

## Board meeting – 16 March 2026

### Summary minutes

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**Date:** The Healthwatch Dorset local Board met on Monday 16 March at 10am, online

**Board members present:** Viv Aird (Chair), Judy Crabb, Amanda Shirlin-Brown and Sue Warr

**In attendance:** Louise Bate and Adele Snell (Healthwatch Dorset)

**Apologies:** Margaret Guy, Gary Alessio and Helen Webb

**1. Declaration of interests:** There were no declarations of interest

**2. Minutes of the Last Meeting:** These were agreed

**3. Matters arising:** Welcome back to Louise after time off for ill health and congratulations to the team for working so hard in her absence.

- **Work with MPs and Councillors:** We are keeping in contact with the MPs in our area and continuing to answer their questions.
  - Through an introduction via Margaret, Viki Slade (MP for Mid Dorset and North Poole) is due to meet with Louise at the beginning of April.
  - Lloyd Hatton (MP for South Dorset) wrote to Wes Streeting and has had a standard response
  - The [Early Day Motion about local Healthwatch](#) currently has 13 signatures.
  - Louise will be attending a meeting next week with the Kings Fund to hear what they have learnt from the Healthwatch model before they publish their report.
  - Still very broad-level information rather than specific details about changes. Current timescales now seem to be suggesting it could take until March 2028.
- **NHS change: ICB Cluster**
  - ICB Cluster has been making more appointments.

- David Freeman (Chief Officer for Commissioning and Place) has come from NHS Dorset and has previously worked with HWD.
- Louise has recently met with Dean Spencer (Place Director, Dorset) and discussed our upcoming projects. He is particularly interested in our Women's Health project and working with the Primary Care Network and our Youth project (how they access health information)
- NHS 111 is due to be recommissioned in 2027 for Dorset. The findings on our Urgent Care report could prove interesting for this process.
- There is a lot of change going on at the moment, and people are now leaving NHS Dorset. This will impact who we know we can call on and who we can work with.
- The new cluster ICB Board is changing meeting attendees. It is proposed that one person will be invited to represent all Healthwatch within the cluster area to the main meetings and on a local level, no one from Healthwatch will be attending. Louise has raised this as a concern about how they will hear the independent patients' voice.  
*Action: Louise to provide feedback when she receives a response to her concern. Louise to attend the HWE meeting with other HW Managers about working with ICBs and will also be attending a meeting with the other HW managers in the new cluster area.*
- **NHS Change: Hospital Governance:** Nothing appears to have changed yet at DCH. The ICB will reportedly be responsible for its own governance. There is concern that if there is no Healthwatch or Hospital governors, where does the independent patient voice come from? Hospital Governors this year are focusing on the feedback loop and what changes in the longer term from feedback received.
- **Update from Evolving Communities:** "We had an update on Healthwatch. Despite the uncertainty, the Board is optimistic – and focused on ensuring EC is ready to shine in whatever future model emerges. We discussed how there is still a long way to go with the legislation as it passes through the Commons and Lords. The view is that, even if 'Healthwatch' as a brand doesn't exist, there will still be a need for an independent, trusted patient/service-user/carer voice, along with the need for genuine engagement in communities. We will be advocating for this and will be following events closely, getting ready to take new opportunities as they emerge from the new

structures. One clear aim is to keep our teams together so that they can build on the legacy of work to date.”

#### **4. Progress Report:**

**a) Smoking Cessation:** Report has been finished and sent to Public Health, who do not wish to make any changes. *Action: We will publish the summary as a blog and the full report in a couple of months.*

**b) Enter and View (Emergency Department, Royal Bournemouth Hospital):** This took place just before the end of last year and still reported the same issues as the [Urgent Care Report from October 2023](#) – despite the lovely new surroundings, people waiting for in excess of 10 hours and worrying about going to get a drink in case they missed their name being called. We are waiting for a response from the hospital. *Action: To publish in the next few weeks.*

**c) Enter and View (Care Home Request):** We have been approached by a care home to run an enter and view, which we have not done in this type of setting before. *Action: to run as a pilot with volunteers.*

**d) Women’s Health work for Mid Dorset PCN:** We have been asked to bid for this work, which will include a survey and engagement work. This may lead to an impact on the neighbourhood Planning in the future. *Action: Bid submitted.*

**e) Weymouth College/Tourette Awareness:** There has been an increase in the number of young people going through college with Tourette Syndrome. *Action: Due to the success of the film ‘I Swear’, we will work with Weymouth College, who have noticed this increase, to raise awareness in May/June.*

**f) Youth Volunteers:** The board are very pleased to hear about the success we have been having working with our youth Volunteers. *Action: look to producing a report on our work with youth volunteers and what we have learnt in the process that can be shared with other organisations.*

**g) Physio Report:** There has been an increase in the amount of feedback regarding Physio services. *Action: Adele to run a report on feedback received, highlighting key themes to be sent to Louise and Judy.*

**5. Priorities for 2026/27:** Discussion and agreement around the 3 main priorities to be set for next year:

- Access to Primary Care
- Women's Health Hub (including ageing women's health and that of female carers, along with fertility and maternity)
- Children & Young people's mental health

*Action: Louise to provide more detail on each area, including clarity about the outcomes we are looking for.*

- Discussion around whether there could be a link with the Friendly Food Club? High levels of food insecurity in rural areas and in towns. Links with deprivation and inequalities in health. *Action: Louise to meet with Liz and Amanda from the Friendly Food Club to chat about possibilities of working together in the future.*

## **6. Any Other Business:**

- Dorset County Hospital had an unannounced CQC visit to its Emergency and Medical Departments in February 2026. Louise has contacted the CQC contact for hospital visits in this area to find out more about this visit and if the CQC findings could help follow up on our Urgent Care Report.

Viv Aird, Chair of the Board, thanked everyone for their time today, and the group agreed the date for the next board meeting, Monday 18 May 2026, to be held online.

### **For further information:**

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