



**Business Board Meeting**  
**Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2025, 13.30-15.30**  
**Unit 7, Witney Way, Boldon Business Park**

**Present:**

John Lowther (JL)	Chair	Tracey Grainger (TG)	Director
Arthur Mckean (AM)	Vice Chair	Carl Buckley (CB)	Director
Sheila Scott (SS) Operations Manager			
Bev Cook (BC) Business Support/Engagement Officer (minute taker)			

Agenda Item		Actions
1	<p><b><u>Welcome and apologies for absence</u></b></p> <p>JL welcomed all to the meeting, with apologies received from Angela Fahey and Barbara Tennet.</p>	
2	<p><b><u>Declarations of Interest</u></b></p> <p>No new declarations of interest declared.            TG joined the meeting via Teams after the Health Pathways update by Dr Neil O’Brien, Chief Medical Officer, due to a conflict of interest.</p>	
3	<p><b><u>Health Pathways Update - Dr Neil O’Brien, Chief Medical Officer North East and North Cumbria ICB</u></b></p> <p>Dr O’Brien joined the meeting via Teams to update HWST Board on Health Pathways.            Key points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Portal is an online platform a local clinical pathway of information which hold GP guidelines. These aid in patient consultation as up to date guidelines and referral forms can be accessed.</li> <li>• Currently Northumberland has no portal, Cumbria uses Health Pathways whilst South Tyneside, Sunderland, Gateshead, Newcastle and Co-Durham use Health Pathways and GP TeamNet.</li> <li>• The cost is 1.5 million to host these guidelines. Dr O’Brien was asked to carry out a review on all portals used across NENC for consistency, safety and quality.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health Pathways takes up 2/3 of the cost, which was 45% out of date, however, guidance has now been updated.</li> <li>• ICS want to continue to support clinicians.</li> <li>• Recommendations - to look at a single platform across the whole ICS. Allowing a robust system for review.</li> <li>• The cost for a single platform would be around £500,000 enabling savings to be put back into front line services. This is not popular with GPs in South Tyneside and Cumbria.</li> </ul> <p>Q. JL - this is about ending duplication of software and a streamline of services.</p> <p>A. Yes.</p> <p>Q. CB - Apart from South Tyneside and Cumbria showing reluctance are there other risks?</p> <p>A. I can't see any. Health Pathways is used across community and hospital services. STSFT value this system, but I think it can be replicated. National guidelines are much more accessible through the NICE Clinical Knowledge Summaries. We want to signpost to National Guidance with a link to localised referral information. Across the country the only places using Health Pathways are South Tyneside, Cumbria and Wales due to the cost.</p> <p>Q. JL - Could some of the savings be used towards training?</p> <p>A. If the decision is made to go to a single health platform which is not Health Pathways there will be a transition. All of the information will be transferred over to the new system. GP's already use GP TeamNet so no further training will be needed. It will be made easy for GPs to find the information which they need which will include the local referral information.</p> <p>Final decision to be made 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025 which will be shared via comms.</p> <p>Dr Neil O'Brien was thanked by the Board.</p> <p>After the presentation the Board discussed their concerns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no plan or impact assessment on patients or how the funding would be used to improve local services.</li> <li>• Health Pathways is currently used as a training tool for new staff.</li> <li>• JL asked whether a letter should be forwarded highlighting the concerns of the Healthwatch South Tyneside Board.</li> <li>• SS suggested reaching out to GPs once the new system is in place to see how it is working.</li> <li>• TG suggested writing a letter to confirm that the changes being made is people focused. She offered to write it.</li> </ul>	<p>TG</p>
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4	<p><b><u>Minutes of the last meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2025</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The minutes were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.</li> <li>• Matters arising from the minutes - none.</li> </ul>	
5	<p><b><u>Finance Report</u></b></p> <p><u>Management Accounts</u></p> <p>SS circulated the updated management accounts prior to the meeting via email.</p> <p><u>Income and Expenditure</u></p> <p>The accounts made available prior to the meeting were discussed and noted.</p> <p>SS informed the Board that Louise Lydon from the Pharmaceutical Committee would be hiring the large meeting room to carry out training which would bring in additional income. This would take place from September 2025, one day per month for approximately four months.</p> <p>Rebecca from Quantum Accountants will be attending the next Board meeting to discuss the accounts and answer any questions which the Board may have. CB asked whether we should be paying Corporation Tax. It was agreed to put this to the accountants at the next meeting.</p> <p>Annual accounts available to be signed off at the end of the meeting in preparation for the AGM being held on 7<sup>th</sup> July.</p>	<p>SS</p> <p>CB</p> <p>SS</p>
6	<p><b><u>Items for Information</u></b></p> <p><u>Chairs Update</u></p> <p>An update had been shared with the Board regarding meetings attended prior to the meeting.</p> <p><u>Operations Managers Update</u></p> <p>The Operations Manager's report was shared via email prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Items covered:  Job Vacancy  Enter and View - Eight Specialist Homes  Regular Meetings with CQC  Meeting with STC Commissioners</p>	

	NENC Healthwatch Network - Chair and Lead Officers Meeting, 19 May	
7	<p><u>Items for Decision</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-election of HWST Chair and Vice Chair It was agreed that JL and AM would continue in their roles as Chair and Vice Chair having their two-year tenure extended for six months. Once further clarification is given of the tender process this will be reviewed. In the meantime, recruiting new Board members will be a priority. In their absence BT and AF would be asked if they wanted to be considered for the roles of Chair and Vice Chair.</li> <li>• HW staff cost of living increase - The Board agreed to 4.5% cost of living increase, payable in June salary. TG would forward an email to SS confirming the decision who would then forward on to Quantum Accountants to action.</li> <li>• NENC HW Network Shared Values - The network shared values were sent to Board members prior to the meeting. It was agreed that HWST would adopt the HWE Values which are: Equity, Empowerment, Collaboration, Independence, Truth and Impact.</li> </ul>	TG/SS
8	<p><u>Items for Discussion:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resignation of Board Member - NA stepped down as a Board Member as of 28<sup>th</sup> May 2025. Companies House have been notified. New Board members would be recruited to support the next stage of HWST development. It was agreed to look at introducing annual self-declaration forms for all Board Members. TG and CB to share details of what they currently complete in their job roles.</li> <li>• HWST Annual General Meeting - 7<sup>th</sup> July 2025 Board members asked to email if able to attend due to some members being on holiday. 15 members had registered to attend plus Board Members. Although invited, there would be no GP attending. Louise Lydon, Chief Officer of Community Pharmacy Gateshead and South Tyneside will be presenting. TG asked if a pre meeting prior to the AGM could be held to confirm individual roles and layout. All agreed. A calendar invite would be sent out. A short article and</li> </ul>	TG/CB

	<p>invite to the event would be placed in the Shields Gazette to attract more members of the public.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement Update - The report was shared prior to the meeting - Current surveys “Have Your Say” and Pharmacy First continue to be taken to a range of hard-to-reach community groups and information sessions.</li> </ul>	
9	<p><b><u>Any Other Business</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting Value - Discussing the direction of Healthwatch.</li> <li>Lindsay Graham, Wear People First to discuss possible interest in tendering for HWST contract - No invite was forwarded as it was agreed that it was premature to invite Lyndsay at this time. SS gave an overview to the Board. In 2016 HWST were granted a three-year contract with a one-year extension each year after. Toward the end of 2025 the tender process will begin to decide who will be HWST host provider. Board members then discussed the skill set of members and the possibility of tendering as a group. As part of the process SS has been asked for HWST engagement details to enable a questionnaire to be sent out to enable STC Commissioning Team to assess the work of HWST.</li> <li>SS confirmed that she is still having difficulty setting up the new mandate for the TSB Bank Account. A previous Board Member will be helping to remedy this. Three previous Board Members will be removed and replaced with JL and AM as new signatories.</li> </ul>	SS
10	<p><b><u>Date and Time of Next Meeting</u></b></p> <p>Monday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2025, 13.30-15.30</p>	