Committee minutes - Public

5th May 2026 – 2 pm to 3:30pm
Hybrid: in person at Gateshead Central Library and online via Zoom

Committee members present.

Michael Brown	(MB)	(in person)
Gordon Wallace	(GW)	(in person)
Peter Wilson	(PW)	(in person)
Lyn Boyle	(LB)	(in person)
Bob Gaffney	(BG)	(In person)
Semande Ayihonbe	(SA)	Online (via zoom)

In attendance

Yvonne Probert	(YP)	CEO (in person)
Jack Tinkler	(JT)	Healthwatch Gateshead Manager (via zoom)
Avish Johnson	(AJ)	Business Manager (in person)

1. Welcome and introductions.

1.1. MB welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Privilege Garaba (PG)Alan Guest (AG), Gillian Hindson (GH), Shamshad Shah (SS), Mairi Cox (MC), and Courtney Peel (CP).

3. Minutes of previous meeting/matters arising.

3.1. No Action pending and the minutes from the committee meeting held on 6th January 2026 were approved as a true and accurate record.

4. Electronic Decisions

4.1. None.

5. Chair - written and verbal update

5.1. Quarter 4 report to commissioner was shared with the committee for information as had been submitted.

5.2. Quality Accounts – Newcastle upon Tyne NHS Foundation Trust (NuTH) and Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (CNTW) reports have been received and we are awaiting North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) and Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust (GHFT) reports.

5.2.1. Comments on hospital trust from BG have been recorded and will be shared as a standard statement in all Quality Account responses.

5.2.2. The committee mentioned that the change from Hospital care to a neighbourhood first approach should be monitored.

Action: YP to send the reports to the committee as and when received.

5.3. Healthwatch Gateshead Annual Report 2025/26: to be completed and published by the end of June.

Action – YP to share the report template and first draft of the report with the committee. Then later the final version for agreement ahead of publishing.

Action – Committee to review and provide any feedback on the annual report.

5.3.1. Committee was asked if they are willing to provide any comments and experiences on being a committee member, which is a volunteer position, and all agreed.

Action – YP to reach out to the committee to gather feedback for the volunteering section on the annual report.

5.3.2. Committee also decided to include details on project sponsor roles undertaken by committee members in the volunteer section of the report.

5.3.3. Committee was asked to review the Healthwatch NENC Network annual report , which includes details on joint work by the 14 Healthwatch that may be relevant to include in the Healthwatch Gateshead Annual Report.

5.4. Stakeholder Survey Feedback: YP presented the report on the stakeholder survey.

5.4.1. We have received 16 responses, which were overall positive, with respondents stating they are aware of Healthwatch Gateshead and its activities and believe it is making a positive impact in the community.

5.5. Healthwatch England Meeting on 16 April 2026: was attended by MB and below are the points discussed:

5.5.1. King's Speech is scheduled to take place on 13 May 2026 and is expected to include details on the health reform bill, which may replace the existing Health Act and abolish Healthwatch.

5.5.2. The King's Fund report which was recently published spoke about the need for an independent voice, which is positive for Healthwatch.

5.5.3. Some changes are expected in GP services, including AI prescribing and GP access.

5.5.4. A Directorate of Patient Experience is to be set up to take on some roles of Healthwatch England.

5.5.5. A process will be put in place regarding what happens to local Healthwatch documents and archives.

5.5.6. Details on what happens to board members and committee members at the end of Healthwatch is expected to be included in the new Health Act.

6. Project updates and research priorities - Written update

6.1. Project update:

6.1.1. Dementia Care: The report was published on 5 March 2026 and is available on our website.

6.1.2. Autism & ADHD: First draft of the report has been sent to partners for response statements and comments. The final draft will be shared with the committee, and the report i expected to be published in early May 2026.

6.1.3. Physiotherapy: Survey is now live. A six-week engagement period started on Monday 20 April, running until Friday 29 May. Data analysis will be completed in June 2026, and the first draft of the report is expected to be completed by July 2026.

6.1.4. Enter & View for Residential Care: Sister Winifred Laver Centre follow-up report was published on 8 January 2026. Appletree Care Home report was published on 8 January 2026, and follow-up discussion has been completed; the follow up report is to be published in early May 2026. St Marks Court report was published on 27 March 2026. The next Enter & View venue has been identified, and the scoping document has been completed; a date is to be set soon for the visit. A discussion took place on how residential care services are selected based on feedback and concerns raised by the public during engagement activities.

6.1.5. Youthwatch: A summary report of all seven workshops conducted was presented. The team spoke to 78 students, and concerns were raised regarding difficulty in making appointments, waiting times, referral processes, and mental health support; however, overall responses were positive. Further sessions are planned at Love Dunston, and several organisations have expressed interest in a return visit from Healthwatch.

6.1.6. JT expressed appreciation for the work and effort by one of the Engagement and Involvement officer in leading the Youthwatch project and doing a great job.

6.1.7. The committee suggested that Youthwatch work be included in the annual report.

6.2. ICB Projects:

6.2.1. End of Life Care: Awaiting report publication.

6.2.2. Primary Care Recovery Action Plan (PCARP): The project has been renamed to "Modern General Practice Access (MGPA)" and the report was published on 18 March 2026.

6.2.3. Dentistry: Awaiting report publication.

6.2.4. NEAS - Awaiting report publication.

6.2.5. There are no live projects at present.

6.3. Project Tracker: The changes made to the project timelines since the previous meeting were highlighted and presented to the committee.

6.4. Future Priority project NHS 111 is expected to be a joint project between Healthwatch Gateshead and Healthwatch Newcastle, as the data provided by NEAS is combined.

6.5. A discussion took place regarding the change of Enter & View priority from residential care to GP practices. A wider discussion was then had about other publicly funded services that could be looked at as part of Enter & View.

Action – YP and JT to do an options analysis on the potential service areas that Enter & View could look at to inform the discussions at the next meeting.

7. Locality working update - Written update

JT presented the Quarter 4 data to the committee.

7.1. Locality work is working extremely well in terms of collecting feedback, providing information and signposting support, and other engagement activities, with multiple drop-ins across Gateshead. There has been a slight increase in people engaged with to 1,780 people across 72 sessions at 22 venues.

7.2. There is a slight reduction in staff engagement capacity going forward, which may be reflected in future engagement numbers.

7.3. The upcoming locality working plan was presented, including details of various drop-in sessions and event venues.

8. Update from Gateshead Autism Strategy Partnership

8.1. YP attended in AG absence.
8.2. It was noted that there was a very positive view regarding the work AG had done as a Healthwatch representative at these meetings.
8.3. Autism Day is to be held on 15 June 2026 to raise awareness, and Healthwatch will be involved in the activities.
8.4. Issues with the diagnosis of Autism and ADHD, as well as Autism in older people, were discussed.
8.5. Rose Lodge – Learning Disability Specialist Assessment and Treatment Unit (Hebburn) delivered by CNTW remains temporarily closed so inpatient beds will not be available The National Centre at Morpeth as the nearest inpatient provision.
8.6. A discussion took place on the CNTW public consultation process, and YP mentioned that concerns had already been raised at regional level regarding this.
8.7. The Autism Strategy is planning to create multiple subgroups each with a different focus, for example children and autism, education, reasonable adjustments, and judicial matters.

9. Finance Verbal Update

9.1. The Quarter 4 finance report was presented, reporting that income and expenditure are as expected. There is an underspend on the allocated use of TUN reserves due to a refund from previous accountants and savings made on merchandise, printing, and Freepost, as there were no live surveys.

10. Standing Items

10.1. Nothing to report regarding Safeguarding, Health and Safety, or Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
10.2. There is no freedom of information requests.

11. Any other business

11.1. None.

12. Date and time of next meeting.

12.1. Committee agreed to change the meeting day to a Thursday or a Friday.

Action – AJ to check availability with PG, schedule the meeting, and book an appropriate venue.