

## Minutes of Advisory Board Meeting

Held at 2pm on Monday 17 February 2025

### Present:

Board members –

Jennifer Pearl (Chair), Debra Gordon, Stewart Block, Martin Quilter, Jenny Blyth and Richard Strong

Staff –

Keely Parnaby, Inclusion Barnet Head of Peer Services

Sarah Campbell, Healthwatch Barnet Manager

Ed Peston, Healthwatch Barnet Communications Assistant

### Minutes:

Ed Peston, Healthwatch Barnet Communications Assistant

### Apologies:

Board member – Auren Ghazal

No.	Item	Actions arising	Status
1.	<b>Introductions</b>  Jennifer welcomed all attendees and facilitated a round of introductions.		

2.	<p><b>Minutes of previous meeting</b></p> <p>The group approved the minutes of the November Healthwatch Barnet Advisory Board meeting.</p>	Sarah to add the board's November minutes to the Healthwatch Barnet website.	Completed
3.	<p><b>Advisory Board</b></p> <p>Jennifer advised that herself, Auren and Stewart had been serving on the Healthwatch Barnet Advisory Board for four years, which is the maximum length of service as set out in the board's Terms of Reference. All board members and staff joined together in a vote of thanks for all three members, for the service that they had given to Healthwatch Barnet.</p> <p>Jennifer reminded members that she had asked Debra to take on the position of Advisory Board Chair and Debra had accepted. Members thanked Debra for agreeing to move into this role.</p>		
4.	<p><b>Operational Update</b></p> <p>Sarah provided an update on, and the board discussed, Healthwatch Barnet's key current projects and news:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Healthwatch Barnet contract:</b> the board noted that the current Healthwatch Barnet contract had been held by Inclusion Barnet since 2020. Members observed that this contract would conclude on 31 March 2025. In January 2025, Inclusion Barnet had submitted a bid to Barnet Council for the next five-year contract, as well as giving a supporting presentation. Members noted that</li> </ul>	Sarah to update board members with the result of the public tender when it is known.	Completed

	<p>Inclusion Barnet was awaiting the outcome of the tender. Keely explained that, in the event of Inclusion Barnet not winning the contract, the current Healthwatch Barnet permanent staff would have the opportunity to move over to any new provider via a TUPE process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Healthy Heart project funding:</b> the board noted that the posts of three members of Healthwatch Barnet staff were funded through the Healthy Heart contract. Sarah reminded members that the Healthy Heart team were delivering hypertension outreach to Barnet's African, Caribbean and South Asian communities. She advised that the current contract would end on 31 March 2025. However, Barnet Council Public Health and the North Central London Integrated Care Board had agreed to fund the project for a further ten months, until 31 January 2026, to a value of £65,000.</li> <li>• <b>Care home mealtimes:</b> the board noted that, as previously agreed at the July Advisory Board meeting, Healthwatch Barnet had now visited six care homes to review their provision of meals for residents. Sarah advised that these visits had uncovered a number of existing areas of good practice, alongside recommendations for improvement. She said that she was pleased to report that, following the visits, some homes had already implemented changes, including organising dementia-friendly place settings, providing a broader range of menu options for people from different cultures and arranging more regular resident feedback meetings. Members noted that, as well as engaging in dialogue with the care homes, Healthwatch Barnet was sharing the findings with the Barnet Care Quality Team and the Care Quality Commission.</li> <li>• <b>GP mystery shopping:</b> Sarah advised that, as previously agreed with the Advisory Board, Healthwatch Barnet had carried out a phone-based mystery shopping exercise with all 48 of Barnet's GP</li> </ul>		
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	<p>surgeries. Researchers phoned the surgeries posing as prospective patients and asked standard questions on matters including the registration process, face-to-face appointments and non-digital access routes. There were a number of positive findings including, for instance, that the vast majority of receptionists confirmed that foreign language interpreters could be arranged for GP appointments. The research also identified areas for improvement including, for example, that 28 receptionists said it was only possible to register with their surgery online, and there was no option to register in person.</p> <p>Advisory Board members observed that a significant minority of Barnet residents were digitally excluded, and that it was concerning that such a large proportion of GP receptionists had said that GP registration could only be done online. Members discussed the different types of digital exclusion that Barnet residents were experiencing, and that some people who were digitally literate could not access home wifi or mobile data due to financial hardship.</p> <p>Members noted that, following data gathering, the Healthwatch Barnet team had been engaged in helpful dialogue with a number of GP surgeries. Sarah reported that, where the research had uncovered areas for improvement, in a number of cases Practice Managers had advised that their surgery did have the appropriate policies in place, and had assured Healthwatch Barnet that their reception teams would be reminded of these. For example, many Practice Managers had confirmed that their surgery's policy was to allow digitally excluded patients to register in person.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>GP websites:</b> Sarah said that, as previously agreed with the Advisory Board, Healthwatch Barnet had now reviewed all 48 of Barnet's GP surgery websites. The research had primarily focused on the websites' home, contact us and appointments pages.</li> </ul>		
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	<p>Members noted that, at the outset of the project, 30 priority surgeries had been identified. Sarah confirmed that all 30 of these surgeries had been sent individual reports outlining existing areas of good practice and recommended changes. She said that a number of surgeries had already made these changes, for example by adding information about services that were available when the surgery were closed, such as NHS 111, the Barnet walk-in centres and the evening and weekend appointments offered by the Barnet GP Federation. Sarah advised that the Healthwatch Barnet team were continuing to follow up with GP surgeries about the implementation of the recommendations.</p>		
5.	<p><b>Events and engagement</b></p> <p>Sarah advised that, from October to December 2024 (Quarter 3 2024/25), Healthwatch Barnet had run a total of 14 drop-in events, engaging with 250 participants. Venues included the Somali Centre of Excellence, Barnet libraries, GP surgeries, Edgware Community Hospital and Barnet Mencap's Autism Hub.</p> <p>In addition to these drop-in events, the Healthy Heart team also delivered several intensive workshops and courses. Members noted that, in response to feedback from participants, the team had developed a new healthy eating workshop format. This had been devised in partnership with the Healthy Heart Clinical Reference Group. In Quarter 3, healthy eating workshops were delivered to members of the Barnet African Caribbean Association, Barnet Asian Women's Association and the Burnt Oak Nepalese Community Group.</p> <p>Sarah advised that, in Quarter 3, a Healthy Heart course had also been run at Everglade Medical Centre, in addition to an intensive Healthy</p>		

	<p>Heart workshop at Oak Lodge Medical Centre. Healthwatch Barnet had been able to work with these GP surgeries to identify key demographics that they wanted to reach – people with African, Caribbean and South Asian heritage who had a hypertension diagnosis but had not been engaging with their GP surgeries in relation to their heart health. The GPs surgeries had promoted the Healthy Heart intensive events to these groups. Subsequently, the events had been co-led by the Healthy Heart team and GP surgery staff, including a nutritionist and a clinical pharmacist.</p>		
6.	<p><b>Any other business</b></p> <p>Members briefly discussed possible dates for the next meeting and agreed it would be helpful to co-ordinate this over email.</p>	<p>Sarah to follow up by email, to agree the board's next meeting date.</p>	<p>In hand</p>