

**Minutes of the Healthwatch Northumberland Board meeting held on 10 September 2024 at Adapt NE, Burn Lane, Hexham**

**Present:** Peter Standfield (PS) Chair, Mike Allport (MA) Independent Member, Sue Taylor (ST) Independent Member, Gillian Robinson (GR) Independent Member, Jim Brown (JB) Public Health NCC, Kevin Higgins (KH) Northumberland County Council, Alison Killen (AK) Independent Member, Dawn Porter (DP) Independent Member

**In attendance:** Derry Nugent (DN) Project Coordinator, Lorna Beech (LB) Engagement and Volunteering Officer, Laura Haugh (LH) Digital Marketing and Content Creator

**Apologies:** Liz Prudhoe (LP) Adapt NE, Debra Blakey (DB) Carers Northumberland, Denise Robson (DR) Patient Advice and Liaison Service, Caroline Rogan (CR) Northumberland CVA

**Minutes recorded by:** Laura Haugh

<b>1. Introduction, apologies and declarations of interest</b>	<b>Action</b>
<p>1.1 PS opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.</p> <p>1.2 Apologies noted above.</p> <p>1.3 PS reminded the board of his involvement with Abbeyfield Northumbria, which provides residential care and sheltered accommodation for older people on a not-for-profit basis in Newcastle and Northumberland.</p> <p>JB reminded the board he is employed by the ICB and working for Northumberland County Council.</p> <p>No other interests were declared pertinent to items at this meeting.</p>	
<p><b>2. Minutes of last meeting</b></p> <p>The minutes of 11 June 2024 were agreed as a true record.</p>	

<p><b>3. Action points</b></p> <p>3.1 Item 3.1 – The transport service between hospital sites has been promoted on the website and will be used for signposting. PS will share the summary document of the Northumberland public and community transport needs assessment.</p> <p>3.2 All other action points were noted as complete.</p>	<p>PS will share the summary document of the Northumberland public and community transport needs assessment.</p>
<p><b>4. Matters arising</b></p> <p>There were no matters arising from the minutes.</p>	
<p><b>5. Questions from the public</b></p> <p>No questions had been received from the public.</p>	
<p><b>6. Presentation: Volunteering</b></p> <p>LB gave a presentation about volunteer recruitment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over the last 12 months some volunteers have moved on for various reasons such as moving away to university or retirement. A volunteer recruitment campaign was launched in January to find new volunteers to help with Enter and View and engagement events.</li> <li>• LB explained some of the common barriers to volunteering such as out of pocket expenses.</li> <li>• The recruitment campaign highlighted some of the benefits of volunteering for HWN including flexible hours, paid expenses, meeting new people, training and support and a work-based reference.</li> <li>• The campaign involved a printed postcard which was shared with job centres, community centres etc. and online promotion. Also shared with North Northumberland Voluntary Forum’s existing pool of volunteers.</li> <li>• Five new volunteers have been recruited.</li> <li>• There are future plans to recruit more young people although barriers are transport, time and availability around school hours. One of our young volunteers from the local high school is planning a survey project which will be completed during school time. If successful this could be rolled out to other schools.</li> </ul>	

<p><b>Questions and comments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GR suggested a different image could be used on the recruitment postcard if wanting to attract more young people or other demographics.</li> <li>• Members discussed other ways to recruit volunteers such as the sixth form event at St James’ Park, Northumberland College, other schools in the county, Duke of Edinburgh, youth initiatives and bite-sized volunteering. Social clubs, sports clubs and barbers could be used to target male volunteers.</li> <li>• PS suggested quantifying the value of volunteering by calculating volunteer hours in terms of wages to feed back to commissioners.</li> <li>• JB suggested looking into the Volunteer Passport so training does not have to be repeated. Emma Richardson or Nicola Duffy could tell us more about this.</li> </ul>	<p>DN and LB to calculate using real living wage and FTE.</p>
<p><b>7. Operational, risk and financial update 2023/24</b></p> <p>DN asked for questions on the circulated paper.</p> <p>7.1 Operational plan – DN highlighted tight capacity in delivering the operational plan and the project plan list. There was a discussion around the NEAS public engagement project which is paid but has tight timescales to coordinate a focus group. Members expressed concerns that this method of research is limited and this would be reflected in the findings.</p> <p>7.2 DN will be meeting with Adult Social Care staff to discuss public engagement on extra care housing. There was a discussion about HWN’s role in public engagement and making use of networks.</p> <p>7.3 Enter and View – Members discussed the recent Enter and View visits and feedback was very positive. It was agreed that the visits had been useful and the next steps are to pull together learning and reporting. Issues arising were around loneliness and lack of one to one interaction, and access to community services such as podiatry, dentistry and audiology. One more</p>	<p>DN to find out how many people are living in adult care homes in Northumberland.</p>

<p>visit is planned to Hartford Court in Cramlington. ST asked how many people are living in care homes in Northumberland.</p> <p>7.4 Risk register – The Director of Adapt is retiring this financial year. Members agreed to add this to the risk register.</p>	<p>DN to amend the risk register.</p>
<p><b>8. Board partner organisation updates</b></p> <p><b>a. Carers Northumberland</b></p> <p>DB sent an update to be shared in the minutes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A pre-bookable respite bed has been commissioned and is available at Castleview Care Home in Alnwick. The bed is in the residential care part of the home, so not suitable for anyone who needs nursing care. The bed is currently available to book up to 31 March 2025 and can be booked for 3, 4, 7 or 14 night stays. The weekly rate is £856 and standard financial assessment criteria applies (although this can be self-funded). Anyone wishing to book this has to have an assessed need. Following a meeting with Alan Curry, where he said that demand for the service had been very low, Carers Northumberland is now able to publicise this respite bed. Previously the details had only been shared with care management staff and it has been available since May. Carers Northumberland also has access to the booking schedule.</li> <li>• Primary care training – from September, a Carer Awareness training session will be available for any primary care staff to book on to. We have seen a fall in carer referrals via primary care over the past 6-12 months, despite offering Carer Awareness training in GP practices. In order to make it easier for practice staff to attend there will be a monthly online training session on the first Wednesday of the month – this can be booked via the professional page on our website. We can still do bespoke individual practice sessions on request. We will be publicising this in our Professional Update, as well as contacting each practice individually with our updated offer.</li> <li>• AGM – the Carers Northumberland AGM will take place on the morning of Wednesday 23 October, followed by a light lunch at Cramlington Hub. This is the same date as</li> </ul>	

<p>Healthwatch Northumberland’s AGM however, a member of staff will still attend Berwick with an information stall.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carers Rights Day has been confirmed for Thursday 21 November 2024, and we are in the process of planning our Information and Advice Day with our partners at the Corn Exchange in Morpeth. We will be inviting Healthwatch Northumberland to attend.</li> </ul> <p><b>b. North of Tyne Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)</b></p> <p>There was no update from PALS.</p> <p><b>c. Northumberland CVA</b></p> <p>There was no update from Northumberland CVA.</p> <p><b>d. Public Health</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Astyn Stephenson has taken up the role of Healthcare Navigator for housing. Groups she will work with will include prisoners and asylum seekers. There is funding for a similar role within Northumbria. These will be good links for HWN.</li> <li>• The JSNAA website has been updated with new topics including dementia, carers and respiratory conditions. ST asked if there is a JSNAA for eye health. JB will continue to push for this.</li> <li>• There is work around best value for money, service planning and self-assessment going on at NCC.</li> <li>• There is a new head of children’s services.</li> <li>• JB updated on the winter vaccination programme including the RSV vaccine. Those eligible will be contacted by their GP. Covid vaccine plans are still to be confirmed.</li> <li>• KH gave an update on work around housing, early years and employment. There is a focus on improving quality of work. KH will send any requests for consultation to DN. A DWP whitepaper is due in November – work and health will feature in this.</li> </ul>	<p>JB to continue to push for a JSNAA for eye health.</p>
<p><b>9. Governance issues update</b></p>	

<p><b>9.1 Healthwatch England Quality Framework</b></p> <p>The new survey method of completing the Quality Framework is in progress. Members agreed that it is a useful way of completing the task although some felt it took longer or they didn't have enough knowledge of the framework to complete the surveys. DN will recirculate the Quality Framework guidance and will continue to share the surveys with the aim to complete all sections by December. DN will start to think about how to involve external stakeholders in Quality Framework. ST, DP, GR and AK expressed interest in forming a task group to look at the Quality Framework.</p> <p><b>9.2 Co-option and Deputy Chair appointment</b></p> <p>No members have agreed to take up the Deputy Chair position. DN and PS will discuss recruiting new members to fill gaps of knowledge on the board such as pharmacy and a service user's perspective.</p>	<p>DN to recirculate Quality Framework guidance.</p> <p>DN to think about how to involve external stakeholders in Quality Framework.</p> <p>DN to arrange a task group to look at Quality Framework.</p>
<p><b>10. Chair's update</b></p> <p>PS thanked everyone for their contributions and said he is putting together an update to share with members.</p>	<p>PS to send a Chair's update to members</p>
<p><b>11. Any other business</b></p> <p>11.1 MA raised an issue about admission times to hospital for operations. The standard to arrive by 7.30am means that people from rural locations need to leave home at 6am to arrive there on time but they may be later in the operations list. He asked if anything can be done about this.</p> <p>DN will ask Northumbria Healthcare what their admissions procedure is and if it takes account of travel time.</p> <p>11.2 JB mentioned the public service reform programme, bringing organisations together to address some public service pressures. JB suggested thinking about what role local HW could play in this.</p>	<p>DN to contact Northumbria Healthcare about admissions procedure.</p>
<p><b>12. Close</b></p>	

**Date of next meeting – 3 December 2024**

**Dates of meetings for 2024/25**

23 October 2024 (AGM)

3 December 2024

21 January 2025 (Board Planning Day)

11 March 2025