



HWS Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Date: 21st August 2025

Time: 5.30-7pm

Venue: Microsoft teams

In Attendance: Graham Head (GJH), Rhyana Ebanks-Babb (REB), Anood Al-Samerai (AAS), Cedric Whilby (CW), Natasha Wright (NW), Sheona St Hilaire (SH), Mannah Kargbo (MK), Carol Vincent (CV), Donelle Grant (DG).

HWS Advisory Board Members: Graham Head, Cedric Whilby, Natasha Wright, Carol Vincent, Mannah Kargbo, Cedric Whilby, Sheona St Hilaire

HWS/ CS Staff: Rhyana Ebanks-Babb, Anood Al-Samerai, Donelle Grant

Apologies/Absent: Charlene Young (CY), Hyacinth Chapman (HC), George Herat (GH).

	Agenda Items
1.	Introductions and apologies The Board discussed apologies and attendance. CY sent apologies. GH informed GJH that he will no longer be able to hold his position on the Board due to family commitments, the Board expressed their thanks to him for his time offered. The Board have not heard from HC
2.	Welcome to Donelle Grant/new members <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CV was welcomed to the Board for her first meeting and she shared about her skills, experience and expertise.• DG was welcomed by the Board to share about her skills, experience and expertise and some key achievements as the new Community Health Ambassador Coordinator.
3.	Confirm minutes, review of actions

	<p>Minutes reviewed and confirmed, action log reviewed</p> <p>Action log from Board meeting on 15th May 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REB to update and finalise approved policy documents - completed • GJH to circulate NHS simulation opportunity to absent board members - completed • Board to consider participating in NHS simulation and Southwark Stars events - completed • Subgroup to develop skills audit for board members within 3 weeks- completed • Explore potential for in-person board meeting, with REB to investigate logistics - completed • New board member Carol Vincent to be invited to next meeting - completed • REB to invite Donelle Grant to future Board meeting - completed
4.	<p>Conflicts of Interest</p> <p>No conflicts declared</p>
5.	<p>Annual Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REB gave a brief overview of the annual report, highlighting Healthwatch Southwark's work in 2024-25, focused on two strategic projects. • The report shows stronger community ties, improved accountability processes, and the impact of volunteers and the Ambassador Programme. • It also includes outcomes from key projects and responses to NHS initiatives. • Board members praised the report's clarity and presentation, and its reinforcement of Healthwatch's independent role. • Concerns were raised about the government's decision to wind down Healthwatch. • The Board asked REB to pass on their thanks and commendations to the team.
6.	<p>Priorities/project updates</p> <p>Temporary Accommodation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on refugees/asylum seekers with no recourse to public funds during move-on period.

- Partnering with hotels and community groups; creative workshops planned for December.
- Supporting Health & Wellbeing Board event in November.
- Board discussed legal and political context, noting potential national impact but limited short-term effect in Southwark.

Enter and View

- Refocused from Southwark Disability Centre to Southwark Resource Centre due to service changes.
- Volunteer recruitment underway; training in September.
- Board agreed with the shift, noting relevance to disability networks and team capacity.

Children & Young People

- No current activity; may be revisited next year if funding allows.
- Board stressed realistic planning and acknowledged Healthwatch's legacy and capacity challenges.
- Transition planning underway; Community Southwark Away Day (12 Sept) to explore future health work and funding.

7. Healthwatch closure announcement and updates

Healthwatch Closure & Updates

- Closure announced via Daily Mail, sparking concern over loss of independent patient voice.
- Closure requires a parliamentary bill, so Healthwatch continues operating for now.
- National and local campaigning underway; focus on supporting the team and planning next steps.

Collective Action

- Two working groups formed: one on campaigning (with legal limits), one on messaging and transition planning.
- Joint letter sent to Wes Streeter; two petitions launched (4,596 signatures so far).
- MPs contacted; concerns raised over exclusion from Department of Patient Experience plans.
- Healthwatch England accepted closure; Louise Ansani's representation questioned.
- REB requested Board support for local messaging and outreach, including Southwark News.

	<p>Board Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letters circulated to support influence efforts. Need for local mobilisation and creative campaigning (e.g. arts, music). Support received from stakeholders like King's Hospital. Focus on aligning with NHS neighbourhood teams and VCS groups to maintain scrutiny and tackle health inequalities. <p>Team Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> REB shared staff support options; transition proposal drafted for Anood. Suggested working group to explore funding and NHS engagement. Board input welcomed; health session planned at Community Southwark Away Day. GJH, NW, and CW confirmed attendance; GJH encouraged team to reach out for support. <p>Chair & Vice Chair Roles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GJH to remain Chair until closure or reversal; feedback and expressions of interest invited for Vice Chair role. Board thanked GJH for continued support.
8.	<p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CV mentioned a range of health related information that she receives and asked best methods to share this with the team. REB noted to send them by email to info@healthwatchsouthwark.org

Action log:

Action	Owner	Status/update
Send the HWS Annual report along with minutes	REB	Completed
Share national petition regarding the concerns of losing independent patient voice	REB	Completed

Send out request for a working group to shape local campaigning messaging	REB	To be completed by 12.09.2025
Share information about Samaritans for REB to share with Healthwatch national working group	NW	
Circulate method of applying for vice chair role	GJH	
Share HWS transition proposal and gather board members input	REB	Completed
Resend away day (Sep 12) invite to Graham & Natasha; add venue details	AAS	
Forward NHS info to be included in newsletter/Ambassador Network	CV	

Next HWS Advisory Board Meeting - Thursday 20th November 2025