



Board of Directors

subject	Chair's Report
Date of meeting	25 th January 2023
author	Jonathan Wells
purpose	For Discussion

This brief report outlines achievements and challenges for us at present, from my point of view as chair.

In the past quarter we have continued our work to engage with people with mental health challenges including older people, and people with substance misuse issues. People with lived experience give us positive feedback about appreciating being listened to and about “giving something back” to services from which they have benefitted. We remain committed to having as much impact as possible when we enable people’s voices to be heard within the local NHS and social care systems. I believe there is always more we can do in this area.

It has become increasingly clear that through Lois we have a central role in championing a wide range of voice organisations locally – significantly wider than the services we are commissioned to provide. This is a sign of our good reputation and the strong relationships we have established with the relevant NHS and social care commissioning bodies. However, without additional funding it is hard to see how we can deliver on these new responsibilities effectively. Lois and I are therefore in dialogue with local contract holders to address this issue.

At a strategic level I do have concerns about the length of time it is taking for the system to move from being a Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to an Integrated Care System (ICS). This change is mandatory, and offers a chance to move to a better model, but at present progress is slow. I understand it may be four years between beginning to make the necessary changes and them being fully established. The old Strategic Board structure came to an end in June 2022 and little of it has so far been replaced.

There has been a great deal of discussion about processes but little about outcomes – both how to ensure that the ICS model is more effective than its predecessor in addressing well known gaps in services, and in terms of achieving better outcomes for those accessing mental health and substance misuse services. I am pleased we are working with key colleagues to embed co-production values and practice in the new structure but ironically it often feels harder to do this this year than it was before.

I have raised these concerns on behalf of The SUN Network and will escalate the issues if necessary in the coming months. Those who have taken the trouble to engage with us and share their experiences expect and deserve nothing less.