

Board meeting minutes.  
Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024  
5pm – 6.30pm  
Board meeting – online (Teams)

**Present:**

Lee Adams (LA)	Chair
Pat Southgate (PS)	Vice Chairperson
Derek Bodell (DB)	Trustee
Laura Parker (LP)	Trustee
Kacie Hodgson (KH)	Trustee
John Cunningham (JC)	Trustee
Alan Cram (AC)	Trustee
Alison Wood (AW)	Trustee
Ashley Green (AG)	CEO

**Welcome & apologies.**

LA welcomed everyone to the meeting, including our two new Trustees – Alan & Alison.

LA asked for formal approval for Alan & Alison from those trustees present. PS formally proposed for Alan and Alison to be elected as Healthwatch Trustees and DB seconded this.

LA asked AG to arrange a short induction for them both.

LA confirmed that Amy Barnes would be stepping down as a Trustee with immediate effect due to family and work commitments.

**Confidential matters & declaration of interest**

LA said that she was still supporting Healthwatch Wakefield and a temporary member on their Trustee Board but intended to step down from this in April.

There were no confidential matters arising.

**Minutes & Action log – 7<sup>th</sup> November 2023 Board meeting**

LA and all those present agreed with and accepted the minutes from the Board meeting in November. LA asked for future minutes to have page numbers.

DB said that he intended to follow up with Emma Davis, Public Health Manager, NYC about their previous discussions about sexual health due to recent national figures showing a rise in cases across England.

LA said that she had agreed to provide mentoring support to Emma in a voluntary capacity, outside of her Healthwatch role.

AG went through the 'Action Log' and confirmed that all except two actions had been completed and these two (staff media training and volunteering) would be ongoing actions.

Both PS and LP said that it had been challenging to get feedback or information about next steps for the mental health workshop that they had chaired in June 2023. PS said that she would re-contact the organiser to find any news.

LA spoke about her chairing of the two adult autism public consultation events in December and said that she hadn't received any information about outcomes or next steps. LA asked if AG could investigate this for her.

LA also asked if Trustees felt that we should provide a written response to the adult autism strategy consultation which was currently out as LA had drafted her thoughts on the strategy and sent these to AG. AG felt that we didn't need to as we had been involved in the strategy working group and engagement planning group. AW felt it might be more beneficial for us to monitor the delivery of the strategy once it has been agreed, which AG agreed with. AG said that individual people can respond with their feedback via the consultation survey and website. It was therefore agreed that we wouldn't submit a written response.

### **Q3 Board report (Oct – Dec 2023)**

AG asked those trustees present if this report format and information meet their needs, given that he provides a monthly summary of work and activities. LA suggested that future Board reports could be aligned with an annual delivery plan for 2024/25. AW agreed with this proposal and highlighted that a clear format for identifying activities, aims etc. would be a more effective way to both plan and monitor work. There was a general consensus for this new approach which AG agreed to action from April onwards. Both LA and AW offered to support AG in developing the delivery plan template.

AG briefly went over the Q3 Board report and highlighted that 38 people had attended the online AGM in October 'Making an impact' webinar, this figure excluded staff & speakers. Those attending predominantly included representatives from our partners and stakeholders, and less so the public.

AG said that our joint report with York St John University on Rurality & health inequalities was launched in October and was on the 'front page' of the Yorkshire Post. We received positive comments back from a range of stakeholders and our report had influenced two health inequalities funding bids in Harrogate and Hambleton & Richmondshire to focus on rurality.

AG said that our Medequip report was launched in November which was commissioned by Medequip and looked into the experiences of people using their services and equipment.

Medequip have produced an action plan detailing how they will act on our recommendations. The report has been shared with key stakeholders across the county – NYC, NHS and ICS. The report has received strong praise from North Yorkshire Council, and particularly the Corporate Director for Health & Adult Services.

LA suggested that it would be helpful in understanding the website and social media figures that were included in the report, if there was a comparison to what other Healthwatch were achieving. AW suggested that it would be helpful to have targets against these figures to help explain our work and success.

### **Revised policies**

1. Data protection & confidentiality policy – there was consensus amongst all trustees for this revised policy. LA asked if this would cover requests for FOI and AG agreed to investigate this. AG said that he intended over the coming year to undertake an audit of their systems and procedures, with support from one of our volunteers, to ensure we were complying with this revised policy.
2. Financial management & controls policy – there was consensus amongst all trustees for this revised policy. AG asked if AC had any thoughts on our reserves policy which we had reduced from 3 months to 1 month. AC said he would look into this after he had a better understanding of our income/expenditure. [AC to meet with AG and staff on the 5<sup>th</sup> March]. LA asked what limit AG had to expenditure on the Healthwatch debit card, and AG said he had up to £1,000 which was sufficient for the organisation's needs.
3. Cookies policy – there was consensus amongst all trustees for this new policy.
4. Retention policy – there was consensus amongst all trustees for this new policy and AG said that similar to the Data protection & confidentiality policy he would undertake an audit of their systems and procedures to ensure they complied with this new policy.
5. Privacy statement – LA said that she had some comments on this policy around the wording of the info we captured and would send this to AG. AG said that the template was produced by Healthwatch England. Other than this, there was consensus amongst all trustees for this new policy.

### **Impact reports & progress against recommendations**

AG highlighted that there had been challenges for him to receive timely responses to their reports for a number of reasons, for example around the diversity of our reports and structure, complexity of the NHS/ICS/NYC own systems for both receiving and responding to our reports, as well as our reports sometimes acting to add to an already existing body of evidence (ie: our rurality report). AG gave the example of our continence report which had taken a period of 8 months to get the right people from across the system together to discuss the report and actions.

However, AG was pleased to say that he had met this month with both the council and local NHS (for North Yorkshire) to agree a single format for who receives our reports and responds to them and our recommendations.

LA said that she felt the information provided in the reports did not highlight the impact or outcomes that our report or recommendations were requesting and was not what the trustees had asked for previously. JC suggested keeping the impact and actions in response to our recommendations short and concise. There was a discussion about how we might better define what we meant by our impact and AW said having a template/structure to how we report this would help us. DB said that it might help us to look at the design and/or layout of our reports to better demonstrate the impact we are asking for. PS said that the enter & view reports and subsequent actions were very important. LA asked for a list of all our report and recommendations over the last two years with impact and actions against these, and details of where we are still waiting to hear back from partners on what action have been taken in response to our report for the April Board meeting.

AG agreed to take these comments on board and review how going forward we ask for feedback from our health and care stakeholders and how he reports this back to trustees. AG agreed to bring an updated report(s) to the April Board meeting.

#### **Trustee appraisals**

LA said that she would like the appraisals to take place in March or April and trustees should approach one another to meet as a pair and appraise each other using the forms provided and return these to her. LA said that AC and AW wouldn't need to do this, and that she and Pat would appraise the CEO.

#### **AOB**

LA asked for other trustee thoughts on whether we should invite the public to our Board meetings, as she felt we should do. There was general recognition of the benefits but some hesitancy due to the content of our agenda and discussions, use of technology and holding it as a hybrid meeting. It was felt therefore that for the April Board meeting that we would not invite the public, but AG would explore how we might include the public at future meetings.

LA said that today we hadn't included the trustee skills audit which she had sent to trustees but said she would like to see this included at the April Board meeting.

AG said that as part of reviewing how we go forward and support our volunteers without a single dedicated post, he was inviting volunteers to a face to face and online meeting to hear what they thought about being supported going forward. PS said that she would be interested in being part of these discussions. AG said that he was aiming to share a draft budget in the next two weeks which would include revised salaries and pensions.

PS said that in response to LA request for a stipend payment that a small sub-group has been set up (including PS, DB, LP, JC & AG) and met once to begin discussions and these would continue, with any final decision requiring full Board approval.

#### **Close**

Next Board meeting: Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> April, office and online. 10am -1pm