

Chairs Report March 2025

Part 1

Business Planning

Obviously, I missed the Business Planning Day due to a severe cold and cough (and grateful for the 'get well' messages from staff and Board). I did hold a virtual 121 with Sam beforehand and would like to thank Steve for facilitating the session and all who attended. We will need to reach a conclusion on values.

Meetings

North West Healthwatch 14th February*
Commissioner Liaison meeting 27th February
Health and Adult Scrutiny Panel 5th March
Sam 121 25th February and 19th March
HW in GM Chairs meeting 20th March

*I'm grateful to Nisa who attended the first part of this meeting which a speaker from Community Pharmacy England covered Pharmacy care. I forwarded the slides from the presentation to Nisa.

Apologies

GM Mental Health Trust Quarterly meeting 6th March

Northern Care Alliance

The Northern Care Alliance Partnership Board meeting with 4 Healthwatches due on 28th January was postponed until 10th March, when no meeting was called or held.

The quarterly catch up meeting with Charlotte Bailey from Salford Royal on 6th February was cancelled and these may well be on hold until her replacement is known.

Future meetings

HW GM 25th April
Quarter 4 Liaison meeting 8th May
HW England Chairs 12th May
HW GM Chairs 15th May

Healthwatch GM

The issues around payment and banking have been resolved. HW GM have access to the bank account although HW Bury are continuing to manage payments for now.

There was a meeting of Heather Etheridge, the HW GM Chair, with Mark Fisher, the Chief Executive of GM Integrated Care Board, at his request. However he seemed ill prepared and not sighted on our role and work. I suggested that we should seek a standing item of the ICB agenda. This could include regular updates on our collective work in the 10 HWs and HW in GM. We currently report into the Quality and Performance Committee. Although there are moves to change this from 3 monthly to 6 monthly.

Changes to other HWs

Tracey McErlain Burns, Chair of HW Tameside has stood down. Someone is covering this role whilst they seek a replacement.

HW Wigan are restructuring to have a charitable host organisation with the current HW Wigan Chair and Chief Officer moving across to the host, with a specific HW role contained within the host with a new Chair and Chief Officer.

HW Bolton are coming to the end of their contract with no certainty about renewal or funding.

National developments

Alongside the abolition of NHS England ICBs have been told to reduce their running costs by 50%. We have received assurances that this will not impact the funding for HW GM in 2025/26.

Penny Dash, who has just been announced as Chair of NHS England, continues to lead her review into patient safety, and the six organisations that currently cover this (including part of Healthwatches). Given the deregulating zeal currently in place I'd expect some rationalisation.