

## Suffolk Coastal Disability Forum

Minutes of the Meeting held via Zoom on Tuesday, 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2023,  
at 2 pm

### Present:

Linda Hoggarth	Disability Forum for Suffolk (Chair)
Peter Coleman	Member, North Suffolk and NE Essex Foundation Trust
Deborah Darby	Melton Parish Council
Simon Daws	Resident / Suffolk Guide Dog Forum
Bryan Frost	Resident / Trimley St Mary Parish Council
Steve Hodgkiss	Disability Forum for Suffolk / Suffolk Sight
Paul Kelly	Resident (Vice Chair)
Joss Mullett	Communities Officer – Framlingham, Wickham Market & Surrounding Villages, East Suffolk Council
Margaret Morris	Resident (Secretary)
Kerry Overton	Community Development Officer, Healthwatch Suffolk
Graham Walker	Chair, Disability Advice Service – East Suffolk

### Guests:

Steve Bruce	Patient Experience Lead, East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust
Helen Rose	Lead Governor, East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust

### Apologies:

Trevor Garrod	East Suffolk Travellers Association (ESTA)
Sylvia Izzard	Resident
Linda Layton	Resident
Cllr Edward Thompson	East Suffolk Council / Woodbridge Town Council

### 1. Welcome & Introductions

Linda welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

### 2. Apologies

The above apologies were received and noted.

### **3. Patient Experiences at Ipswich Hospital**

3.1 Steve Bruce, Patient Experience Lead, East Suffolk & North Essex NHS Foundation Trust, was welcomed to the meeting and invited to talk about his work with the Patient Experience Team. Helen Rose, Lead Public Governor, East Suffolk & North Essex NHS Foundation Trust was also welcomed.

3.2 Steve explained that this was a large area to cover and the overall aim is to ensure that patients' experiences of hospital services are good and to make experiences better if there are areas of concern. He is very keen to hear patients' experiences and to gather feedback.

3.3 He works with both the wards and the various clinics within the Hospital Trust.

3.4 There are a number of initiatives that allow patients to talk about the services that they receive. These include Patient Panels which have replaced the previous User Groups and these cover patients with specific conditions such as cancer or are related to specific projects. These have been reorganised in recent months.

3.5 There is a Readers' Group where volunteers comment on draft leaflets being produced to ensure that the wording of these is clear and helpful to patients.

3.6 Where a patient has a particularly useful story to tell, the patient can be invited to be present at the Trust Board Meeting in order that the hospital can learn from the experiences being shared.

3.7 Patients volunteering for the Patient Panels are recruited as volunteers and have DBS checks through the Hospital's Volunteering Service. Further information about the Patient Experience Team can be found on <https://www.esneft.nhs.uk/get-involved/patient-experience-network/>.

3.8 If members of the Forum want to get involved, particularly in the Patient Panels, then Steve would be very keen to hear from them. He stressed that Patient Experience is very much the 'Voice of the Patient'.

3.9 Steve was keen to gather feedback from Forum members on their experiences of hospital services. Whilst he would not be able to address all concerns, he would take those back to relevant departments/staff within the hospital.

3.10 The following concerns and issues were discussed:

- **Patients' Letters:** It was noted that it is seemingly impossible for letters to be sent out to patients in their preferred formats. It is particularly difficult for patients with visual impairments. This is an area that has been a problem for many years and, despite this being raised many times, no progress has been made. Members commented that the letters often have a Bristol postmark so it could be that the system being used does not accommodate specific formats. It was noted that a new Equality and Diversity Officer is now in post.

**Post Meeting Note:** Discussions are taking place regarding accessible information standard letters/correspondence with the provider but Steve is waiting to have it confirmed what formats will be available or what the timeframe is to make this happen.

- **Patient Portal:** Members noted that the Patient Portal can be difficult to access since the new provider has taken over.

**Post Meeting Note:** If anyone is having issues accessing the patient portal, they can email [patient.portal@esneft.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.portal@esneft.nhs.uk) and they should get a response and help to log in. Further information can be found at <https://www.esneft.nhs.uk/patientportal/>

- **PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service):** Members were advised that the PALS Service was available to assist them with any concerns.

**Post Meeting Note:** PALS Telephone numbers are as follows:

Ipswich – 01473 704781 or 0800 3287624

Colchester – 01206 742683 or 746448 or 0800783 7328

With regard to the information on the answer phone for out of hours contact, this is due to be updated at the end of the month and an option will be added to be put through to the switch board who will in turn contact the site matron. Information can be found at

<https://www.esneft.nhs.uk/your-visit/before-you-arrive/patient - advice-service-pals/>

- **15 Steps Challenge:** Brief information was given on the 15 steps challenge which is designed to take on board the views of patients and their families.

**Post Meeting Note:** The link below provides further information. If anyone wants to come along and take part, please advise Steve. [The Fifteen Steps Challenge \(england.nhs.uk\)](https://www.england.nhs.uk/15stepschallenge/).

- **Parking for Blue Badge Holders:** Members felt that there were now less spaces for blue badge holders. The current building works added to the difficulty as the blue badge spaces were often used for mobile units. This also meant that the blue badge spaces were quite a distance from the hospital entrances and therefore caused problems for people with limited mobility. Wheelchairs could only be accessed by reaching the entrances and so did not provide a very accessible form of assistance. Standard size parking spaces were not wide enough for wheelchair users.
- **Signage:** Members felt that the signage in the hospital could be improved especially to help patients find their way back out of the hospital when they had been to particular clinics.
- **Public Bus Services into the Hospital:** Members felt that more bus services should have access into the hospital site. There were particular issues for people using the No 64 Service which goes right past the hospital. The walking distances from nearby bus stops to access the hospital are too far for people with mobility difficulties to walk. It was noted that a tree obscures the bus stop on the opposite side of Heath Road making it difficult for people to access buses.
- **New Elective Orthopaedic Centre:** Members commented that the consultation events regarding the development of this Centre were very helpful and gave people the opportunity to raise their issues. It was felt that this involvement was good practice and very useful and should be replicated when other developments were in the pipeline. However this did not appear to be common practice across the whole Trust and it was not clear whether the learning from such involvement benefited other developments. In theory, all developments met current building regulations, but there were still instances where errors in accessibility were made.
- **Non-Emergency Patient Transport:** Steve said that 'lived examples' of using Non-Emergency Patient Transport will be sought with the aim of improving the service.
- **PLACE (Patient-Led Assessments of the Care Environment):** Helen drew attention to the PLACE visits which take place throughout the Trust by assessors. Volunteers are welcomed as assessors. PLACE was introduced in 2013 and is the system for assessing the quality of the patient environment. The assessments primarily apply to hospitals and hospices providing NHS-funded care in both the NHS and private/independent sectors, but others are also encouraged and helped to participate in the programme.

3.11 Steve and Helen took note of all the issues raised and will seek responses from the relevant departments/staff within the hospital. They made it clear that they did value their attendance at this meeting and had listened to and made note of members' concerns and issues. Steve will report back on the responses he receives.

**Action: Steve Bruce**

3.12 Steve and Helen were thanked for their input and members looked forward to the responses to issues raised in due course.

#### **4. Services provided by Members**

##### **4.1 Disability Advice Service – East Suffolk**

4.1.1 Graham was welcomed to the meeting in his new role as Chair of the Disability Advice Service – East Suffolk.

4.1.2 Graham said that he was very new to this role and, in addition, the Disability Advice Service has a new manager, Steve Race. However, he was able to present detailed information about the service via slides, which will be circulated with the minutes of the meeting.

4.1.3 Key points were as follows:

- The Disability Advice Service is a free, independent advice service for disabled people and their carers.
- The service has expanded and now has more office space at their offices at The Square in Martlesham. This has enabled them to have a ground floor office.
- The services provided include advice by telephone or by appointment, crisis support (which takes one third of their resources), and a listening service.
- Contact can be made by telephone, e-mail, via the website or facebook.
- Some services are under review such as home visits, outreach services and drop in visits to the office.
- In 2022, £2.6m of benefit gain has been secured for clients, over 14,700 client contacts made, and 33 benefit appeals won with a success rate of 100%.
- Whilst predominantly assisting people in East Suffolk, they can help people wherever they live in Suffolk.
- Their annual budget is in the region of £250,000 but there is always a need for fundraising to ensure the future of the different services.

- The Disability Advice Service – East Suffolk can be contacted by Telephone: 01394 387070, E-mail: [advice@daseastsuffolk.org](mailto:advice@daseastsuffolk.org).
- Further information is available at <http://www.daseastsuffolk.org/>

4.1.4 Graham was thanked for his very helpful update and it was hoped that the Disability Advice Service – East Suffolk would maintain good contacts with this Forum.

## **5. Minutes from the Meeting held on the 4<sup>th</sup> October 2022**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Suffolk Coastal Disability Forum held on 4<sup>th</sup> October, 2022, were agreed as a correct record.

## **6. Matters Arising**

**6.1 Item 4 Ease the Squeeze:** Members were unsure whether they had received information regarding Ease the Squeeze and this would be checked.

### **6.2 Item 6.3 Parking for Blue Badge Holders:**

6.2.1 It was understood from a meeting of the Waveney Disability Forum that Lewis Boudville, Transport Infrastructure and Parking Services Manager, was intending to review the parking information on the Council's website. He had been reminded that the two Forums would be happy to review this. Joss would also remind him.

**Action: Joss Mullett**

6.2.2 It was not known whether the relocation of the parking spaces for blue badge holders in the Station Car Park, Woodbridge had resolved the issue of flooding when it rains.

**6.3 Item 6.5 Changes to Landlines:** Information from Ofcom had been circulated to members and it was hoped that this would go some way towards reassuring members what they should do when their landlines were to be moved to digital technology.

**6.4 Item 7.5 Handy Person Service:** Information is still awaited regarding this service.

**Action: Joss Mullett**

**6.5 Item 8.3 Pedestrian Crossing – Martlesham Village:** Simon reported that he was very disillusioned at the lack of response from

local councillors regarding the lack of a pedestrian crossing. There had been no information from Cllr Thompson as to whether he was working on introducing a petition for local residents.

**Action: Cllr Thompson**

## **7. Issues, Concerns and News from Members**

**7.1 Plug in Suffolk:** It was noted that Suffolk County Council had received funding of £3.3m for a pilot project to install 100 sockets for charging electric vehicles. So far 78 have been installed, some of which are in the area covered by the Forum, in Grundisburgh, Gt Glemham, Rendlesham, Saxmundham and Southwold. These are being installed in rural areas where there would be very little chance of them getting a charging hub without Plug in Suffolk grant support. Up to date information on the charging network can be accessed on [www.zap-map.com](http://www.zap-map.com). Members noted that the app only gives information on where the charging points are not whether they are working. Difficulties in installing an electric charging point in Melton were noted.

**7.2 East Suffolk Travel Association:** A survey has been carried out on train and bus journeys during October, 2022 and a report prepared. This report has been circulated to members. It was agreed to ask Simon Barnett his views on some of the issues identified relating to bus stops/stations.

**Action: Linda Hoggarth**

## **8. Views on Health and Social Care with Healthwatch Suffolk**

8.1 Kerry reported as follows:

- Additional criteria had been introduced by the Community Dental Service which now include wheelchair users who need a hoist to transfer, homeless people, and people with mental health problems. There are differences between Norfolk and Suffolk relating to the provision of Children's Dental Services.
- Gill Jones, Community & Engagement Manager, is retiring from Healthwatch Suffolk and will be replaced by Sally Watson.
- Projects currently being undertaken include Living with Dementia, Improving mental health support in pregnancy and Tackling poverty with people in Suffolk.

8.2 Members congratulated Kerry on completing the London Marathon in 5 hours 40 minutes.

## 9. Information Round/Any Other Business

**9.1 Melton Pavilion:** Deborah advised that the Melton Pavilion is now open and is fully in use. Bookings can be taken for meetings and events.

**9.2 Use of Cot Sides for Elderly Patients:** Members raised instances where elderly patients had fallen out of bed in hospital because cot sides were not being used. It was thought that the use of cot sides should always be considered as part of the care of elderly patients. However, there are conflicting views on their safe use.

## 10. Format and Topics for the next Meeting

10.1 The Planning Group will decide whether to hold the next meeting on Zoom, as a Hybrid Meeting or Face to Face.

10.2 Topics for discussion were suggested as follows:

- Poverty Truth Network – Healthwatch Suffolk
- Progress Report on the Felixstowe Beach Village – East Suffolk Council

## 11. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Suffolk Coastal Disability Forum will take place on Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2023, at 2pm. The arrangements for this meeting will be advised to members.

**Post Meeting Note:** The Planning Group is continuing to seek a way in which a hybrid meeting can be organised for the next meeting. This requires more research into suitable venues with good internet access and the availability of the necessary equipment. In the meantime, please keep the date of the 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2023 in your diaries as a possible Zoom meeting.