

**Carers Representation Group**  
**Notes of the meeting held on 18 September 2020**

<b>Present</b>	
Carers	8 carers attended
Carers in Hertfordshire	Roma Mills (RM)

1	<b>Welcome and introductions:</b> The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting
2	<b>Apologies:</b> 3 carers sent apologies
3	<b>Minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 June 2020:</b> the minutes had been pre-circulated and were noted.
4	<p><b>Matters arising:</b></p> <p>4.1(i) <i>Homelessness:</i> RM confirmed that she had contacted the District Housing leaders group as agreed. The response confirmed that local housing teams do liaise with HPFT (mental health)/CGL (drug and/or alcohol abuse)/ACS (social care) and refer to those services as appropriate. The Government had provided additional funding for accommodation for the street homeless. However some people who continue to use alcohol and/or drugs choose not to engage with services that require them to reduce their usage. In response to a query RM confirmed that there is no 'wet house' in Hertfordshire but that Emerging Futures the specialist housing support agency had been commissioned to provide a small number of 'wet beds'. RM to confirm whether that service is now being provided.</p> <p>4.1(ii) <i>Backlog of assessments:</i> remains outstanding.</p> <p>4.1(iii) <i>Direct Payments:</i> ACS had agreed to increase a Direct Payment to meet the additional costs of care/equipment arising from the pandemic.</p> <p>4.1(iv) Issues for those people who are not able to comply or understand social distancing: this remains problematic for certain clients and has to be managed. Lanyards with an exemption card attached for those who have difficulty wearing a face mask can be obtained from eBay or etsy at prices ranging from £2.99 to £6.99. Google <i>Hidden Disabilities Lanyard</i>.  <i>Note:</i> Jenni also provided the following link and note:  <a href="https://hiddendisabilitiesstore.com/shop.html">https://hiddendisabilitiesstore.com/shop.html</a> : not free I'm afraid but only 50p and various cards too</p> <p>4.1(v) ACS Strategy: CinH held two meetings for Helen Maneuf, Assistant Director, to present the ACS 3 year plan review 2018-2021 to carers and to hear their views and experiences. Two further meetings have been booked for 30 October, 2.00pm – 4.00pm and 4 November, 7.30pm – 9.30pm, where Helen will report back to carers on the themes identified in the first stage of the review and discuss priorities for the next three years, 2021-2024.</p>

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**Chair's Report:**

The Chair reported that as the co-chair of the CCPB he had met with Chris Badger, Interim Director of Social Services, Ted Maddex, Commissioning Manager for Carer Support and County Councillor Fiona Hill, Deputy Executive Adult Care Services, to discuss the operation of the Board.

He had asked for clarity around what different partners understand by Co-production, how we assess whether a project is being co-produced and how we encourage the Board to move towards true co-production. He suggested that we use the Ladder of Participation/Co-production (attached) as a tool to measure the level of participation possible with a project and members agreed. The Group's role would also be to engage in some creative 'blue sky' thinking and be proactive about bringing ideas and solutions forward to the Board.

The Chair explained that we have the opportunity at the Board to present the issues and concerns that carers report or raise. Members agreed that we should seek input from the Hub leaders to collect this information. RM also explained that CinH is aiming to develop our database so that themes can be more readily recorded and shared. This will involve obtaining input from the whole organisation and will enable us to cite intelligence gained from across the county rather than relying on anecdote. The Group also agreed that the Hubs and other carer groups should receive feedback from the CCPB to encourage them to see it as a useful – a *You Said: We Did* approach.

The Chair also reported that he had asked that any presentations or reports to the CCPB be circulated to members of the Board at least one week in advance of the meeting. He has also agreed that the Carers' agenda slot would be towards the end of the meeting.

The CCPB would meet quarterly and we would be advised of the theme for any meeting in advance.

The Chair reported that the CCPB had set up three working groups –

- The Carer Stress group
- The 'Be Safe' group
- The contingency and long-term planning group

He has asked that each group submit a report to the next and future CCPB meetings and confirmed that the 'Stress' group had met on 9 September 2020. Dick confirmed that he had attended a recent meeting of the 'Be Safe' and was encouraged to report that he felt that that group was achieving its objectives.

It was noted that the Carers Strategy 2018-2021 is now due for refresh and a fourth working group will be set up to lead on that.

**Carers' questions/issues to be submitted in advance of the CCPB on 22 October:**

Concerns were raised about the new Turning Point 'Carers' Breaks' sitting service. A carer had passed the published telephone numbers on to carers only to find that they were incorrect. He had followed this up himself and had been able to contact the service – was promised a call back that did not happen. Agreed that we should ask that the theme for one meeting should be the project management and quality monitoring of changes to ACS contracts. It was noted that another carer had reported concerns about problems with the transfer of an Extra Care Support contract to a new provider.

A parent carer raised concerns about parents of disabled children being left without support during the COVID-19 pandemic. Whilst they may have been contacted by services, no support was offered and the special schools did not keep open for all the pupils on roll despite the Government's statements that children with special needs would continue to be able to attend school. Roma confirmed that CinH had received similar feedback from other parents – particularly in relation to children with complex health needs or those with challenging behaviour. Agreed that this should be raised as a concern in the event of a second lock down.

Other questions included:

1. Will the Board receive an update on the emerging themes from the ACS 3 Year Review 2018-2021?
2. Can the Board be updated on progress in working through the backlog of assessments – how long will it take to clear?
3. How has COVID-19 impacted on the quality monitoring of care services?
4. Patients are being tested for COVID-19 on admission to hospital but not closer to the discharge date which means that if the infection is acquired in hospital it is not diagnosed. Can this practice be changed? Are the two care homes that ACS re-opened being used as 'half ways houses' for people being discharged from hospital whilst still waiting for the result of the COVID-19 test?
5. A carer found the questions put to him to determine eligibility for respite during COVID-19 offensive and disturbing so he withdrew from the telephone assessment. Can these questions be reviewed?
6. Lack of activities for people during the pandemic is leading to depression and deterioration in their functioning. This applies particularly to people with dementia and those with learning disabilities whether living in the family home, supported living or residential/nursing home care. They need to interact with other people and engage in a variety of activities that offer stimulation. If it is not going to be possible to re-open day services and activities then what other solutions can be found?

	<p>7. Similarly the lack of a break is taking a heavy toll on carers of people with dementia and parent carers of children with complex healthcare needs or challenging behaviour. So again, if it is not possible to re-open day and respite services or if schools have to reduce their opening, what other solutions can be found to support them?</p> <p>8. Can ACS update the Board on proposals for re-opening day and overnight respite services?</p>
7	<p><b>Possible ways to get an answer or response to carers' issues/concerns:</b>  The Chair reported that ACS can provide an officer to attend the Group meetings - this person would be able to respond to some of the issues raised immediately or take forward those of individual concern. The Group agreed that an officer would attend in the second part of the meeting on a trial basis. Some concern was expressed that this should not be used to neuter or 'manage' the CRG and carers' views and that this should be reviewed after two further meetings.</p> <p>There would still be the opportunity to take issues and concerns to the Board, with the option of a written response provided in advance or a response at the meeting. In either event a record would be kept.</p>
8	<p><b>Any Other Business:</b>  The issue of police awareness of the needs of people with ASC was raised following a difficult experience during an arrest. RM to raise via the All Age Autism Board.</p> <p>The next Board meeting will be held on 22 October 2020, Mike O and Kevin Minier will be attending a Chair and Vice-Chair of this Group. We have three other spaces and it was agreed priority should go to those who were able to attend the Group meeting on 18 September.</p> <p>Future meeting dates will be circulated as soon the CCPB meeting dates are agreed.</p>