Nik Demetriades, CEO) -recruitment is underway of a Chichester University Intern to study of the quality of patient experiences as they journey through the Eye Clinics in St Richard’s and Worthing Hospitals. Repeated consumer feedback highlights this is an ongoing area of concern. The new intern will receive training to act as an authorised Healthwatch West Sussex Representative. The project will result in a collaborative report of findings on project completion (forecast Autumn 2018).



Local Community Networks - Coastal West Sussex CCG

Healthwatch West Sussex have been commissioned by Coastal CCG to support the development of the eight [Local Community Networks](#).

Better Births Programme

Having been invited to take part in a System Leadership project led by The Kings Fund, we are having exploratory meetings with the Better Births programme leadership team with a view to greater involvement of the community and voluntary sector in this programme to ensure widest engagement with patients, families and carers and service provider staff.

We are having exploratory meetings with the following with a view to possible collaborative projects:

- Chichester University
- Wrenford Center
- Motor Neurone Disease Association
- Worthing Churches Homeless Project
- Sussex Oakleaf
- West Sussex Ethnic Minority Engagement Officer
- Horsham Matters
- Alzheimer's Society
- Parkinson's UK
- Disability Trust
- Mid-Sussex Voluntary Action
- Hyde Housing

To find out more about our Community Partnerships work please contact:



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