

DRAFT Healthwatch Coventry Steering Group Minutes

at 10:00am – 12:00 noon on 30 June 2026

Venue: Committee Room 2, Council House, Earl Street, Coventry, CV1 5RR

Attendees: Stuart Linnell (Chair), Last Mafuba, Catherine Smith, Allen Margrett, Jo Dickie

Staff Present: Davina Lucas, Leigh-Anne Howat, Ridhwana Sheikh

Other Attendees: Josh Masih (Healthy Lifestyles Coventry), Emma Denis (UHCW), Sue Hitchcock

Apologies: Hayley Best (UHCW), Ghulam Vohra, Rose O'Malley

1. Welcome/Introductions

SL welcomed everyone to the meeting.

SL asked if any members had any declarations of interest, there were none.

2. Matters arising/Actions from previous meeting

There were none. Minutes were agreed as an accurate record by members present.

3. Guest Speaker – Josh Masih (Healthy Lifestyles Coventry)

Healthy Lifestyles Coventry is a free service commissioned by Coventry City Council that helps residents make positive changes to improve their health and wellbeing. The service provides personalised support for people who want to: lose weight, stop smoking, become more physically active, reduce alcohol consumption, and improve their overall wellbeing.

JM provided information about the eligibility criteria and referral process to access the service.

RS informed the SG about the collaborative work we have been with Healthy Lifestyles Coventry and how it has help improve connections jointly for both organisations. Josh and I speak on a regular basis about upcoming events within both organisations to make sure we both are aware of events within the city. We have Healthy Lifestyles on our referral list for anyone who is looking for that kind of support.

4. Healthwatch Activity

(a)Service update

LAH provided an update on the work plan and where we are in the process in delivering different projects and highlighted the areas we are monitoring.

The projects we are prioritising this quarter to get started is the Faith project and the NHS App survey with GP practices. We have had some development in these projects which we will be able to update at the next steering group meeting.

(b)Latest update from Healthwatch England

Updates and links have been shared with SG from Healthwatch England. The updates included topics such as staff training, prostate screening and dental services.

(c) Latest update from Healthwatch Local Working Group

LAH reported that Healthwatch Coventry has participated in national Local Healthwatch Working Group activity responding to the proposed Healthwatch reforms. This has included engagement with **newly elected or re-elected local councillors**, to highlight the importance of retaining an independent patient voice and scrutiny function within health and social care and gain their support.

5. Work Programme

(a)BBC Coventry and Warwickshire Article

A BBC Coventry and Warwickshire article was shared about a patient who had received 13 years of chemotherapy for what was thought to be an aggressive spinal tumour has spoken of his devastation at being told his cancer was low-level and the treatment unnecessary. The patient has spoken of the knock-on effect it has had on his mental health.

(b) Child Friendly Coventry

Child Friendly Cov is a city-wide initiative led by Coventry City Council and its partners to make Coventry the best place in the UK for children and young people to live and grow up. The programme aims to ensure that children and young people feel valued, supported, safe, healthy, and able to enjoy life and opportunities. This update highlighted the themes they are targeting and how they are delivering the programme.

6. Local service changes and reports

(a) CQC reports/findings

SG members were given a paper which listed the published reports from recent CQC inspections. There were 3 homecare services, 2 care homes, 2 GPs and 1 dental clinic.

(b) Pharmacy updates

Two pharmacies in Coventry have had a change of ownership application approved.

7. Governance and Communication

The annual report 2025/26 has been completed and published on the website. The report has been shared with Steering Group members.

LAH confirmed these have been shared with all key stakeholders and will be sharing highlights of the report at the next scrutiny board meeting

The Steering Group members/SL expressed the report showed a significant amount of work completed and highlights the extent of changes/impact we have had in a short time. Overwhelming positive responses received.

Action: LAH to feedback to staff and thank them for their efforts.

Mandatory training needs to be completed by all Volunteers. Laptops being provided for those who need help with getting set up with digital equipment/digital support.

Stuart announced he will be stepping down as Chair to focus more on his health and family. The next SG meeting will be his last meeting.

Recruitment campaign for new Chair and Deputy Chair commencing in the next week.

Action:

LAH to share role/applications information with all current steering group members to consider internal applications

8. Future of Healthwatch Update

DL provided an update on the proposed changes to Healthwatch following the introduction of the Health Bill, which has now begun its parliamentary journey. Members noted that the proposed abolition of Healthwatch remains subject to parliamentary approval and has not yet been confirmed. The next stage of the Bill is the Committee Stage, following its Second Reading in Parliament.

It was noted that the Government has stated that any abolition of Healthwatch will require primary legislation and will therefore be subject to the will of Parliament. The Government has also recognised the continued importance of ensuring that patient and public voices are heard within health and care services. Current proposals would see patient voice functions transferred into NHS and Local Authority structures.

DL shared a strategic briefing paper outlining the current national position, key parliamentary timelines, emerging intelligence from Healthwatch England, National Voices and the wider sector, together with potential implications for Healthwatch Coventry and Citizens Advice Mid Mercia (Camm) as the host organisation.

The Steering Group discussions recognised that no final decisions have been made nationally or locally. These included independent, commissioned and partnership-based approaches that could enable patient and public voice functions to continue in Coventry in some form should the proposed changes proceed.

Members acknowledged that the current parliamentary process creates a degree of uncertainty for local Healthwatch organisations, staff and volunteers. However, the Steering Group also recognised that CAMM is well positioned to engage proactively with Coventry City Council, NHS partners and wider stakeholders to help shape future arrangements and explore opportunities to maintain a strong, independent community voice for local residents.

It was agreed that updates would continue to be provided as the legislation progresses and further information becomes available regarding future commissioning, funding and delivery arrangements.

Actions:

DL/LAH to continue monitoring national developments and parliamentary progress of the Health Bill.

DL/LAH to engage with Coventry City Council, NHS partners and relevant stakeholders regarding future patient voice arrangements.

Steering Group to receive further updates as national and local discussions progress.

CAMM to continue exploring potential future delivery and funding models to support a sustainable patient voice function in Coventry.

9. Any other business

We have had 4 new volunteers join our outreach team and completing the compliance and induction training. They have been attending our outreach events at City of Coventry Health Centre and Central Library.

10. Next meeting

The next Steering group meeting will be on Tuesday 25th August 2026, from 10.00am to 12.00pm, meeting will be held at The Wheelhouse (Council House).