



Business Board Meeting
Monday 29th September 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
Angela Fahey (AF)	Director	Barbara Tennet (BT) Director
Sheila Scott (SS)	Operations Manager	
Bev Cook (BC)	Business Support/Engagement Officer (minute taker)	

Agenda Item		Actions
1	<p><u>Welcome and apologies for absence</u></p> <p>JL welcomed all to the meeting.</p>	
2	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>No new declarations of interest declared.</p>	
3	<p>Anna Hargrave Programme Director – Sunderland & South Tyneside Health & Care Alliance, South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust</p> <p><u>Presentation: Guiding You Home</u></p> <p>Guiding You Home - aims to support patients with an urgent health or care need, to receive care as close to home as possible as part of neighbourhood working.</p> <p>The programme is a partnership between South Tyneside Council, Sunderland City Council, Sunderland and South Tyneside Foundation Trust, North East and North Cumbria ICB and Newton Consulting.</p> <p>Work conducted between November 2023 and February 2024 identified opportunities across the whole system to improve the independence and outcomes for people living in South Tyneside and Sunderland.</p> <p>Since July 2025 hospital discharge plans have been made up of four work streams.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hospital Discharge 2. Reablement 3. Return to Independence Beds 4. Admission Avoidance and Flow 	

“Call Before Convey”. Ambulance crews are mandated to call the Care Coordination Hub who offer a health and social care response to avoid hospital admissions.

Same Day Emergency Care (SDEC) has been integrated into the Care Co-ordination Hub which enables same day expert care.

By December this year 500 patients with acute respiratory illnesses such as COPD and pneumonia who regularly go into crisis will be monitored by a device called LUCY.

GPs to sign up to the monitoring programme which has been set up by the ICB – ARI Hubs (Acute Respiratory Illness Hubs).

1st November the respiratory hub pathway will be going live. 111 will be coming on board.

New pathways planned include Falls Pathway and Head Injuries Pathway.

Questions

Q. When did we stop doing the basics, getting back to patient centred needs?

A. By recognising and supporting all of the care needs we can support a person to stay at home, supporting the carers and relatives with the systems which we have in place. We hope to have Carers Advocates to support the family, look at their needs and give them the confidence that the systems are in place.

Q. Are the advocates employed by the hospital or are they private.

A. My intension is that we fund them, but the funding is given to Sunderland Carer’s Centre who will employ the staff. They will be part of the discharge team and the Care Hub Team.

Q. Is there data showing lower risks and a longer life expectancy when patients remain in their home.

A. Yes, when someone goes into permanent care their life expectancy is reduced by about two years. Being at home they are living longer, happier and more independent lives.

Q. Is a pathway 3 a care home?

A. Yes.

Q. How did you choose where to trial the service. Was that through data?

A. Yes, we took baseline data from July 2024 to July 2025 so that we got the seasonal trends. We looked at the areas which had the highest levels of care packages when they were leaving reablement.

Q. Is anybody looking at any deprivation or economic overload to this in terms of Wards?

A. Quite a lot of the work that Newton Consulting presented included lots of data around deprivation levels. A lot of people who leave hospital and require our services come from the most deprived areas.

Q. I work in domiciliary care. I called the Hub and gave the information and was told I would be passed over. I had to relay all of the information again. I thought, what was the point in that.

A. I totally agree. When you ring up you get a call handler who are trained in the triage process. You will have been handed over to a

	<p>nurse practitioner, but you should not have to repeat the information. Anna said she would look at this.</p> <p>Anna was thanked for her very informative presentation. Presentation slides available on request. The Chair asked for permission to share the slides.</p>	
4	<p><u>Minutes of the last meeting held on 2nd June 2025</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The minutes were agreed as a correct record of the meeting. • Matters arising from the minutes – AF and BT declined the offer of becoming HWST Chair. 	
5	<p><u>Finance Report</u></p> <p><u>Management Accounts</u> SS circulated the updated management accounts prior to the meeting via email.</p> <p><u>Income and Expenditure</u> The accounts made available prior to the meeting were discussed and noted. SS informed the Board that there would be a payment of £300 paid for some upcoming work - Healthwatch NENC PCARP (Primary Care Access Recovery Programme) Awareness Initiative.</p>	
6	<p><u>Items for Information</u></p> <p><u>Chairs Update</u> An update had been shared with the Board regarding meetings attended prior to the meeting.</p> <p><u>Operations Managers Update</u> The Operations Manager’s report was shared via email prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Items covered: Enter and View – Eight Specialist Homes Regular Meetings with CQC Meeting with STC Commissioners arranged for 18th November 2025. Meetings recently attended – Care Closer to Home, Living Well Alliance, South Tyneside Alliance Committee, NENC HW Lead Officers (and Chairs), Sunderland and South Tyneside Involvement Partnership</p> <p><u>Engagement</u> Project engagement taken place between June and September was shared via email prior to the meeting.</p>	

	<p><u>Themes from the public</u> Have Your Say public response themes were shared with the Board to identify future project work in the Healthwatch South Tyneside’s 2026/27 Operational Plan.</p>	
7	<p><u>Items for Discussion:</u></p> <p>Closure of Healthwatch – The Board discussed the forthcoming closure of Healthwatch South Tyneside and the need to ensure that the organisation is fully prepared when this happens. It was noted that, while there is currently no agreed strategic direction for the closure process, the Healthwatch brand will cease in its current form. It was agreed for the December Board Meeting TG and SS would provide a briefing which covers redundancy and contract closure options, including any potential risks associated with the closure. Discussions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff contract and redundancy policy. • Board members asked to reflect on the time commitment needed to oversee this process and whether they can commit until closure. Additional support was offered to the Chair due to the increased workload the closure will generate. • Between meetings, Board Members agreed that all communication will take place via email on a ‘reply all’ basis to ensure total transparency. Any decisions agreed outside of meetings to be brought back to Board Meetings via a written paper. <p>Operational Plan 2026 to 2027 - Adult Mental Health, Hospital Discharge and Waiting Times for Procedures were agreed with the Young Peoples Mental Health piece of work to be completed during the current Operational Plan 2024-2026. A draft Operational Plan to be available for the next Board Meeting.</p> <p>Providing information for Companies House – SS agreed to re send the link and email to Board Members who are still to complete the process.</p> <p>Christmas Closing Dates – It was agreed that Healthwatch South Tyneside would close for Christmas on Monday 22nd December at 5.00pm. and re-open on Monday 5th January 2026 at 9.00am.</p>	<p>TG/SS</p> <p>ALL</p> <p>SS</p>
8	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member of the public - Communications with a recent caller who could not understand the role of HWST and why the organisation could not help. The Chair agreed to write explaining the role of HW. • Meeting Value – Understanding STSFT new plans to improve independence and outcomes for patients in South Tyneside and Sunderland following a presentation from Anna Hargrave. 	
9	<p><u>Date and Time of Next Meeting</u> Monday 15th December 2025, 13.30-15.30</p>	