

Minutes of the Healthwatch Northumberland (HWN) Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 4 November 2021 online via Zoom

Attendees: 80 people signed into the meeting who were members of the public and representatives of health and social care providers and commissioners and voluntary and community organisations.

Derry Nugent, Project Coordinator for Healthwatch Northumberland went through basic housekeeping and technical issues such as optimal online viewing information and use of chat function to ask questions/comment.

1. Opening of Healthwatch Northumberland AGM

Cllr Wendy Pattison, Portfolio Holder for Adults' Wellbeing, formally opened the meeting and gave an overview of her remit and appreciation of the work of Healthwatch Northumberland.

2. Welcome: David Thompson, Healthwatch Northumberland Chair

David welcomed everyone to the event and thanked Cllr Pattison for her work and interest in Healthwatch Northumberland.

He confirmed the minutes of the previous year's AGM had been sent out with the meeting details and were also available on the website. He said any queries or comments could be raised via the chat function or by the usual methods outside of the AGM. No queries about the minutes were raised during the AGM.

David then thanked the Healthwatch Northumberland board, volunteers and staff, welcomed new board and staff members Fareeha, Helen and Tim and provided news of recent recruitment of new board members Jacqui Davison, Gillian Robinson and Kaeti Seth.

David thanked those team members who have left Healthwatch Northumberland in the past year - volunteers Anna, Harry, Ann, Maggie and former Engagement Officer Caroline Janes.

3. Review of the Year: Derry Nugent, Healthwatch Northumberland Project Coordinator

Derry highlighted the number of reports produced since the start of the pandemic including Mental Health 2020, Audiology: Lets Talk, Click and Connect, Care Homes: Covid-19 and beyond, Annual Report 2020-2021, Where Next: Annual Survey 2021 and Young People and Mental Health, along with our regular Quarterly Reports which bring together public feedback on services.

Derry introduced Healthwatch Northumberland's remit to 'gather, inform and report' reaching people via our newsletters, mailshots, PR, press and radio, face to face and online engagement events and receiving feedback and providing information and signposting digitally from surveys, calls, text, emails and letters.

She explained that our statutory 'Enter and View' activities will start again once we are in a position with the pandemic to allow it.

Derry outlined what we do and how we do it - convene, co-exist, collaborate and communicate; bringing people together to enable conversations, partnership working and having trusted relationships with the public, providers and commissioners. Derry went through some key pieces of work including our work in partnership with Northumberland County Blind Association using our volunteers to make wellbeing calls to

their service users. Also our work with relatives of those living in care homes and the Your Voice Fund which offers small grants to specialist organisations to listen to their service users about health and social care issues.

Derry summarised Healthwatch Northumberland finances for 2020-2021 and highlighted some key priorities for next year set by the board, many of which were decided from feedback from the people of Northumberland in our Annual Survey. These included End of Life Care, the Integrated Care System, improving access to dental services, care at home, Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) and Primary Care and Covid-19 impact on health inequalities.

Following on from the presentation there was a short Q&A session, the document for all Q&As from the AGM can be found on our website.

4. Northumberland Recovery College: Tracy Bruce, Mental Health Concern Lead Officer

Tracy outlined Mental Health Concern's remit and its role in being the lead organisation for Northumberland Recovery College along with the ethos and aims of the college. The philosophy of the college was introduced in more detail with a focus on co-production, education, inclusion and recovery.

The diverse nature of Northumberland as a vast county with rural and urban areas was discussed along with the importance of understanding the needs of those different communities, build long-term trust and rapport and reach across the county with the help of different partners rather than have one building that only a few can access.

Tracy outlined the aspirations of the college as 'about thriving not just surviving' and the recognition that people need friendships, laughter, connections and to feel safe, supported, valued, and appreciated.

Tracy summarised what was next for Northumberland Recovery College including some examples of activities requested by communities including: autism peer support, walking football, community choir, wellbeing book club, drumming, wellbeing festival and support for veterans and the armed forces.

We watched a video from Libby, a student at the college, about the benefits she experienced being part of it and Tracy also outlined the reported benefits from others including improvements in wellbeing, life skills, confidence and motivation.

Tracy called for people to get in touch about what they want to see in their communities.

5. Breakout sessions: Guided Visualisation and Building Resilience

Following a short break and a Q&A session with Tracy Bruce and Kate O'Brien, Senior Head of Commissioning for Child Health, Mental Health and Learning Disabilities, Northumberland NHS Clinical Commissioning Group, Healthwatch Northumberland Chair, David, introduced two taster sessions delivered by Eddie Martin and Connie Davis from Northumberland Recovery College on guided visualisation and building resilience.

Details of the Q&A session are on our website.

6. Close: David Thompson, Healthwatch Northumberland Chair

David closed the AGM by thanking everyone for attending and Northumberland Recovery College for the presentation and breakout sessions. He invited people with further questions to send them in using their preferred format. He also thanked providers of services, commissioners and politicians working behind the scenes.