

Committee minutes – Public

16th July 2026 – 2 pm to 3:30pm

Hybrid meeting: in person at Citizens Advice, Gateshead and online via Zoom

Committee members present.

Michael Brown	(MB)	(in person)
Peter Wilson	(PW)	(in person)
Bob Gaffney	(BG)	(In person)
Gillian Hindson	(GH)	(in person)
Privilege Garaba	(PG)	Online (via zoom)
Semande Ayihonbe	(SA)	Online (via zoom)

In attendance

Courtney Peel	(CP)	Chief Operating Officer (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 Gordon Wallace (GW), Alan Guest (AG), Lyn Boyle (LB), Shamshad Shah (SS), Mairi Cox (MC), and Yvonne Probert (YP).

3. Minutes of previous meeting/matters arising.

- 3.1. The Quality Account reports has been sent to the Committee for review.
- 3.2. The Annual Report has been finalised and published within the statutory deadline.
- 3.3. The Enter & View Options Appraisal paper was presented to the Committee.
 - 3.3.1. The positive and negative aspects of potential Enter & View topics were discussed.
 - 3.3.3. The Committee highlighted that Enter & View can only take place in publicly funded services and does not include children's care services.

2:13 pm – GH joined the meeting

- 3.3.4. The Committee asked JT whether any areas had been identified for potential Enter & View visits.

3.3.4. JT said that, during a recent project, it was discovered that the reception area for a hospital service was often unattended, which members of the public had identified as a concern. The project also found that people felt there was not enough clear information or guidance about what they needed to do following their appointment.

3.3.5. Mental health services were also discussed, including the need to identify relevant contacts and potential areas for an Enter & View visit.

3.3.6 The Committee agreed Mental Health as the next Enter and View topic.

Action – JT to create a scope for looking at mental health services and present it at the next meeting

3.4. The minutes from the committee meeting held on 5th May 2026 were approved as a true and accurate record.

4. Electronic Decisions

4.1. The Annual Report was approved by the Committee. Positive feedback was received from Healthwatch England about the Annual Report, appreciating the quality of work and Enter & View activities.

Action – CP to share the feedback email with the Committee.

5. Chair – written and verbal update

5.1. The Annual General Meeting is scheduled to take place on 30 September at Gateshead College. Further details will be shared in due course.

5.2. The Annual Report was completed and submitted on time before the statutory deadline.

5.3. YP attended the Department of Health and Social Care meeting held on 10 June between Healthwatch England and the Local Healthwatch. The topics discussed included:

5.3.1. Healthwatch funding will continue until the new Health Act comes into effect.

5.3.2. The Health Bill will be presented to the House of Lords in September.

5.3.3. The Chair of Healthwatch England presented at the House of Commons Committee meeting and highlighted the importance of an independent voice.

5.3.5. There is a proposal that ICB regions are to be divided, which may affect the North East and North Cumbria region.

2:32 – SA Left the meeting

- 5.4. The Healthwatch England guidance document on the closure process was shared with all Local Healthwatch across the country.
- 5.5. Call for evidence to MP's – the Parliamentary Committee debate records are now available and will be shared through the weekly communications.
- 5.6. Priority setting: Healthwatch priorities for the next financial year will be set at the AGM in September. Four topics identified by the committee will be presented at the AGM for discussion and finalisation.

2:38 pm – SA joined the meeting

6. Project updates and research priorities – Written update

- 6.1. ICB Projects – The Patient Transport Service engagement period has been completed. There are currently no other live projects, and there have been no further updates since the last meeting.
- 6.2. Project Tracker: Changes to the project timelines since the previous meeting were highlighted and presented to the Committee.
 - 6.2.1. The NHS 111 project is a joint project with Healthwatch Newcastle, in partnership with NEAS, and is expected to start by the end of the year.

2:41 pm – SA left the meeting

- 6.3. Project update:
 - 6.1.1. Dementia Care: The report was published on 5 March 2026 and is available on the website.
 - 6.1.2. Autism & ADHD: The report was published on 6 May 2026 and is available on the website.
 - 6.1.3. Physiotherapy: The engagement period is complete, with a total of 124 responses gathered. Data analysis has been undertaken, and the team is currently drafting the report.
 - 6.1.4. Hospitals: A&E usage – The project scoping document is complete, and work is underway to develop the survey. The position of Project Sponsor remains open to the Committee. GH volunteered to be the Project Sponsor.
 - 6.1.5. Enter & View for Residential Care: The Sister Winifred Laver Centre follow-up report was published on 8 January 2026. The Appletree Care Home report was also published on 8 January 2026. The revisit has been completed, and the report is currently being drafted. The St Marks Court report was published on 27 March 2026. The next Enter & View visit has been rescheduled and is expected to be complete by the end of July 2026.

- 6.1.6. Youthwatch: Since the last meeting, a further three Youthwatch workshops have been held: two at Birtley Learning & Skills and one with the Healthy Lifestyle Group. This brings the total number of workshops complete to 10, with 103 young people engaged with. A summary report of all workshops, including a breakdown of participation numbers and the main themes discussed, was presented to the Committee.
- 6.1.7. Safeguarding Board – The project is now being completed in-house by the Council rather than by Healthwatch Gateshead.
- 6.1.8. Healthwatch Gateshead has been asked to support a Gateshead Council project. This is to support the commissioning team on a contract review task, engaging with the current service users about what works well and what doesn't work well with the current providers. It was noted that this would be a good opportunity to expand the team's skills and expertise, in an area we are already confident in and allow us to continue a good working relationship with the Local Authority. The Committee was asked whether they agreed to take up this opportunity, and all members were in agreement.

7. Locality working update – Written update

JT presented the Quarter 1 data to the committee.

- 7.1. Locality work is progressing extremely well in terms of collecting feedback, providing information and signposting support, and delivering other engagement activities, with multiple drop-in sessions held across Gateshead. A total of 1,810 people were engaged with across 70 sessions at 33 venues.
- 7.2. The main themes identified included Patient Transport and Travel to Appointments, Physiotherapy, TAMS and Rehabilitation, GP and Dentistry Access, difficulties navigating services, and mental health, among others.
- 7.3. New venues have been identified for future drop ins across Gateshead.
- 7.4. Committee appreciated JT and team for continued quality work.

8. Update from Gateshead Autism Strategy Partnership

- 8.1. There are no new updates, as the meeting is scheduled to take place next week.

9. Finance Verbal Update

- 9.1. AJ informed the Committee that the Quarter 1 data had not yet been prepared, as the quarter had only recently ended. AJ confirmed that income and expenditure were as expected, with nothing of concern to report.

Action – AJ to share the finance report once completed.

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. MB checked with the Committee whether Thursdays would be more convenient for everyone, and it was agreed that the next meeting would be held on 8 October at 2:00 pm.