



Newsletter

September 2011

Rising to the challenge of HealthWatch

In the world of public and patient involvement, there is probably no bigger challenge for local authorities at the moment than the development of their Local HealthWatch. Patient and Public Involvement Solutions is at the forefront of this work helping a number of them shape and create their local aspirations through discussion and debate with their key stakeholders.

PPI Solutions has been working with nine local authority areas across the South Coast, London and the Midlands. Well done to Warwickshire, East Sussex, Staffordshire and Newham for getting their pathfinder status.



Sahdia Warraich, Director of the Host agency of the Newham LINK says, "The LINK commissioned PPI Solutions Ltd to facilitate a recent HealthWatch Planning Day. We were impressed with their knowledge and expertise around the whole HealthWatch transformation agenda. They worked hard to get us the short, medium and long term action plan we required to take the steps from LINKs to HealthWatch. We are definitely going to work with them again as we evolve, so that they can advise us on the model that would work in our area and support our HealthWatch sub group."

... also in this edition

-  Engaging Communities – an intelligent approach to democratic legitimacy?
-  Community Voices being heard through the ether
-  University Challenges in Brighton and South Bank
-  High Tech Pilot in Bournemouth
-  Latest Training News from PPI Solutions

"As well as stand alone workshops, like those we delivered in Newham, we have developed a successful methodology using a combination of one-off events, questionnaires and focus groups. We created a report for each that identified themes and a discussion document that will help them to communicate with stakeholders and the public more effectively", says Jessie Cunnett, Director of PPI Solutions.

"In Warwickshire we facilitated four focus groups, issued two questionnaires to both 'informed' stakeholders and to those who are interested but have less knowledge of the sector, and held focus groups. These involved people from the voluntary sector, LINK participants, and Health and Social Care users and staff. We were really pleased with the results. We received more than 300 responses to the questionnaires and the lively focus group sessions produced some really innovative ideas and, perhaps surprisingly, a huge commonality in respect of what people want from HealthWatch".

As well as the answers to the key questions posed in the questionnaires issued, PPI Solutions has valuable information from the analysis of around forty hours of focus group debates. Because the groups are run to a standard format, this data can be legitimately cross referenced and compared across areas to enable the company to establish key themes. For more about the key themes go to: <http://patientpublicinvolvement.com/news.htm>



Jessie Cunnett

"At this stage it is very important to strongly encourage people to steer away from getting their judgement clouded by how HealthWatch should be delivered. First they need to establish what they want HealthWatch to be. The 'how it is delivered' comes after. Form follows function."

"What comes across very strongly", says Jessie, "is that people want HealthWatch to be an organisation that is inclusive of everybody, and one that enables all people to come together and have their voices represented – but not by others who may have their own opinions, but by information and evidence generated by the activities of HealthWatch".

"Clearly learning from their experiences to date, people are telling us that HealthWatch mustn't become a club, with members, but an intelligence led body – and we have heard some great creative ideas for how that might be developed.

People have also told us that those elements of the new HealthWatch that are already being done well should be incorporated into HealthWatch – and not reinvented. That is to say, we should make the best of what we've got – not create new things for the sake of it."

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Rising to the challenge of HealthWatch continued...

Being in a unique position to see all of this feedback, PPI Solutions is very clear that to succeed in times of competing demand, Local HealthWatch organisations should develop a robust business case that can demonstrate how value can be added and lives and services improved.

“They should also think about how they will survive and grow in a competitive environment and establish themselves in such a way as to be able as to provide specialist services through additional income streams, providing local specialist independent consumer insight. They need to re-orientate in their thinking from previous systems and exist in a more modern operating model”, says Jessie.

As you can see, PPI Solutions is well placed to help local authorities who need to have a better understanding of what their local stakeholders want from HealthWatch and can help get focus groups up and running within a few weeks. To find out more about this or any other aspect of HealthWatch (including potential delivery models) get in touch at info@patientpublicinvolvement.com

Engaging Communities — an intelligent approach to democratic legitimacy?

This exciting aspect of PPI Solutions work has come a long way since it was mentioned in the last PPI Newsletter.

“*Engaging Communities Staffordshire* is a ‘first’ and it is an exciting model that will become a legal, fully independent company in January 2012”, says Jessie. “It will be run with professional support by local people for the benefit of local people”.



David Colin Thomé who wrote the initial report on the failings at Mid Staffs and who has been championing the project from the off says, “Whose NHS is it? The proposed reforms to the NHS commendably include the commitment to patients of ‘No decision about me without me’. For all public service users to make that commitment a reality they need information. Information is indeed power. The power to choose, the power to be an informed expert patient as partner with their professional, the power to have control of their treatment in particular for long term conditions. And the future aim must be for the public as future or current patients to have influence over services. For this we need meaningful engagement, involvement and patient determined outcomes. Commissioners of care must be the ‘people’s organisation’ and to deliver will need access to the same information.

In this age of limited resources the patient is an underused and often under-valued resource. There is too much unnecessary duplication of care, inefficiencies and not joined up and often inappropriate care. Some patients have a need for a complex range of services. Who better than the patient and/or personal carer working with their professional carer to ensure effective outcome oriented co-ordination of their care across organisations. High quality care is actually cheaper. Patients, the public and indeed commissioners need an organisation that provides independent information and support. ‘Engaging Communities in Staffordshire’ the leading edge example across the country can already do much of this with the potential to be even better.”



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The project has achieved partnership funding from the council, hospital, PCT, and the Mental Health Trust. All part funding its transition, with the receipt of an independent grant from the Social Enterprise Investment Fund giving enough money to appoint a project/development manager and assistant who are co-located with the Local Involvement Network, and who are setting about the task of creating the new company. The project is also an important part of the developing Staffordshire HealthWatch and is integral to its pathfinder proposals. More information at www.engagingcommunitiesstaffordshire.co.uk

Community voices being heard through the ether (and in the post!)

PPI Solutions is delighted to see that the work it did last year for the Department of Health to create virtual patient reference groups has been included in the National Guidance as the way for GPs to form a virtual patient group to achieve the Patient Participation Directed Enhanced Services (DES) payment.

“The appendix to the National Guidance is the toolkit we created”, Jessie tells us, “And the project that it came from has been picked up and included as an example of good practice - *the way to do it*. It’s a great compliment”.

As a spin off from this work, PPI Solutions is currently working with a group of three GP practices in Hounslow who have sought help in setting up a virtual patient group and meeting the requirements of the DES.

“Working ‘front of house’, and using a carefully worked out script, we talked to people as they waited to be seen by the doctor - and recruited 60 people in the first three hours! That rose to 281 in the following few days through the practice staff continuing the good work.

“Most people we approached were more than happy to be part of this as it’s not a big commitment”, says Jessie. “Fears of email and online methods not appealing to everyone were eased with a very rich cross section of people coming forward, those not on email gave their home address to receive information by post.

It has been very interesting to have worked on an innovative Patient Participation Group module this year with a fascinating organisation called **Health Unlocked** that creates on-line patient communities.

Their Chairman, Matt Jameson Evans, says “Jessie’s wide experience in patient involvement and participation combine to provide well-reasoned and applied solutions in patient-centred projects which can otherwise feel somewhat theoretical. Accessing her perspective and advice on more than one project has always produced tangible and very beneficial outcomes.”



Check them out at www.healthunlocked.com/.

University Challenges

Since the last newsletter, PPI Solutions has been working with Brighton and Sussex Medical School, University of Brighton, to develop a Masters level patient and public involvement pilot programme called ‘Developing Effective Partnerships with Patients and the Public’. The aim is for it to become an established programme at Brighton & Sussex Medical School.

This pilot will be run over three days in September and October and has been promoted by the University as a ‘ground-breaking course that will help you jointly create your vision, priorities and plans with Patients and the Public’.



Joan Saddler

“We have some fantastic speakers too. David Colin Thomé OBE, former National Clinical Director for Primary Care (pictured on previous page) opens the first day, and Joan Saddler, National Director for Patient and Public Affairs at the Department of Health opens Day 2. Joy Tweed, a non Executive Director for a London PCT Cluster and lecturer at the University of Westminster, where she is course leader for the MSc in Integrated Governance in Healthcare Communities opens Day 3, followed by Dan Gregory from Common Capital. Such is the interest in these speakers that the morning sessions have been opened up as Masterclasses and all three days have sold out!”



Joy Tweed

“But this is more than an academic course – there will be action learning too as we start a process of working with people who attend to map patient and public involvement in their area so they can begin to create a strategy back at their work place.”.

Running alongside that, Jessie is working with Brighton and Sussex Medical School again but this time with London South Bank University to host a Summit on October 20th. This will begin a dialogue on the future direction of Patient and Public Involvement from an educational perspective. Many key figures have been invited to explore the need to have a professional pathway for people who want to undertake this work. For further information contact Jessie directly.

Hi Tech Pilot in Bournemouth

PPI Solutions is working with Bournemouth Local Involvement Network - hosted by Bournemouth based charity Help and Care - which is piloting the use of some amazing software called Symfonix® designed to automatically amalgamate and sort all of the health and social care data received from the residents of a particular area – in this case, Bournemouth.

Help and Care's Martyn Webster comments, "The automatic mapping across the area not only helps us with the identification of important issues but also helps us communicate this to other health partners."

Jessie believes that this approach has the potential to make a real impact to the way organisations make decisions, bringing meaningful insight from the ground up'.



This year sees PPI Solutions undertaking work with their 50th Local Involvement Network (LINK) client!

Latest Training News

When organisations undergo change a great deal of time and energy is directed towards evaluating options and developing new systems and processes — often at the expense of the existing day to day activities. With the transition of LINKs to HealthWatch, PPI Solutions is pleased to report that generally these networks seem to be remaining focused on the day job in spite of the distractions and are continuing to expand and develop the areas of work that will be continued by HealthWatch.

Trainer, Ruth Cottington-Bray says, "LINKs are continuing to invest in quality training and resources to support their volunteers. What we have seen over the past few months is a strong commitment from LINKs nationally to improve their engagement and involvement with the public by investing in Community Network and Development training, something that brings huge benefit as it demonstrates the LINK is reflective of, and responsive to its community."

The company has also seen a substantial increase from LINKs for Enter & View training. This appears to be a result of LINKs having established good working relationships with local commissioners and providers who are responding to the evidence from initial Enter and View visits that demonstrate their success and impact. This has led to an increase in Enter and View activity which requires more volunteers to be skilled and trained to undertake this valuable work in their communities.

"We look forward to continuing to support LINKs through the transition period to HealthWatch not only with the programmes mentioned but with all of our training and support resources. We shall also be continuing to provide specially tailored materials where needed", says Ruth.

Contact details

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 <https://twitter.com/PPIsolutions> where we regularly upload latest public and patient involvement related reading and resources.

 <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Patient-and-Public-Involvement-Solutions/123836184301559>