

Middlesbrough Development Day 28.1.16

Attended:

Staff Members

Natasha Judge
Toni McHale
Jill Edemenson
Sue Cawley

Board Members

Paul Crawshaw
Shirley Pew
Jo Cole
Helen Neal
Herbert Dirahu

Facilitator

Craig Smith

Middlesbrough Development Day started with an informal buffet lunch at 12noon with the actual event starting at 12.30am. All Board members were invited to come along and share the meal together.

1. Welcome

A warm welcome was extended to everyone and the facilitator Craig was introduced to the group. Craig outlined the purpose of the Development Day giving an overview of how the afternoon was to run. The session started with everyone introducing themselves, stating how long they had been a member of Healthwatch. The group divided into pairs and together they discussed what the success stories of Middlesbrough Healthwatch were:

- Team work amongst the Healthwatch Tees staff
- Good decision making skills which influenced service providers
- Recruiting of two University students on a research project
- Dementia Event
- Healthwatch credibility in the area
- Focused approach to work in spite of changes in the NHS structure
- Stick to the brief - 'concept to conclusion' of a theme
- Strong Board providing knowledge and experience
- Excellent relationships between Board and staff, honest and open

2. Expectations

Next the group broke into separate staff and board member groups with the task of discussing what each group expected of the other. This was established by filling in 'post it' notes of what we **get** and what we **give** to the other group e.g. commitment, admin support. All these were then put onto a chart with the headings

Never Occasionally Usually Always

The same chart was used to indicate what we **get** and what we **give** to the other group which on inspection revealed some interesting facts:
The Board indicated that the Reports were of a high standard but they were not always aware of any feedback from the Reports. It was suggested that this was usually shared with the Chair but not always fed back to Board Members. The impact of a recommendation was also questioned and after discussion it was agreed that this was quite difficult to measure as it can take many months or years to feel the impact of changes. However any successful recommendations and positive impacts are always recorded in the Annual Report. The Board felt that they needed challenging more to create a higher standard within the group. However this needs to be tempered

alongside own work commitments. Although the Board need information and evidence to help them make decisions it was generally felt that E mails should be categorised to show levels of importance. Board members shared that receiving too many E mails had a negative impact and that it would be better to get only ones that they could actually contribute to. When Reports sent to the Board for approval, certain parts now to be highlighted indicating that special attention needed. This is especially helpful when time is limited and a Board member not able to read the whole of the Report. It was agreed that Board meetings were chaired well and kept to time. Toni puts the Agenda together but welcomed items from Board members which would be approved by Paul prior to the meeting. Toni explained that she met with the Chair regularly and following these meetings she would start sending an update so that members were aware of operational decisions being made. This would cut down on agenda items and encourage the group to discuss the more important topics. Discussion took place about reducing the frequency of meetings but making them a bit longer to cover all the agenda items. If any Board member is unable to attend a meeting their views can be shared with another Board member (not a staff member) who will pass on the information at the meeting

3. How to make a Strategy

During discussion it was decided that more direction is needed to focus the group on setting work plans. In the past it has been less formal with ideas and intelligence presented to the Board for a decision. Whilst this has been successful to give clearer clarification and a more focused approach a new work plan procedure and request form was presented. After an opportunity to read the forms it was generally agreed to use them but that a few tweaks were necessary. Suggestions for work plan improvements included:

- Identifying stakeholders and partners to gather evidence
- Giving feedback to those supplying intelligence and not just putting the results on the website
- How to monitor impact/outcomes
- In addition to 'case studies' 'lived experiences' were also to be gathered for the annual Report

Use of the forms will give:

- Direction
- A process that needs to be followed enabling independent decision making
- Time scales for the work
- Preferred outcomes
- Ownership details
- An audit trail
- This new way of setting the work plan will be implemented immediately.

3. Decisions - small group

Making decisions can be difficult when attendance at meetings is limited. Quorum is three Board members. If decisions are made at a poorly attended meeting it was agreed to inform the other board members of decisions via E mail. Alternative methods of communication to be explored e.g. group chat instead of E mailing when decisions need to be made. Again it was noted that if a member could not attend a meeting views could be conveyed at the meeting by a representative Board member (to be organised directly between Board members).

The facilitator encouraged the group to think of the decisions that had been made previously and put them under the following headings:

Tell Test Consult Co-operate

It was generally felt that operational decisions could be made by Natasha/Toni/Paul and that these decisions would be conveyed to the Board. An element of trust has to be adopted between the Board and Paul as Chair. Some decisions have to be put to the Board to check validity and in the case of signing off Reports the Board would need consulting for approval. If a piece of work was undertaken and designated to be a quick win, but not on the actual work plan, it would be an operational decision to do this to as it would promote the Healthwatch profile.

4. Gathering Information

Gathering intelligence is the responsibility of all members and not just the Healthwatch staff. Board members encouraged to alert the staff of any trends they hear about from their own networks or from personal experience. All the information from various sources to be collated and presented at Board meetings. Having an awareness of key issues/themes emerging in members day jobs will help in setting the work plan. Knowing what is emerging will hopefully encourage questions to be added to their own surveys and questionnaires going out to their networks. It was suggested that Toni could visit groups within these networks to promote the message of Healthwatch. Raising awareness of Healthwatch in this way has already raised its profile as well as gathering the public's views on Health and Social Care.

At the moment the following have been identified as potential work areas:

- Social Care
- Mental Health
- Sensory Support
- Nursing Homes
- Day Care Centres
- GPs and Social Prescribing Awareness

Board members were encouraged to become more visible in their work settings to promote Healthwatch and if any engagement takes place to give numbers to Jill who is collating all information for the next Annual Report. It was agreed to have a work plan topic in place ready for the next Board meeting on 31.3.16

5. Reconnect

It was agreed that Paul, Toni and Natasha would monitor Board member attendance every six months. It was agreed that if members are unable to attend they can still contribute to the meetings by way of intelligence gathering and making known their views on certain subjects. It was acknowledged that all Board members had extremely busy roles on top of their commitment to Healthwatch. The group was encouraged to reflect on why they have become involved in Healthwatch and what they can give and achieve in the communities they represent.

6. Going Forward

All executive Board members and staff are committed to helping to improve health and social care services for the people of Middlesbrough they represent. Several new processes have been adopted as the result of the development day with immediate effect.