



Healthwatch South Tees Board Meeting

**Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 21 January 2026
Thorntree Hub, Middlesbrough, 15:00-16:30**

Present:	Carole Marshall (CM) - Chair
Board Members	Dr Ian Holtby - Vice Chair (IH) Mandy Capaldi (MC) Kelly Hodgson (KH) Jade Lavan
In attendance:	Linda Sergeant (LS) Gill Durdan (GD)
	Action
1	Introductions & welcome CM welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.
2.	Apologies for absence and declarations of interest Andrew Jones Laura Bush Jen Little Femi Abolade
3.	Declarations of interest None
4.	Minutes from last development meeting & actions Minutes had previously been approved electronically to adhere to timescales for publishing on HW website. No outstanding actions.

<p>5.</p>	<p>Project update</p> <p>LS updated the Board on HWST activity during Q3. Key discussion points were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospital Discharge Report – the Board requested that a follow up be carried out later in the year to see how the recommendations have been adopted by South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundations Trust. • Health and Wellbeing Events – LS advised of a change in strategy for the HWB events due to poor attendance at recent events. The Board supported the decision to carry out more focussed events and that they should be responsive to community need. • Mental Health Priority – LS advised that this is the only Priority from our 2025/26 workplan where we have not made significant progress. To avoid duplication, LS advised that we are currently reviewing what other organisations have already produced. This will help us determine whether developing our own resource remains necessary, or whether our efforts would be better focused on enhancing, promoting, or signposting existing materials. • Staffing – LS advised that we were successful in recruiting a new Community Engagement Officer, Joe Wilson. who commenced in post on 12 January. The Board requested that Joe be invited to the next Board Meeting. Additionally, Vicky Jackson, Project Coordinator has now transferred roles to Lived Experience Group Coordinator. 	<p>LS</p> <p>LS</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>NHS Online Consultation</p> <p>The Government has opened a consultation with the whole local Healthwatch network about the creation of a new national NHS trust, called NHS Online. Under current legislation, local Healthwatch must always be consulted when any new NHS trust is proposed.</p> <p>The consultation will involve:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an invitation to all local Healthwatch to individually respond to the proposals, as set out in the attached document by Monday 9 March • an invitation to attend a DHSC/NHSE webinar to hear about the proposals from officials and ask questions, 14 January – details will be sent to you once the date is confirmed. <p>Several Board members and staff attended the webinar and key points raised were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate diagnosis • Patients must have choice • Danger of an inferior service • Danger of wider health inequalities • Elderly people with multiple morbidities • Not clear about translation methods • Access for carers <p>Board members who were unable to attend webinar asked if a recording had been made available. LS to action.</p> <p>Board agreed to formal responses to the consultation questions to the Project Lead to produce a joint response.</p>	
<p>9</p>	<p>AOB</p> <p>KH informed the Board that she would be leaving her role at MVDA at the beginning of February and that this meeting would therefore be her last in her current capacity. The Chair noted that KH would be welcome to continue serving on the Board as an independent representative. The Board expressed unanimous support for this proposal, and KH accepted the invitation.</p>	
<p>13</p>	<p>Date and time of next meetings</p> <p>TBC</p>	