Healthwatch North Tyneside – Minutes of Board Meeting

Date and time: Monday 8th September 2025, 18:00 – 20:00

Venue: Cullercoats Methodist Church, The Broadway, North Shields NE30 3LJ

Present: Chair - Carol Nevison (CN), Jackie Doughty (JD), Bea Groves-McDaniel (BGM), Peter Berrie (PB), Paul McKelvie (PM), Paul Greenway (PG), David Slater (DS), Lindsay Yarde (LY), Maxine Ulrich Houston (MH),

In attendance: Paul Jones (PJ), Tracey Hindmarch (TH), Katy Parkinson (KP)

Apologies: Paula McCormack (PM)

Agenda item 1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

CN welcomed all to the meeting and announced that we would be using Plaud AI to support note taking during the meeting.

PM sent apologies.

For each item, the Board considered any equalities, Health and Safety and safeguarding issues arising and considered these as part of their decision-making.

Agenda item 2. Declarations of Interest

No new declarations of interest were raised.

Agenda item 3. Minutes from the previous meeting

The minutes from the previous meetings were reviewed. Progress with actions was noted.

Decision – The Board approved as an accurate record with the following changes:

- PB to be added to the minutes as he was present at the meeting.
- MH's name to be corrected.

Action 3.1 – KP to amend minutes from last meeting.

Agenda Item 4: Chair and Director updates

PJ presented the following updates:

<u>Healthwatch Legislation</u>

There will be no new King's Speech until the 2026 calendar year, meaning no primary legislation changes related to Healthwatch will occur until then.

NHS Changes - National NHS changes are stalled whilst funding for redundancy packages nationally are agreed.

Appointments and Changes

- Louise Ansari, the Director of Healthwatch England, has been appointed to the board of NHS England – the Board agreed this was a positive step.
- Louise Grey is now Director of Public Health
- Julie Firth Director of Children’s Services, is retiring

Recruitment is taking place for new Chief Executive, an announcement is expected shortly.

Contract Monitoring

The contract monitoring meeting was supportive. It was confirmed that a name change for the organisation would not have a negative impact, though the process for enacting the change has not yet been detailed.

Safe Haven

Safe Haven is now formally open, 75 people have used the service in 6 weeks.

Dentistry - Verne Road

- Letter regarding the decision to no longer provide NHS dentistry was sent to a significant number of residents.
- It appears that there is an issue with recruitment of dentists and NHS contract impacts on their business model
- Feedback from patients in recent years has focused on lack of continuity of care and access to experienced staff.
- This practice was more accessible to wheelchair users than many other dental practices.

Decision – The Board agreed to the proposal set out in papers in response to this service change.

Action 4.1 – PJ to action dental access proposal with team.

Agenda item 5: Escalations and Considerations

No new escalations or issues were reported regarding safeguarding, GDPR, health and safety, or equalities.

Agenda item 6: Healthwatch Next Steps planning

CN suggested a small working group should be formed to help develop our approach to considering the future of the charity. This subgroup would not have decision making powers.

Decision – The Board agreed the proposal. The subgroup will include CN, LY, JD and DS with the support of PJ. The Board also agreed to a development session around the AGM on 10th November to focus on the future of the charity and that Trustees will be asked to consider key issues prior to this development session.

Actions:

- **6.1** KP to arrange AGM, Board Development session and evening meal.
- **6.2** PJ to coordinate Next Steps working group.
- **6.3** Next Steps working group to prepare development session, including necessary 'pre-work'.

Agenda item 7: Strategic Risk Register

The Strategic Risk Register was discussed. It was agreed that this could be consolidated but the key risks had been identified. Register includes risks held on behalf of the network, particularly around grant agreements and finances.

There was a discussion around who is accountable and responsible for the outcome of the strategic risk register and how the other board members can support them with the actions of these. Further actions will emerge from discussions over the coming months. This will be overseen by the Business Group and shared with the Board at each meeting.

Actions:

7.1 – PJ to support Business Group to review Strategic Risk Register.

7.2 – PJ to share network risks with Chairs and Lead Officers.

Agenda item 8: Workplan updates 2025/26

The board discussed the report in the papers and welcomed the progress with different projects – particularly the website review and carers and noted plans for annual survey activity.

Continence project – The project outline was discussed and agreed to proceed with working up a detailed project plan. LY will act as project lead.

Sexual Health project - The project outline was discussed and agreed to proceed with working up a detailed project plan. BGM will act as project lead.

Action 8.1 – Staff team to work up project proposals as discussed.

Agenda item 9: Finance update and delivery

<u>2024/5 accounts.</u>

PJ provided an update on progress with the yearend accounts. PJ and TH agreed that new accountant review has been thorough and highlighted an oversight which led to a missed HMRC payment due to a failure in the payroll provider's reminder system. Payment by direct debit is being investigated to prevent this happening again.

<u>Current year financial position</u>

The current years financial position remains on track with no issues to report.

<u>Funding bids</u>

1. Alzheimer's Research UK funding for a project around brain health and preventative measures people can take (HWNT could potentially receive 5k) – 1 year delivery option and then additional money for 2 years after. Outcome expected in November.
2. Government funded, business and innovation skills / digital inclusion and NHS app (Network wide) – 6 months delivery. On 4 Sept. Outcome is expected in November.
3. Social prescribing (Network wide) – 6 months delivery

The Board discussed the risks associated with funding for longer-term projects given uncertainty about the future of Healthwatch. This will be monitored as part of our risk register.

Actions:

9.1 - Complete 2024/5 accounts prior to AGM and invite accountant to future Board meeting.

9.2 – TH to investigate and set up a direct debit for HMRC payroll payments.

Agenda item 10: Policies Review and subgroup updates

Draft policies have been circulated separately for review and decision by end of September 2025.

The Board discussed the proposed changes to the salary policy and agreed to the suggestions in principle – detailed discussion once the policy is drafted.

Equalities Diversity and Inclusion policy – BGM to review and assist in any changes that are needed with People Group.

People Group – Will next meet in November given leave and capacity commitments.

Actions:

10.1 – Trustees to review draft policies shared by email and provide comment by end September.

10.2 - BGM to review Equalities policy with PJ and discuss with People Group prior to Board discussion.

10.3 – PJ to draft salary policy and other outstanding policies for discussion with People Group.

Agenda item 11: Any other business

BGM provided an update – The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is conducting a comprehensive review of CNTW.

Next meeting 20th October – Venue to be confirmed. CN made suggestion for possible venue that is available in the evening and will make enquiries after the meeting.

Action 11.1 – KP to arrange October Board meeting venue.