

Committee minutes – Public

Friday 2nd February 2024 – 11.00 am to 12.30 pm.

Hybrid at Milburn House in person and online via zoom

Committee members present.

Terry Bearpark (TB)	Chair (in person)
Feyi Awotona (FA)	(in person)
Alisdair Cameron (AC)	(by zoom)

In attendance

Yvonne Probert (YP)	Tell Us North CEO (in person)
Michelle Brannigan (MAB)	Business Services Manager (in person)
Afsana Begum (AB)	Research & Engagement Manager (in person)
Hannah Farr (HF)	Healthwatch Newcastle Lead Officer (in person)
Avish Johson (AJ)	Business Support Officer (in Person)
Amer Mirza (AM)	Observer (by zoom)
Nick Linfoot (NL)	Observer (by zoom)

1. Welcome by the Chair

Terry Bearpark formally welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Absences received from Gill Clancy (GC).

3. Conflict of Interest in agenda items or other

There were no disclosures of interest.

4. Any other business to add to the agenda.

There were no additions to the agenda.

5. Minutes of meeting and matters arising

- Minutes from the meeting on the 8th November 2024 were agreed as a true record.
- There were no matters arising.

6. CEO verbal update

YP gave an update as Tell Us North CEO on the work that had been done since the last meeting.

- **Healthwatch Newcastle Contract update**

No update on the tender submission

- **Healthwatch Newcastle Quarter 3 Report**

Report was delayed due to data analysis issues.

Action: Quarter 3 report to be distributed shortly by YP.

- **ICS update**

Changes in the staff structure and the new joint roles announced may lead to closer working across the ICB place-based committees for Gateshead and Newcastle. Also, this might increase the overall process efficiency in the two locations.

All agreed to monitor the ICB website and communications to define how the structure change might help Healthwatch Newcastle.

7. Chair – verbal update.

TB as Chair of Healthwatch Newcastle Committee invited a verbal update on the activities and actions from the last quarter. AB gave an update on the current projects and workload and YP gave an insight into strategic decisions.

- **Explain the format for the Meeting.**

TB suggested a change in the structure of future meetings so that all technical items can be discussed first, and priorities discussed later.

- **Diary dates for Committee engagement/activities**

No update

8. Healthwatch Newcastle Activities – Annual Priorities

- **Outreach and engagement activities**

Rolling generic activities

- Community Drop-Ins in the localities across Newcastle have started and are running well.
- Newcastle City Council's Community Champions programme is being refreshed and is set out to engage more locally in the community.
- HF is now in place in the newly created post of Lead Officer for Healthwatch Newcastle. She has now been in role since October 2023
- Recruitment is ongoing for the Information and Communication Officer and Business Service Manager posts.

- CQC report on Newcastle Hospital – a joint statement has helped to bring all the local Healthwatch together, and together we are monitoring any changes and maintaining good communication with the hospitals.

Action: CQC report to be part of the agenda item for the next meeting.

- Annual Priority areas – the identified priorities were discussed to choose specific areas for work for 2023 – 2024.
- In-year additions – No update
- Outcomes of activities – No update

- **Defining research project ideas**

Legacy projects:

- Hospital Discharge is currently a joint project with Healthwatch Gateshead where the staff team is in the initial phase of identifying the issues and problems faced by people to narrow down the focus of the study.
- The Accessible Information Standards project is also a joint project with Healthwatch Gateshead and is scoping out the difficulties faced by sensory-disabled people in accessing health information. This project is on hold until the new standards are released.
- The phase 1 work on Reasonable adjustment for people with autism is now moving to Phase 2 (ICB's commission)
- 2 focus groups to commence in February (ICB's commission)
 - Ethnic minoritised communities and their views on the ICB strategy
 - Health literacy issues faced in accessing a GP for those living in the top 5% of most deprived areas.

Action: YP to check with Healthwatch regionally on the Deep End Practices and the areas of study they are covering to avoid duplication.

- Dentistry regional survey and project work to roll out across all local Healthwatch's in the North East and North Cumbria area, to commence in March (ICB's commission).

Setting priority projects for the year.

A committee discussion was held about the priority themes and potential project ideas that Healthwatch Newcastle could undertake, based on the identified annual priorities from 2023 – 2024.

- Mental Health – the public perception of the mental health services versus the actual process and the impact of this, and crisis management services, were agreed to be the first focus area for project work. The committee delegated to the staff team to scope out the project.

- Decisions about other priority projects will be taken once this is in hand – the focus for this is likely to include GP access.

Action: AB and HF to identify any other mental health themes that have come up using the input gathered from the Power BI reports and to scope out a project plan.

9. Volunteers

YP explained that Volunteer recruitment was on hold. This was due to the new staffing structure and locality working. A discussion took place around the role of the volunteer and how to engage them in tasks. YP stated there was already a role description in place and it was suggested that we invite the volunteers to feedback on their views.

The Committee discussed the volunteer passport scheme and its benefits, it was felt that the passport scheme could be used for events as and when needed.

Action: Volunteering update to be given in the next meeting by AB/HF.

AC and HF left the meeting at 12:05.

10. Finance Update

MB presented the quarterly financial report for Quarter 2. There were no significant financial issues arising.

11. Standing Item

There have been no safeguarding incidents to report in the last quarter.

There have been no Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion notices.

There have been no Health and Safety issues reported.

12. Any other business

No other business was recorded.

13. Date and time of next meeting.

A discussion took place on finalising the dates for future meeting and that a fixed date and time of the month will not be suitable for most.

Action: AJ to send a doodle poll with multiple options and committee member to pick the slot most convenient the date and time will be decided on the majority vote.

AM and NL left the meeting at 12:25.

14. Closed session – Update on Committee member recruitment.

TB informed members that an application form, advert, and recruitment pack had been created, but needed to be finalised.

A discussion took place around the best procedure for recruiting Committee members. A process was agreed, further discussion was needed with the Chair, and management team to finalise this.

Action: MAB to distribute the advert through our newsletter and social media channels as well as on Vonne.

Action: Chair to meet with the management team to discuss the recruitment procedure.