

Committee minutes – Public

13th May 2025 – 2 pm to 3:30pm

Hybrid: at the Boardroom (Gateshead Leisure Centre) in person and via Zoom

Committee members present.

Michael Brown – Chair	(MB)	(in person)
Peter Wilson	(PW)	(in person)
Izzy Gray	(IG)	(in person)
Gillian Hindson	(SA)	(in person)
Alan Guest	(AG)	(Via zoom)
Shamshad Shah	(SS)	(Via zoom)

In attendance

Courtney Peel	(CP)	Business Services Manager (in person)
Afsana Begum	(AB)	Research and engagement manager (in person)
Jack Tinkler	(JT)	Healthwatch Gateshead Lead Officer (in person)
Avish Johnson	(AJ)	Business Support Officer (in person)
Gordon Wallace	(GW)	Observer (in person)

1. Welcome and introductions.

- 1.1. MB welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.
- 1.2. Gillian Hindson was proposed to be co-opted to be a committee member, and everyone agreed.
- 1.3. Gordon Wallace was introduced and welcomed to the meeting as an observer.

2. Apologies for absence.

Lyn Boyle (LB), Privilege Garaba (PG), Mairi Cox (MC) Semande Ayihonbe (SA) and Yvonne Probert (YP) gave apologies for the meeting.

3. Minutes of previous meeting/matters arising.

- 3.1. The Dash review report which is fundamental to the future of the Healthwatch Network and how Healthwatch's are commissioned; it is yet to be published and is expected soon.
- 3.2. The National Healthwatch England Chairs meeting held on 12th May did not refer to the Dash Review.

- 3.3. Notes from the Newcastle Marmot City Conference are not yet available and will be shared once received.
- 3.4. Website updates are on the agenda for discussion later in this meeting.
- 3.5. Gateshead Autism – AG has been offered a place on the Gateshead Autism Strategy Board and will gather further details and give feedback at future committee meetings.
- 3.6. Feedback on the priority topics has been received and will be discussed further in the agenda.
- 3.7. The minutes of the meeting held on the 14th of January 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record.

4. Electronic Decisions

- 4.1. None.

5. Chair – Verbal update

- 5.1. Quarter 4 report to the commissioner has been submitted on time.
- 5.2. Quality Accounts – comments and feedback are being gathered and will be submitted shortly.
- 5.3. The Annual Report 2024/25 is due to be published with a statutory deadline of the 30th June 2025. A template has been shared by Healthwatch England. MB highlighted how the Annual Report helps to showcase the impact made within the community.
- 5.4. Website – The Communication and information officer has been working on improving the overall look and feel of the website.

Action – Committee members to review the website and provide feedback on the accessibility of information, ease of navigation, and whether content is clear and easy to understand. Any additional feedback is welcomed.

6. CEO Update

The report was present by MB on behalf of YP in her absence.

- 6.1. Annual Survey Summary Report and emerging priorities:
 - 6.1.1. We received 278 responses in total which provided insights and experiences on a range of health and/or social care services which were accessed in Gateshead in the past 12 months. Dentistry, General Practice (GPs) and Pharmacy which are national issues were raised again locally.

- 6.1.2. A discussion took place regarding the priority lifecycle and the deadline for setting them.
- 6.1.3. The committee reviewed all priority topics and identified Mental Health, Hospitals, NHS 111 service, Social Care, Physiotherapy, and Ambulance Services as some of the key local issues.
- 6.1.4. Positive feedback on pharmacy services was noted. The lack of responses related to Autism was also discussed.

Action – AG to discuss the issues and problems with Autism at the Gateshead Council Autism Strategic Board Meeting.

- 6.1.5. As Physiotherapy is included in Healthwatch Gateshead's 2024 priorities and Ambulance Services fall under the Regional Healthwatch Network's work programme, the committee agreed to consider Mental Health, Hospitals, NHS 111 service, and Social Care as emerging priorities for 2026.

6.2. Stakeholder survey summary Report

- 6.2.1. We received nineteen (19) responses, which is an increase from eight (8) responses which were received in last year's survey
- 6.2.2. The survey results reflected overwhelmingly positive perceptions of Healthwatch Gateshead among stakeholders.

Action – AJ to provide details on the total number of stakeholders contacted and the response rate.

6.3. Star Awards

- 6.3.1. A subgroup from Healthwatch Newcastle and Healthwatch Gateshead has met and defined the Star Awards Scheme for both areas. The Awards will be relaunched in 2025 as part of engagement and involvement activities, aiming to raise the profile of both Healthwatch organisations in their local communities.
- 6.3.2. The Star Awards application process will run each spring, with a defined nomination period. Healthwatch Lead Officers will oversee the nomination process as part of their engagement work.
- 6.3.3. The Star Awards will be a 2-tier system
 - 6.3.3.1. Certificate of Nomination – All validated nominees will receive a framed certificate with citation, presented by engagement staff at their workplace.
 - 6.3.3.2. Super Star Award – presented formally at the Joint Annual General Meeting of Healthwatch Newcastle and Healthwatch Gateshead.
- 6.3.4. Final detailed paperwork to follow

6.4. Volunteering

- 6.4.1. We have recruited new committee members and Tell Us North CIC Directors. And set three roles for general volunteering which are Research and engagement, Outreach and locality working and Information and communication.
- 6.4.2. A specialist Enter and View volunteering role has also been introduced. Committee members were encouraged to take on further volunteering roles based on their areas of interest.
- 6.5. Complaints Policy
 - 6.5.1. Healthwatch Gateshead has been operating under the Tell Us North CIC complaints policy. However, in line with guidance from Healthwatch England, a separate policy has now been drafted using the template provided by Healthwatch England.
 - 6.5.2. The committee agreed to adopt the new complaints policy in addition to the existing Tell Us North CIC policy.

7. Project Update

- 7.1. Hospital Discharge – Final report complete. Currently on hold – awaiting responses from partners (e.g. Adult Social Care, Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust).
 - 7.2. Women’s Health Report: Menopause and HRT – Final report has been published.
 - 7.3. Safeguarding Adults Board – Gateshead Council delayed in delivering due to independent review. Awaiting further information after SAB board meeting in June 2025.
 - 7.4. Gateshead Autism – Awaiting further information from Gateshead Council.
 - 7.5. Enter & View – Draft report complete for Sister Winfred Laver Centre. Awaiting response from partners (e.g. Adult Social Care).
 - 7.5.1. The next Enter & View visit is scheduled to take place in June 2025 at a residential care home. Further details will be shared by the Enter & View Officer.
- Action – committee to respond to the email to confirm if they are interested to take part in the next Enter & View visit.
- 7.6. Youthwatch – No current workshops scheduled. Working on new development with partners.
 - 7.7. Research and Engagement Team currently working on producing background research to populate scoping document for the new priorities, Autism and ADHD, Dementia Care and Physiotherapy; a meeting is scheduled for 14th May. Scoping documents will be shared with the committee by end of June 2025 for electronic decision and will be presented at the next meeting.

- 7.8. AB asked the committee to decide the order in which they would like the research activities to begin. Taking into account the complexity of the work and the availability of information, the following order of delivery was agreed: 1. Dementia care, 2. Autism and ADHD and 3. Physiotherapy.
- 7.9. Integrated Care Board (ICB) Regional project update:
- 7.9.1. Dentistry – ICB have not yet published the Dentistry report.
 - 7.9.2. ICB Involvement Strategy – Healthwatch Newcastle provided a Focus Group with Seldom Heard Group (Ethnically Marginalised/Asian Community).
Action – AB to check with YP on the reason to mention Healthwatch Newcastle focus group in the report.
 - 7.9.3. North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) – ICB have not yet published the report.
 - 7.9.4. Women’s Health: ICB have published the report on the 7th March 2024.
 - 7.9.5. The NHS 10-year plan – HWG involved with engagement stage which is now complete and waiting on Regional and National reports to be published.
 - 7.9.6. Covid 19 and Flu vaccination take up by the public – Report published.

8. Locality working update

- 8.1. JT stated that the locality working was continuing successfully with a variety of drop-ins across Gateshead.
- 8.2. JT presented the Healthwatch Gateshead engagement data, highlighting the number of people staff have engaged with and the emerging themes identified across various localities.
- 8.3. JT mentioned that adult social care and transportation for health services were frequently requested areas for signposting.
- 8.4. A discussion took place regarding inconsistencies in the use of the NHS app across GP practices—some utilise it while others do not—leading to confusion and difficulties for service users in understanding the process.
- 8.5. JT outlined upcoming events and future venues for drop-in sessions, emphasising how expanding into new locations is helping to enhance engagement activities.

9. Finance Update

- 9.1. There has been an overspend this quarter, primarily due to Freepost returns from the Annual Survey, committee DBS checks for new members, and activity related to the Enter & View workstreams.

9.2. The committee were also reminded that the overspend was due to Tell Us North CIC having agreed to allocate some reserve funds to increase the capacity of the Healthwatch Gateshead staff team.

10. Standing Items

10.1. No reported safeguarding concerns, health and safety issues, equality and diversity concerns, or freedom of information requests.

11. Any other business

11.1. None.

12. Date and time of next meeting.

12.1. Tuesday 16th July 2025 – 2 pm.