

**Healthwatch Hertfordshire Board Meeting
10am on Thursday 28th November 2024, Online**

Board Members: Eve Atkins, Alan Bellinger, Ryan Heard, Amanda Hutchinson, Enoch Kanagaraj, Jan Taylor, Neil Tester (Chair)

Executive Team: Ivana Chalmers (Chief Executive), Fiona Corcoran (Deputy Chief Executive), Nuray Ercan (Deputy Chief Executive, Governance and Operations)

Visitors/others: Susan Ebanyat (HCC Commissioner), Angela Hughes (Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust), Pooja Patel (Visiting Angels North Hertfordshire)

Apologies: Alex Booth, Sally Orr, Ramone Samuda, Amy Willcox-Smith

1. Welcome, apologies and register of interests

Neil welcomed everyone present and communicated apologies, as above. It was noted that it is Ivana's first Board meeting. Register of interests are correct as at the time of publication.

2. Minutes of 29th August 2024 and outstanding actions

[The minutes were approved as an accurate record and signed off.](#)

Neil updated Board that the Integrated Care Board item within the action tracker will be discussed further at the Strategic Board meeting in December.

3. Chair's update

Neil referred to his report circulated as part of the meeting papers and highlighted the following:

- Board 1:1's are upcoming. It was agreed that these would be held in January 2025.
- He thanked Board and the staff team briefing Ivana on issues during her first few months.
- On the basis of what has been briefed to the media ahead of the Devolution White Paper, it is increasingly possible that the government may be proposing some local government reorganisations which may have implications for Hertfordshire.
- Neil attended the National Healthwatch Conference. It was very inspirational to remember that we are part of a big national network with a diverse range of people.

[Board noted the Chair's report.](#)

4. Chief Executive's update including: Organisational performance and contract monitoring

The contract monitoring documents for quarter 2 have been circulated as usual. Ivana noted that the documents spotlights the incredibly immense spectrum of work and that we continue to work with our partners at Herts County Council. In the background, she has been having good meetings with our commissioner Susan Ebanyat discussing next steps and KPI's, coming to Board shortly.

5. Signposting and research overview

This document aims to zoom out from our day to day work and provides a timeline of activity for both the Board and public. We are instating this document to be received by Board every six months to provide a flavour of the themes of work we are undertaking. It was noted that Board found this paper very useful and agreed it would be good to have on a regular basis.

[Board noted the report.](#)

6. Finance – Management accounts as at September 2024

Alan gave an overview the accounts as at September 2024. He focussed on the projected forecast for year-end and explained that:

- There is no significant variances on employment costs
- Non-staff costs are up very marginally however costs are in line with our budget
- Revenue income is healthy - we have a positive variance of £9k on core funding from HCC
- Revenue generated from trading activities is positive
- At the end of September we were looking at a positive variance of approximately £10k but have picked up some costs during October so at year end we may have a slight deficit

[Board signed off the Management Accounts as at September 2024.](#)

HwH Trading Limited meeting update

We set up HwH Trading as a way of managing VAT. In setting this up in December last year 3 shares were allocated (to Alan, Neil and Geoff) and at a HwH Trading Meeting in August it was agreed to review the three shares and these have now been transferred to and held by Healthwatch Hertfordshire Ltd. HwH Trading is now a wholly owed subsidiary by Healthwatch Hertfordshire Ltd.

[Board noted the above update.](#)

7. Policy sign off

Fiona introduced the Communications Policy and social media guidelines. She highlighted that it is a new policy to help staff and Trustees support and expand our communications and social media channels. It also ensures that we adhere to the obligations of being part of the national Healthwatch brand.

It was agreed that the term 'tweet' would be reviewed as it is platform specific and may date the policy.

[Board approved the Communications Policy and the Social Media guidelines pending the minor tweak raised above.](#)

8. Board Advisory Committee (BAC)

Alan updated that the BAC had a productive meeting with Ivana setting the scene with a 'looking ahead' paper and we did a deep dive into contract monitoring. Additionally the Committee heard a full review of current projects and operations. Much of the meeting focussed on reviewing the budget for 2025-26, the enabler for what we want to do within the business model.

9. HwH Meetings schedule

Neil's gratitude was noted for the work that has already been put in on this. Ivana echoed Neil's thanks to the team and thanked Board for completing the poll. We have obtained helpful insights from this already and have seen that there are some members that were not able to attend where the majority fell. Board's role is at the centre of our thinking and we want to enable Trustees to be part of as many conversations as is appropriate so the principle we are working to here is having the most impactful and effective governance we can achieve. On occasion a Trustee may not be

able to attend the date of a meeting and we really want to encourage alternative ways on connecting you into the conversation either before or after the meeting.

Board agreed the following recommendations:

- the next three meeting dates, to enable planning and logistical arrangements to happen in good time
- Particularly those who have challenges to reconnect and looking at the data from the poll to aim to alternate times/days so that it is not always the same people disadvantaged

10. Speaker ideas for 2025

Nuray raised that we have run to the end of speaker suggestions from last year and asked for Board's suggestions on any speakers or topics they would like to hear from in the coming year. Additionally Trustees may wish to share knowledge and/or expertise.

Suggestions made within the meeting included:

- The assisted dying bill going through and palliative care pressures
- Someone from the ICB on trends and the three shifts and any reorganisations between now and April 2025, maybe Jane Halpin or Michael Watson
- Alan offered to talk on what is happening around virtual hospitals and predictive medicines and patient experiences on this
- Connection with local Citizens Advice and the topic of cost of living
- Find ways that social care in the most broadest sense stays on our agenda

Nuray thanked Board and the above suggestions will help shape the programme going forward.

11. Any other business including questions from the public – NA

10. Part 2 – Closed

Next formal meeting of the Board: Thursday 27th March 2025