

Committee minutes – Public

14th January 2025 – 2 pm to 3:30pm

Hybrid: at the Boardroom (Age UK Gateshead) in person and via Zoom

Committee members present.

Michael Brown	(MB)	Chair (in person)
Mairi Cox	(MC)	(in person)
Lyn Boyle	(LB)	(in person)
Shamshad Shah	(SS)	(via Zoom)
Peter Wilson	(PW)	(in person)
Alan Guest	(AG)	(in person)

In attendance

Afsana Begum	(AB)	Research and engagement manager (in person)
Iqra Hussain	(IH)	Research and development officer (via Zoom)
Jack Tinkler	(JT)	Healthwatch Gateshead Lead Officer (in person)
Avish Johnson	(AJ)	Business Support Officer (in person)
Izzy Gray	(IG)	Observer (in person)
Gillian Hindson	(GH)	Observer (in person)

1. Welcome and introductions.

- 1.1. MB welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.
- 1.2. Izzy Gray and Gillian Hindson was introduced and welcomed to the meeting as observers.

2. Apologies for absence.

Semande Ayihonbe (SA) Privilege Garaba (PG) Yvonne Probert (YP) and Courtney Peel (CP) gave apologies for the meeting.

3. Minutes of previous meeting/matters arising.

- 3.1. Star awards – The committee subgroup is in the process of developing a procedure. A draft is expected to be completed and presented at the next committee meeting.

- 3.2. The project on autism is currently awaiting further guidance from Gateshead Council. AG will be updated as soon as any new information becomes available.
- 3.3. The report on the priority topic has been delayed due to other ongoing projects. It will be made available by the next committee meeting.
- 3.4. The minutes of the meeting held on the 19th of November 2024 were approved as a true record.

4. Electronic Decisions

- 4.1. None

5. Chair Update

- 5.1. The National and Regional Healthwatch Chair Meetings were held online on 13th January 2025. Lead Officer Daniel Milburn attended the Regional Meeting and provided an update on the topics discussed:
 - 5.1.1. The Dash review is expected to be published by late February or early March, pending public and Government responses. Healthwatch forms one part of the review, while another key focus will be patient safety.
 - 5.1.2. Healthwatch England (HWE) is exploring options to administer the funding at national level instead of the local authorities which is the current route. This is still under review and not yet confirmed.
 - 5.1.3. NHS 10-year plan – Four discussion groups have been organised. A combined Healthwatch Newcastle and Healthwatch Gateshead event was held at One Strawberry Lane on 17th January, with another joint event scheduled for 22nd January which will be online. Healthwatch Gateshead event to be held at Central Library on 31st January and Healthwatch Newcastle on 3rd February. Feedback from the public gathered at these events will be submitted to the Regional Healthwatch Network and be given to the ICB.
- 2:18 pm Shamshad Shah joined the meeting online**
- 5.1.4. Operating protocol – It was noted that income from the ICB is guaranteed for 2025/26, with all local Healthwatch receiving a core operating payment to be used for Regional Network purposes such as travel and face-to-face meetings.
- 5.1.5. The NENC Regional Healthwatch gathering/event is scheduled to take place on 31st March at the Royal Station Hotel in Newcastle.

Action – A decision is required regarding attendees, which will be communicated shortly.

5.1.6. The ICB's future project plans were discussed, including hospital discharge. The committee will monitor the progress of these projects to determine how contributions can be made.

5.1.7. The ICB also plans to invest further in the expansion of dentistry services, with a review of these services to be conducted.

5.2. Committee members – Recruitment for committee members is currently closed, as another two new members have joined, along with two observers, bringing the committee to a good number.

5.3. ICB update – Community pharmacy services contracts are within the ICB remit.

5.4. Gateshead Council – the Council are operating to their Mid Term Financial Plan and no revisions are expected this year so no budget consultation is happening.

5.5. Quality Accounts 2024/25 – We are awaiting accounts from various statutory and public bodies to be released. Once received, Healthwatch Gateshead's response will be discussed and be submitted.

5.6. Volunteering: three role descriptions have been finalised, and role descriptions are ready. The next step is to distribute to current volunteers. Recruitment for new volunteers will begin shortly.

6. CEO Update.

6.1. Healthwatch Gateshead – Monitoring Report for Quarter 3 will be circulated when submitted.

6.2. A shadowing – all committee members were offered the opportunity to shadow staff to gain a better understanding of the various roles and responsibilities within the organisation.

7. Project Update

7.1. MB provided an overview of the process involved in choosing and scoping a project for the benefit of the new members and observers.

7.2. Hospital Discharge and Women's Health – Data dissemination and analysis have been completed. The draft report is currently in progress and is expected to be finalised by the end of March, along with the impact and recommendations derived from the project discussions.

7.3. Gateshead Autism – Awaiting further information from Gateshead Council.

7.4. Safeguarding Board – Gateshead Council delayed as awaiting further information being given at the Safeguarding Adult Board (SAB) board meeting in June 2025.

7.5. Enter & View – The residential care home visit to the Sister Winifred Laver facility, initially scheduled for January, has been delayed.

Action – An additional Enter & View training session will be held on 29th January. Committee members interested in attending should contact to AB/NS as soon as possible.

7.6. Youthwatch – In process of delivering first workshop with Youth Focus NE, scheduled for 24th January 2025.

8. Enter and View update

8.1. Included in Project Update.

9. Volunteering Review Update

9.1. Included in Chair update.

10. Locality working update

10.1. JT stated that the locality working was continuing successfully with drop-ins across Gateshead.

10.2. JT presented the Healthwatch Gateshead Drop-ins and one-off events report which showed the number of people the staff have engaged with in various ways.

10.3. JT proposed experimenting with different drop-in times at current venues to engage with a wider demographic.

10.4. Plans are in place to expand drop-in venues across various locations in Gateshead.

10.5. Workshops at Northumbria University have been successful, with positive feedback and responses. The team is now looking to organise similar workshops at Gateshead College.

11. Finance Update

11.1. There has been overspending due to several factors, including backdated employee pay resulting from the NJC pay scale increase, Freepost costs for paper surveys related to projects, office setup costs for new staff, recruitment costs, and travel and accommodation expenses for sending two representatives to the Healthwatch England Conference.

11.2. The Healthwatch England Conference expenses were fully covered by the bursary awarded, so these costs will be reimbursed. Other costs are expected to decrease,

as office setup is a one-off expense, and the overall budget is anticipated to balance out over the next quarter.

12. Standing Items

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

13. Any other business

13.1. None.

14. Date and time of next meeting.

14.1. Tuesday 11th March 2025 – 2 pm.