

Committee minutes – Public

19th March 2025: 10 am – 11:30 am

Hybrid model – In person, with an online option (Zoom available) for those unable to come to Milburn House, Newcastle.

Committee members present

Michael Brown (MB) – Chair	(in person)
Terry Bearpark (TB)	(in person)
Feyi Awotona (FA)	(in Person)
Alisdair Cameron (AC)	(via Zoom)
Nick Linfoot (NL)	(via Zoom)
Alex Hoole (AH)	(via Zoom)

In attendance

Yvonne Probert (YP)	CEO of Tell Us North CIC (in person)
Courtney Peel (CP)	Business Support Manager (in person)
Daniel Milburn (DM)	Healthwatch Newcastle Lead officer (in person)
Lewis Brown (LB)	Information & Communication Officer (in person)
Avish Johnson (AJ)	Business Support Officer (in person)
Kate Bowman (KB)	Observer – Newcastle City Council (in person)
Lisa Fletcher (LF)	Observer (via zoom)

1. Welcome by the Chair

- 1.1 MB was delayed in joining the meeting and FA took the chair until he arrived.
- 1.2 FA welcome Lisa Fletcher, Kate Bowman (Newcastle City Council) and everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

2. Apologies for absence

- 2.1 Ann Wynn and Amer Mirza are on sabbatical leave.
- 2.2 Afsana Begum unable to attend the meeting due to poor health

3. Minutes of meeting held on 22nd January 2025

- 3.1. Notes from the National Heathwatch Chairs Meeting have been distributed to the committee.

- 3.2. Committee members have confirmed their attendance for the NENC Regional Healthwatch Network event.
- 3.3. MB will continue as interim chair for Healthwatch Newcastle until the Annual Joint Meeting, and other committee members are encouraged to consider stepping up to the role of chair.
- 3.4. We are still awaiting The Dash Review, and this will be shared once it becomes available.
- 3.5. There has been no update on the NHS app awareness programme in Newcastle. Connected Voice are taking on the responsibility of training the public on the NHS app.
- 3.6. Enter & View topic research is to be discussed later in this meeting.
- 3.7. The Locality Working Quarterly Comparison Report will be presented later in this meeting.
- 3.8. The minutes of the meeting held on the 22nd of January 2025 were approved as a true record.

4. Electronic Decisions

- 4.1. None.

5. CEO update

- 5.1. Quality Accounts from public sector and statutory partners are due to come in May and committee members were asked to be prepared to read them and make comment. A joint response from several local Healthwatch was agreed like last year.

6. Healthwatch Newcastle Website

- 6.1. LB spoke about the current website layout and how it could be further utilised to share important information and create a greater impact on service users. The committee was asked to review the website and provide feedback on two key aspects: the ease of access to important health-related information, and their first impressions of the website.

Action – YP to send a reminder email to the committee with feedback going to MB.

10:21: MB joined the meeting

FA gave a brief overview to MB on the matters discussed so far and handed over to MB.

7. Finance Update

- 7.1. No updates to report on, income and expenditure are as expected. Full quarter and year end report at the next meeting.

8. Project Update

- 8.1. YP provided the project update in AB's absence:
- 8.2. Hospital Discharge – The draft report is currently in progress and remains on track to be published by the end of March 2025.
- 8.3. Mental Health Crisis Services – The draft report has been completed and shared with the committee and partners involved in co-production for feedback. LB is currently working on branding prior to publication.

Action – Committee members to provide any comments to AB by Monday 24 March on the draft report.

Action – YP to send a reminder email to the committee to provide feedback and re-send the draft report.

- 8.4. Reasonable Adjustments Phase 2 – Awaiting receipt of funding from the ICB. The project timeline will be reviewed and amended before commencement.
- 8.5. Accessible Information Standards – Staff team have been scoping ideas for new priority.

10:31: NL left the meeting

- 8.6. Enter & View – committee agreed social care as the first topic area with the community of interest being learning disabilities and/or autism. A second potential topic, GP services, was also proposed for future visits.
- 8.7. ICB funded projects:
 - 8.7.1. Dentistry – The Integrated Care Board (ICB) has not yet published the report, but it is expected before the end of March 2025.
 - 8.7.2. ICB Involvement Strategy – Healthwatch Newcastle facilitated a focus group with a seldom-heard group (ethnically marginalised/Asian community).
 - 8.7.3. NEAS – ICB have not yet published the report.
 - 8.7.4. Women's Health:the BIG conversation – ICB have not yet published the report, it is expected before the end of March 2025.
 - 8.7.5. The NHS 10-year plan – the workshops have been completed, feedback has been shared, and the Regional and National reports are awaited.
 - 8.7.6. Understanding Vaccinations – This project explores reasons behind the lower-than-expected vaccination uptake this winter. A short survey

was launched and received 17 responses. A draft report has been produced, with the final version to follow shortly.

Discussion took place regarding possible causes of low uptake of vaccination, with some committee members sharing personal negative experiences, such as allergic reactions and unprofessional staff behaviour, as potential contributing factors.

11:00 LF left the meeting

- 8.8. 2025 research priorities – A report was presented outlining various focus areas under each priority topic. The committee was asked to select one focus area for research and study so that scoping work could start.

Action – YP to create a table summarising all the suggested priorities and send it to the committee.

Action – Committee members to select their top and second focus areas under each priority and provide feedback by the end of March.

9. Chair – Verbal update

- 9.1. The Regional NENC Healthwatch Network Event is scheduled to take place on 31 March. Ten representatives, including committee members and staff, will be attending on behalf of Healthwatch Newcastle and Healthwatch Gateshead.
- 9.2. Star Awards – The sub-group is in the process of finalising the awards structure. A two-stage process will be introduced: the Star Award and the Super Star Award, with the latter to be presented at the annual joint meeting. The next subgroup meeting is scheduled for the end of March, and a draft proposal is expected to be available for discussion and approval at the next committee meeting.
- 9.3. Newcastle Marmot City conference
 - 9.3.1. A discussion took place on how life expectancy in Newcastle increased until 2010 but has been declining in recent years.
 - 9.3.2. Changes will be introduced to support the city's development as a Marmot City, with a focus on reducing health inequalities.
 - 9.3.3. A two-year programme will be launched to address these issues and help close the gap in life expectancy.
 - 9.3.4. It was noted by YP, that Healthwatch Newcastle as part of the Age Friendly City group, feel that the current plans appear to be less age-friendly, as they focus more on children and young people, with limited attention to the needs of older people.

10. Volunteers review – Verbal

10.1. Considering that two committee members are currently on sabbatical, YP suggested recruiting additional committee members, and all agreed.

10.2. Recruitment for new Tell Us North CIC Directors is also to be advertised.

Action – Committee member recruitment to be re-advertised again.

10.3. Engagement volunteering is being explored in collaboration with the volunteering centre to support engagement and communication activities.

11. Locality working update from Lead Officer

11.1. DM reported that locality working is continuing successfully, with drop-ins taking place across Newcastle. Quarter 3 engagement and signposting data were presented, highlighting the number of people staff have engaged with, emerging themes across various localities, key issues raised, public experiences, and the impact created by Healthwatch.

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. 21st May 2025 at 10am.