

Minutes of Healthwatch West Northamptonshire

Advisory Board Meeting

Venue: 1st Floor Community Room, Grosvenor Centre

2 Union Street, Northampton NN1 2EW

21st of July 2025

Commencing at 12.00 p.m. to 2.00 p.m.

Members present:

Morcea Walker (MW), Dora Shergold (DS), Marcella Daye (MD),
Kate Holt (KH)

Guest speaker:

Simon Hewson – Head of Pathology at UHN(SH), Jamie John –
Strategic Improvement and Development Manager at UHN(JJ)

Staff In attendance:

Gabriella Van-Beek (GVB), Jemma Frater (JF)

Apologies Received:

Susan Hills (SH), Will Pope (WP), Mark Vincent (MV) Wendy Patel
(WP)

Abbreviations: Healthwatch North and West Northamptonshire (HWNW), Healthwatch Rutland (HWR), Healthwatch England (HWE), Young Healthwatch Northamptonshire (YHWN), Connected Together CIC (CTCIC), Health Watch Officer (HWO), Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB), Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children's Board (NSCB), Northamptonshire Safeguarding Adults Board (NSAB), Children and Young People (CYP), Children's Trust (CT), Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NHFT), Patient Participation Group (PPG), NHS England (NSHE), Kettering General Hospital (KGH), Northampton General Hospital (NGH), Integrated Care Across Northamptonshire (iCAN), Patient Advisory Group (PAG), Community Diagnostic Centres (CDC), Northamptonshire Health and Care Partnership (NHCP), Northamptonshire Oral Health Alliance (NOHA), Integrated Care Board (ICB), Local Area Partnerships (LAP's), Community Wellbeing Forums (CWF), Local Medical Committee (LMC), West Northants Council (WNC), Any Other Business (AOB)

Actions for the next meeting are in **red font**.

<u>No</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Lead</u>
1.	<p>Welcome, Introductions, Apologies and Declarations of Interest:</p> <p>Apologies from WP, SH, MV.</p> <p>No Declarations of Interest were given.</p>	MW
2.	<p>Draft Minutes and Matters Arising of HWNW Advisory Board meeting: April 28th 2025 (attached)</p> <p>Draft minutes were accepted.</p> <p>Action – GVB to send a reminder to Michael Hurt to send the tool to use for end of life and dementia care in services.</p>	<p>MW</p> <p>GVB</p>
3.	<p>UHN Mortuary Services Review – Simon Hewson – Head of Pathology – UHN, Jamie John – Strategic Improvement and Development Manager - UHN</p> <p>The UHN Mortuary team are happy to attend another meeting to speak with more people, as many members were not present during the meeting.</p> <p>There are currently mortuary services at both hospitals (NGH and KGH); this will be moving to one centralised location in Northampton (Riverside) for a county-wide service. UHN have decided to transport all inpatients and staff to the new facility.</p> <p>KH asked who employs the staff, and SH responded that they will TUPE over to WNC for new oversight and commissioning.</p> <p>Why a new mortuary is needed? Service providers want one clear process for families, whether the death is coronial or non-coronial. Hospital mortuaries are not set up for family viewings (although Northampton have started doing some recently). There is no permanent facility, and the current one requires major investment. The new site will have much-improved facilities for the bereaved families.</p> <p>KH asked if transport is in place to transport bodies. SH said that there is, and it will be council-controlled, so there is no blurring of the lines.</p> <p>MW raised concerns that the wider area where the building is being built is prone to flooding, and no one can be sure that it</p>	<p>JJ</p> <p>KH/SH</p> <p>SH</p> <p>KH/SH</p> <p>MW</p> <p>SH</p>

	<p>won't flood the new site. SH added that this concern has been raised previously.</p> <p>Construction began in January 2025, and there is onsite parking, all accessible.</p> <p>Maternity and the young children viewing areas will be kept separate, so the families can spend as long as they would like there. They can also view the deceased through a screen if they don't want to be in the room with them. Maternity services, such as baby footprints, will continue to be done in the hospital.</p> <p>After passing, the patient will stay on the ward for as long as appropriate to give loved ones a chance to say goodbye. This is typically 4-6 hours for adults; young children can be a bit longer, while babies can have up to 7 days.</p> <p>Nursing staff will carry out a body mapping and ensure any property is returned to the family where possible – if it is not, it will be securely bagged and kept with the deceased.</p> <p>KH queried how many patients they currently manage a day, SH informed that it is about 12 at KGH and 15-20 at NGH in both the hospitals and communities. The new building will have a storage capacity of 300+ adults, where there is currently space for 120 between KGH and NGH. The 2 transport vehicles will have a capacity of 4-5 people. Some concern was raised around there only being 2 transport vehicles, with KH asking what will happen if there is a breakdown or issue with the vehicle, and one or both are unable to run.</p> <p>GVB queried how families will have the information on what is happening where, in terms of where the body is located. SH said that families will have access to software to track where the deceased is.</p> <p>MD asked if there is a similar service in Leicester or elsewhere, where you can mark progress against. SH said Leicester all do the work in the individual hospitals, but Bristol has just gone through a similar process, and the council is in contact with them.</p> <p>KH said Northamptonshire is an expanding county and asked whether there are plans to meet this. SH replied that they have done projections for the next 25-30 years, where this was factored in. There is also a space available, if something were to happen, where they would need more capacity.</p>	<p>JJ</p> <p>SH</p> <p>KH/SH</p> <p>GVB SH</p> <p>MD SH</p> <p>KH SH</p>
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	GVB said the Romanian tradition is to have the deceased in their home; the next best thing would be if they can spend multiple days with them. MW added that they can arrange with the funeral services to have them home once discharged from the mortuary.	GVB MW
4.	<p>Healthwatch News – Dissolution of Healthwatch England and Local Healthwatch</p> <p>The open letter to Wes Streeting was sent out last week – NN journal picked this up.</p> <p>There was an HWE meeting on Friday, but no new updates were given relating to the changes.</p> <p>Action – GVB to send the letter to Mark Arnall, leader of WNC and see about setting up a meeting with him.</p>	KH GVB
5.	Break	
6.	<p>Regional/Countywide Updates: (verbal and reports attached for information)</p> <p>GVB attended the ICB meeting; she is just waiting for September for the next action plan to address the NHS 10 Year Plan and how the new changes will be delivered.</p> <p>There will be one more meeting before the ICB board is merged with Leicester/Leicestershire ICB. NHFT, GPs and one other group will no longer have a space on the ICB board. Tracey at HWR is going to start a meeting with Gabby, Pratima and HW Leicester, as the ICB may no longer want HW on the board.</p> <p>There are new plans for community health hubs – 8 in total. They will be staggered across 5 years, with the first one in Corby scheduled for the end of the year.</p> <p>Action – KH to write to EMAS, as HWW have not had an update from them in a while.</p>	GVB KH
7.	<p>HWW/WNC Updates</p> <p>GVB met with Linda Chibuzor, Chief Nursing Officer at NHFT, for quarterly meetings and to connect more often with the Trust. Recent themes from feedback were discussed to ensure the Trust stays informed.</p> <p>St Andrews is under review at the moment for poor handling of staff. GVB to join an Oversight Group to stay informed and to share findings/insights from our previous St Andrews visits and reports.</p>	GVB

	While attending the West Executive PLACE Board, board members raised concerns around the loss of Healthwatch and patient voice, with the concern around the lack of independence if the service is run by the NHS.	
8.	Any Other Business:	
9.	HWW Advisory Board Meeting in Public Closes	
10.	Date of Next HWW Advisory Board Meeting: 10.00 am to 12.00 pm 27th of October 2025 Online Teams	

Chair Signature:

MJ Walker

Date: 27.10.2025