Business Board Meeting
Friday 29th May 2026, 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	**<u>Welcome and apologies for absence</u>** JL welcomed all to the meeting.	
2	**<u>Declarations of Interest</u>** No new declarations of interest declared.	
3	**<u>Minutes of the last meeting held on 20th March 2026</u>** • The minutes were agreed as a correct record of the meeting. <u>Matter arising from the minutes</u> JL confirmed request regarding the case shared with the Patient Experience Group earlier in the year had been responded to. SS confirmed that it had and due to patient confidentiality and because of solicitor involvement there is no further action for HWST to take. SS shared that the patient's daughter continues to contact HWST with updates to the case which are logged on our confidential system. Pg 1 item 4 – CB's offer to produce the HWST Profit and Loss accounts. HWST do not have a SAGE account, and this would be costly to set up. There would be no access to historical data, it was therefore agreed that the Profit and Loss accounts would continue to be produced by Quantum Accountancy.	
4	**<u>Finance Report</u>** <u>Management Accounts</u> SS circulated the updated management accounts via email prior to the meeting.	

	<u>Income and Expenditure</u> Following the new signed contract with South Tyneside Council SS confirmed that the purchase order had been received and the first invoice had been paid.	
5	**<u>Items for Information</u>** <u>Chair's Update</u> An update had been shared with the Board prior to the meeting. <u>Operations Manager's Update</u> An update had been shared prior to the meeting. The report included: • Enter and View – Eight Specialist Homes • 29th May - Meeting with STC Commissioners • Attendance at Meetings • E-newsletter • Planned Projects • Annual Report • Guiding You Home Celebration Event <u>Quarter 3 and 4 Marketing Reports</u> Marketing reports had been shared with the Board prior to the meeting. SS informed the Board that views on our social media and website are seeing an upward trend. She was informed by Chris who works with other NENC Healthwatch that we are doing well. JL was thanked by staff and Board members for his supportive comments when delivering HWST updates at the recent Health and Wellbeing Board meeting. JL had also mentioned at the HWBB about the difficulty in receiving a response from commissioners to add to HWST reports. <u>Feedback from meeting with Commissioners on 29th May</u> During the meeting with the commissioner SS presented quarterly reports and marketing updates. The commissioner showed appreciation for the work which HW do, particularly the work carried out in the eight specialist care homes. SS shared the date for HWST AGM with the commissioner. The next HWST board meeting will be 28th September 2026. If needed following any further updates on the closure of HW an earlier meeting can be arranged. SS forwards all information regarding closure to commissioners to keep them informed.	

6	<u>**Items for Discussion**</u> <u>Potential Closure of Healthwatch and staff terms</u> A lengthy conversation took place around setting an agreed plan for closure. Points discussed included: • The Health and Social Care Bill which will be published by the end of September 2026. By then the Local Authority and the ICB should know what direction of work they are taking. • Hosting a meeting with commissioners from NENC ICB, South Tyneside Council and the other NENC Healthwatch together with their local authority representatives. • Writing to the ICB and South Tyneside Council to get clarity and enable strategic direction and planning. • Closure of HWST either March 2027 at the end of the contract or October 2027 if there is funding to do so. • Redundancy Policy, plans and information shared with the law firm. **Actions** • It was agreed that SS and CB would meeting with the accountants Quantum to discuss winddown with a report to be given at the September Board Meeting. • A letter to be drafted by TG to the ICB and Local Authority about timelines and to propose a meeting. • SS to collaborate with NENC Healthwatch to ask if there is a redundancy policy that can be shared. • TG current draft redundancy policy to be shared with Square One (law firm). • JL to go back to the Square One regarding written advice and ask for a response within 21 days. <u>HWST Annual General Meeting</u> To be held on Monday 14th September, from 10.00 – 13.00 at Hebburn Central. Speakers include Vicki Pattinson or a colleague from Adult Social Care and Peter Maloney from Hospitality and Hope.	SS/CB TG/All SS JL JL SS
7	<u>**Any Other Business**</u> **Meeting Value** – Forward planning and actions agreed for a successful dissolution of HWST.	
8	<u>**Date and Time of Next Meeting**</u> Monday 28th September 2026, 13.30 - 15.30	