

Minutes of Q3 Board Meeting held on 25th February 2026

Context

This meeting was hybrid with some people participating in person and others via Teams. Board members were asked to read all the papers and submit any questions on these in advance of the meeting.

As this is a public meeting, TEAMS is used as it does not need a licence and can be accessed for free. The public were made aware of the meeting via our Events Page and social media posts. Invitations were also sent directly to stakeholders and commissioners. Permission to record the meeting, for the purpose of notetaking was agreed verbally. After the production of the draft minutes the recording was deleted.

Present

LLB Members: Steve Cooper (Chair), Non-Executive Independent Directors: Heather Mercer; Jane Collins; Patrick Brady; Mark Sharman, Kathryn Loughnan (Help & Care Member Directors).

Councillors: Mel Nicholson, Niki Lewis.

Apologies: Sarah Peters (Help & Care), Jeremy Gardner (Vice Chair), Non-Executive Independent Directors, Sue Morton, Nigel Foulkes, Ali Khan.

Councillors: Alan Sinclair, Amanda Jupp, Alison Challenger, Seth Gottesman, Bob Lanzer, Fiona Mackison

In attendance: Jo Tuck (Deputy Manager) Katie Weston (IHCAS), Ann Brosnan (Minutes) Public Observer: n/a

1. Welcome and declarations of interest

Steve welcomed everyone to the meeting, and noted apologies.

No declarations of interest noted for the meeting.

2. Approval of Previous Minutes

November minutes approved.

Summary of previous actions:

- Action 03: Jo to contact Colliers to increase engagement – Completed and Freshers Fair taking place in September.
- Action 04: Jo to share policies on website with the board – update was that now there is an LLB only the decision making policy is updated by the LLB and this item will be removed from the agenda.
- Action 05: Jo to add new board members information on website – completed
- Action 06: Steve to contact Ali re board attendance – completed.

2.1 Matters Arising – None

3. Impact and Performance Report

Jo gave an overview of the key points in the report which included the 'Connecting with Young People' programme, led by Zoey. This looked at how young people with challenges around communication interact with the NHS and what they needed to improve this, such as better communication, feeling heard, being treated fairly and having an accessible environment.

West Sussex Healthwatch has their own live survey currently running regarding the proposed new online Trust.

Since November the team has been one member of staff down, but is still maintaining output and Jo thanked the team for their hard work.

Changes in the ICB has created challenges in terms of contacting the right people.

The Volunteers have been supporting the team by representing Healthwatch at a number of meetings. The team also keeps updated on other forums by being on their mailing lists to ensure oversight.

Katie gave an overview of the IHCAS report. There were eight new clients in December and twenty in January.

The IHCAS team is considering reintroducing the waiting list due to demand at present, but this is still to be confirmed.

The case studies demonstrate how some of the clients have been supported for years. Feedback has been received and two case studies demonstrate the value of IHCAS. They have been featured on Facebook and YouTube.

The self-help guide from West Sussex will be adapted and used by the other Help & Care Healthwatch teams.

Concern raised that, in the ICB the reorganisation has seen the number of complaint officers reduced from ten to three and the response time increased from thirty to forty-five days. The ICB is encouraging people to raise issues directly with the provider first.

Trust executives are disappointed at the potential loss of the Independent Voice that Healthwatch provides and would like to see something similar take its place.

The quarterly meeting with representatives of the local MPs is proving beneficial and insight is being shared.

4. Quarterly Stats Comparison

Jo showed a series of slides to demonstrate how Q2 always tends to spike as the team does more engagement over the summer period.

5. Feedback from meetings

5.1 Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB)

Jo presented the Annual Report at the last meeting. Concerns raised about the loss of Healthwatch.

The HWB has published their strategy and it will reflect on five areas of focus and five delivery groups have been established.

The next board has been cancelled due to the elections.

Healthwatch has agreed to do work around raising vaccine take-up. Niki spoke about areas that could be targeted, and vaccine scepticism. There has been a low take-up of the 'flu vaccine by older people. Jo asked for a more defined brief on the best area to target given current resources.

5.2 Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee (HASC)

Jo said that Healthwatch will be supporting those services that are closing and will ensure that their voices are heard during this transition period. The permanent nighttime closure of Crawley UTC will be one area where Healthwatch will reassure people and provide factual information on this decision. The next HASC is also cancelled due to local elections.

5.3 Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB)

No update given as Nigel sent apologies

5.4 Stroke Task & Finish Group

No further update; to be removed from agenda.

Action: Ann to remove from agenda

5.5 Development of ICS and Place-based partnerships

The ICB will be merging with Surrey from April. ICBs will now focus on Strategic Commissioning and not do as much support/guidance for providers; Healthwatch can help fill that gap.

Jo meets with the ICB fortnightly but there have been lots of changes with people leaving. The ICB engagement team is being reduced from nine to one and a half people, which means the Healthwatch will be even more vital in hearing the voice of local people. The new CEO is very supportive of Healthwatch and is keep to meet the Healthwatch teams in Sussex and Surrey.

5.6 Regional and National Update

Kathryn said the latest meeting of Healthwatch with the DHSC has taken place with Royal Assent planned for April 2027 in terms of the abolition of Healthwatch, although it was pointed out that the process is likely to take longer than the timeframes being discussed.

New NHS Online service; Surveys are being sent out to get feedback from communities on this.

5.7 Other board member insight – none this month

6 Deputy Manager's Update

The team is working very hard under challenging circumstances. Kerry is leading on design and sets up the quarterly report. Jo is supported by Cheryl and Sophie.

A workshop is taking place after the LLB to discuss the workplan and how to make as much impact as possible. Jo is also working on future planning across Sussex to influence/support whatever comes next.

Bi-monthly West Sussex Insight Report

The Insight report will be shared with the draft minutes.

Action: Jo to send Ann the report and Ann will send out with draft minutes.

7. Policies and procedures update

Policies now fall under Help & Care since the board changed to an LLB with only the decision-making policy belonging to the board, and this agenda item will be removed.

Action: Ann to remove item from agenda

8. Escalation and Insight Tracker Log

Jo said that all the issues in the insight report have been escalated and have asked for them to be reported back.

Jo will give an update in May's board meeting.

9. Risk Register

To be looked at in May: Jo will send out latest copy to Ann.

Action: Ann to send out Risk Register with draft minutes.

10. AOB

This was Mark's last meeting before his retirement next month. Steve thanked Mark for all his support over the years and wished him safe travels in his camper van.

Future Board meeting dates:

Board Meeting dates 2025/26
Q4 20 th May, Q1 19 th August, Q2 25 th November

Action Plan

Item Number	Action required	By Whom	Notes/ Completed
07	To remove Stroke Task and Finish Group from next agenda	Ann	Completed
08	Insight report to be sent to Ann to send out with draft minutes	Jo/ Ann	Completed
09	Policies and Procedures item to be removed from agenda	Ann	Completed
10	Ann to send the latest risk register with the draft minutes	Ann	Completed