Healthwatch North Tyneside – Minutes of Board Meeting

Date and time: Monday 28th April 2025, 18:00 – 20:00
Venue: Healthwatch North Tyneside Office, Wallsend Community Hub and Library, 16 The Forum, Wallsend, NE28 8JR

Present: Carol Nevison (CN) (Chair)**,** Jackie Doughty (JD), Paula McCormack (PM), Paul Greenway (PG), Bea Groves - McDaniel (BGM), Peter Berrie (PB), Paul McKelvie (PMc)

In attendance: Paul Jones (PJ), Matthew Hunter (MH), Tracey Hindmarch (TH)

Apologies: Lyndsay Yarde (LY), David Slater (DS), Maxine Houston (MHo),

	Agenda Item	**Discussion**	**Action Required**
1.	Welcome, introductions and apologies	CN welcomed all in attendance to the meeting. LY, DS, and MHo sent apologies	
2.	Declarations of interest	PB announced his resignation as a trustee from Whitley Bay Young People's Centre, citing personal reflection and decision-making during a holiday. BG advised her role has changed slightly at CNTW and she is now also serving on the Charities Committee responsible for dispensing money from the Trust's charitable arm. For each item, the Board considered any equalities, Health and Safety and safeguarding issues arising and considered these as part of their decision-making.	

3.	Minutes From the Previous Meeting	The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as a true record. **Outstanding Actions** Setting up the new bank account with Unity Trust.	
4.	Chair and Director Updates	**NHS Changes** PJ provided an update to the board regarding NHS restructures recently announced. Impacted organisations include the North East & North Cumbria ICB and NHS Trusts. PM asked about the security of the Healthwatch North Tyneside core contract. PJ confirmed this contract could only change if the organisation fails to meet targets, or if there is a change in primary legislation. **Penny Dash Review** The outcome of the Penny Dash review is still unknown. A Chairs and Lead Officers meeting is scheduled for May 19, 2025, to discuss potential outcomes. **Quality Accounts** PJ advised the first of the quality accounts has been received from Newcastle Hospitals Trust. A joint response will be made with colleagues from Northumberland, North Tyneside, Newcastle, and Gateshead. CN thanked PJ for his recent presentation at the Health and Wellbeing Board.	

5.	Standing items: • GDPR • Safeguarding • Health & Safety	**Escalations** PJ notified the board of a recent failed fire drill test, which has led to revised training and a successful second attempt. The issue was escalated as per policy.	
6.	Trustee Business: 1) Appointment of Trustees 2) Trustee Responsibilities 3) Expenses	The board agreed to appoint Lindsay Yarde as a trustee, following her attendance at the last board meeting. **Role Assignments** Discussion took place to assign roles such as staff link, volunteer link, health and safety lead, safeguarding lead, and business development group. The following decisions on roles were made: • PG to continue in the role of staff link. • PB will step down from the role of volunteer link. The position is currently vacant, with the hope that one of the trustees who were unable to attend this meeting will take it on. • PMc to be Safeguarding Lead. • Health and Safety role position is currently vacant, with the hope that one of the trustees who were unable to attend this meeting will take it on. • Business Development group remains unchanged (with PJ, TH, CN, PM, DS, JD). • People Group will change once the volunteer is appointed (CN, PG, PJ will remain, with JD attending as required).	TH to update the charity commission with the appointment of Lyndsay Yarde TH to contact MHo, LY and DS regarding Volunteer and Health & Safety board roles

		Information Governance sub group (new) - this group will consider future approach, including AI. BH, PM and PB agreed to join this group with PJ. **Five Pillars sub groups - Strategic plan** PJ advised Governance and Being a robust organisation pillars are the responsibility of the full board. DS, CN and JD expressed interested in the influencing sub group. PG, and PM expressed interested in the Community Engagement sub group BG expressed interested in the Co - production sub group. PJ advised Mho has also expressed interest in this area. It was suggested LY may be interested in the information and signposting sub group. **Trustees' Expenses Policy** Discussion on the policy regarding trustees claiming expenses took place. It was noted that there was a previous blanket statement against claiming expenses, which is now being reconsidered to ensure fairness and inclusivity. Trustees were reminded that an approved expenses policy is in place and available for their use. The decision to submit expense claims remains at the discretion of each individual trustee.	**TH to contact LY re information and signposting sub group.**
7.	Workplan Updates	PJ explained engagement numbers are very positive this year, helped by large	

		scale regional projects, such as dentistry and NEAS. The last of the care home visits is scheduled for 13 May. PJ thanked MHo for her help with the care home reports. CN agreed to look at the hospital to home report. JD agreed to look at the PNA report, both recently completed. Carers survey is ongoing, and further promotion will occur following the local election on May 1st (once the Purdah period ends). This year the focus is on adult carers. PJ explained next steps for Cancer Alliance funds, which HWNT have been holding for a number of years. The remaining Health Inequalities funds and a further contribution from HWNT may also be used to support this work. There will be some work with the North Tyneside Public Health team to award a small number of grants to the VCSE to undertake co-designed work surrounding topics including: healthy living, signs and symptoms of cancer, barriers to screening, barriers to healthy lifestyles.	CN to review Hospital to Home Report JD to review PNA report
8.	Finance Update and Budget Planning	The financial position at the end of March 25 shows a surplus of just over £3,000, despite planning for a £23,000 deficit. The surplus is expected to increase by £2,000-£3,000 due to interest from savings accounts. PJ noted that the fixed reserves, money required to be kept for winding down the charity should this be necessary, will be	

		held at £50,000 for now. This could change if the independent auditors recommend a different figure. The account audit will take place in June. PJ outlined the 6 categories of spending where reserves may be used in the coming year. These are: • Website Set up • Organisation development • IT Equipment Replacement • Developing partnerships contingency • Staff contingency • Information Management Systems The board agreed to note progress so far on the budget. The board agreed to a 3% pay increase backdated to April 2025.	
9.	Our Approach to Using AI	PJ initiated the discussion about the use of AI within the organisation. PJ noted that the organisation does not currently have a view on this, but is developing guidelines for staff to follow, and that any use of AI must take into account GDPR / Data Protection. BG supports the framework developed by PJ for staff to use AI. PB is also supportive, and notes the importance of staff trialing these new tools, within a clear set framework. CN requested the new Information Governance Group to take ownership of AI use and frameworks going forward.	

		PJ noted next steps, including AI training for the team, and sharing learning with the wider Healthwatch network.	
10.	AOB	• BG discussed the impact of recent Supreme Court judgments and government actions on transgender rights, particularly regarding the use of facilities. She expressed concern about potential policy revisions at Healthwatch and requested involvement in policy reviews and training. The board agreed to conduct transgender awareness and myth-busting training, and involve BG in policy reviews. • PG thanked the staff for their hard work between board meetings. • TH advised that the board will soon be approached with a number of policies for review. CN suggested providing a summary of the policy changes in line with previous review requests as this approach has proven helpful. • PM praised the HWNT website for its layout and content – particularly policies.	
	Date of Next Meeting	Monday 2 June 2025 6pm – 8pm	