

Committee minutes – Public

14th January 2026 – 10:30am

Hybrid: Milburn House, Newcastle in person and online via Zoom

Committee members present.

Feyi Awotona	(FA)	(in person)
Michael Brown – Chair	(MB)	(in person)
Terry Bearpark	(PW)	(in person)
Alex Hoole	(LB)	(in person)
Emily Sinclair-James	(ESJ)	(in person)
Rogelio Rivera	(RR)	(via Zoom)
Roo Begom	(RB)	(in person)
Tobi Oludade	(TO)	(via Zoom)
Meera Soundararajan	(MS)	(via Zoom)

In attendance

Yvonne Probert	(YP)	Tell Us North CEO (in person)
Courtney Peel	(CP)	Tell Us North COO (in person)
Dan Milburn	(DM)	Healthwatch Newcastle Manager (in person)
Baran Hadid	(BH)	Observer (via Zoom)

1. Welcome and introductions.

1.1. MB as Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence.

Avish Johnson (AJ), Ann Wynn (AW), Alisdair Cameron (AC) and Alex Hoole (AH) gave apologies for the meeting.

3. Minutes of previous meeting/matters arising.

3.1. New staff organisational structure had been sent to the committee.

3.2. Project sponsors have contacted Dan.

3.3. Those interested in Enter and View authorised representative training have been in contact with Dan.

3.4. Dan had provided the committee with the data that had been requested to show the comparison on the themes of 'who is Healthwatch is' against the other topics raised.

3.5. The minutes from the Committee meeting held on 12th November 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record.

4. Electronic Decisions

4.1. None

5. Chair – Verbal update

5.1. MB provided the following feedback on the NENC Regional Healthwatch Network's Chairs and Lead Officers Meeting held on 15th December 2025.

- NHS England will continue to exist until 2028 before moving into the Department of Health and Social Care.
- Integrated Care Boards – 50% of the redundancy payments to ICB staff will be covered by the government.
- Healthwatch England will remain in place nationally until dissolution, there will be a transitional period with local Healthwatch on dissolution so they can handover their functions to the ICB and Local Authority.
- Funding to the Local authority has been confirmed by the DHSC and Healthwatch Gateshead are awaiting an update from the Local Authority on fund allocation.

11am – DM arrived

6. CEO Update

6.1 An upcoming Healthwatch England and DHSC meeting is to be held on 4th February 2026.

Action – Committee members to share any questions with YP and MB to be presented at the meeting.

6.2. The NENC Regional Healthwatch Chairs and Lead Officers Meeting was held on 29th January 2026

- Ahead of the next NENC Regional meeting, the Network is being asked its views on how it works and has asked each Healthwatch to give some thought to a list of questions on projects, the function of Healthwatch, and how to partner and work together:

- YP asked the committee how Healthwatch should position itself at the regional level and respond to each of the questions.

Action – YP and MB to respond to the regional questions on behalf of the Committee.

6.3. The NENC Regional Healthwatch quarterly report to the ICB was shared with the committee for review.

6.4. Staff change and update: from 1st January 2026, the Research and Engagement Manager is on a 12-month maternity leave, and the Enter and View Officer is on a 6-month sabbatical leave; as such, project delivery needs to be refocused.

6.5. The committee agreed to reduce the number of projects on priority themes and reduce the number of Enter & View visits and make capacity for ICB projects.

6.6. It was agreed that work capacity will need to be reviewed in six months' time.

Action – YP to present updates at each Committee meeting.

7. Project Update

7.1. Accessible Information & Health Literacy

- Engagement period for data collection still underway.
- First, 4 focus groups complete.
- Staff team still arranging contact with community organisations to schedule more focus groups specifically for new mothers.

7.2. Adult Social Care

- Project scoping in progress, team are seeking advice from community-based organisations.
- Staff team speaking to community-based organisations to identify gaps in service provision. Project scoping in progress.

7.3. Physiotherapy

- In process of scoping out project.

7.4. Reasonable adjustments phase 2

- Engagement period underway for data collection.

7.5. Enter & View: Adult social Care

- The report for our recent Enter and View venue has been completed and is awaiting publication.
- Potential venues under new GP theme are being scoped for visits in late November 25.

7.6. Youthwatch

- Scoping opportunities.

7.7. Regional projects updates were given including:

- End of Life Care – Is in planning phase
- Primary Care Recovery Action Plan (PCARP) – In the report writing phase.
- You and Your General Practice” guidelines and survey – Complete

8. Locality working update

8.1. The committee were presented with a verbal locality update covering all the venues and localities with top themes.

9. Finance Update

9.1. CP presented the finance report and advised of an overspend due to NJC related back dated pay to staff and the replacement of IT equipment.

9.2. There is nothing of concern, as income and expenses are as expected.

10. Standing Items

10.1. CP advised there is 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. Nick Linfoot has resigned his position on the Healthwatch Newcastle Committee due to increased work commitments in a new job. The committee thanked Nick for his time and contributions, as well as wishing him well in his new role.

12. Date and time of next meeting.

12.1. Wednesday 11th March 2026 at 10:30am.