

Healthwatch Coventry Steering Group Meeting

Minutes

at 10:00am – 12:00 noon on 17 February 2026

Venue: The Wheelhouse, Council House, Earl Street, Coventry, CV1 5RR

Attendees: Stuart Linnell (Chair), Catherine Smith, Allen Margrett, Rose O'Malley, Ghulam Vohra, Jo Dickie, Ifra Ali, Last Mafuba

Staff Present: Leigh-Anne Howat, Ridhwana Sheikh, Ruth Burdett

Apologies: Christine McNaught (FWT), Davina Lucas

1. Welcome/Introductions

SL welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted for members who were unable to attend.

SL asked if any members had any declarations of interest, JD stated she works at Vision Hub.

2. Matters arising/Actions from previous meeting

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

3. Housing with care main report

RB presented the main report from the Housing with Care project. The SG congratulated the Team for the amazing work they have done, and the report highlights many factors for the providers to reflect upon on.

JD asked how many housing with care facilities are there in Coventry? RB responded there are many different housing facilities in Coventry and it's about understanding the transition from each service. Such as how people move from their home to supported living, to housing with care and then into a care home.

GV raised a question regarding cultural inclusion and if people had access to a multifaith room? This hasn't been covered in the report, but did you see if these facilities were available and are they meeting their requirements. RB said there were no provisions for prayer rooms, and no cultural foods were prepared in the kitchen at any of the facilities.

RO'M mentioned that there is a care home in Earlsdon that many people have been raising concerns about, would it be possible to do an enter and view at this location? RB replied that this care home is a private home, but if we did have concerns about it, we could raise them with the CQC.

4. Guest Speaker – Richard Burden (Chair HW Bham and Solihull)

RB was happy to be invited to the Coventry Steering Group meeting and was happy to share his knowledge of how things operate at parliamentary level. Looking at the Penny Dash Review and she has a lot of reviews, there were reviews taking place in February, March, April and then in June, there were criticisms of how the CQC was working and Healthwatch was not even in question.

The director of patient experience service was being transferred to DHSC, which means that the patient experience service will be inhouse. Very little has been said about how this will be going ahead since the announcement has been made. There is a further announcement to be made from the DHSC in mid-April before the king's speech which should address how they are planning to transfer patient experience inhouse. Healthwatch England were not able to oppose and are constrained about the decision being made. National response network which has been out together by Local Healthwatch's across the country have come together to oppose this decision. The point is the independence of patient voice. RB has been reaching out to local authorities about the value of Healthwatch's. The impact of this decision is big but there's more risk to Staff and Volunteers.

The question is can we get the government to change their mind? Wes Streeting said he is not backing down from his decision to close all Healthwatch's, but there are huge challenges. There will be a report from the Kings Fund about independent Patient Voice and what the plans are. Firstly, there will be a debate in April in the House of Commons. The government has majority on the committee. This will take time and consideration for this to go through. The MP can table amendments after this meeting, but it will be clear once this has been done then the bill goes to the House of Lords. There is a good chance it could be a bit of ping pong as they call it between the House of Lords and House of Commons before the bill is passed.

The real thing that needs to be considered in the abolishment of NHS England. Therefore, the responsibilities from there will already fall on to the ICB's who themselves are going through job cuts and redundancies due to merging ICB's. The ICB's do not have the skills or resources to take on the patient voice and experiences, and the same goes for local authorities. If the decision to abolish all Healthwatch's goes through, there will be a transition period for this to happen.

5. Healthwatch Activity

(a)Service update

LAH shared a document from the Coventry Neighbourhood Health team briefing for SG members information. We are still trying to make connections with the right people to get on the agenda of the primary care meeting.

- The NHS App report has been published on the website and has also been shared with steering group
- The Family Hub report has been published on the website and circulated.
- There has been changes to the Long Covid service and this is going to be de-commissioned – SL asked what happens to the patients that are still suffering from long covid?
- Questions regarding the closure of the CUES service – JD to ask the chief exec of the Vision Hub to write to the ICB again.

(b)Latest update from Healthwatch England

Updates and links have been shared with SG from Healthwatch England. Update regarding the closure of Healthwatch, a full impact assessment will

be published soon. Further updates regarding the redundancies around the closure of NHS England.

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. Question was raised about Earlsdon Lodge care home and if it is possible to do an Enter and View visit. As this care home is private, we are unable to do a enter and view visit. However, we can raise concerns to the CQC.

(b) Pharmacy updates

SG members were updated about the pharmacy changes that have taken place in Coventry since the last meeting.

(c) Specsavers

A paper was shared about the Specsavers Hearing care service. This service is due for re-commissioning. However, due to a miscommunication patients are being told the service is coming to a halt.

7. Governance and Communication

LAH has asked the SG to complete all their mandatory training and to send the certificates to Rizzy or herself. The deadline for these trainings to be completed are end of February.

LAH suggested that it might be worth having a Deputy Healthwatch Chair as the demand of the Chair has risen.

LAH said we have run short on time but there are also 2 work proposals in these papers. The first one is for the NHS App, to delve in to more details about how the NHS App has been set up by GP practices and to understand in detail how the NHS App is going to be taking over as the NHS gateway. The second project is for the places of worship and to do a pilot study with a mosque in Coventry. Please could you let me know of your thoughts for these projects.

8. Any other business

None.

9. **Next meeting**

The next Steering group meeting will be on: Tuesday 21st April 2026, from 10.00am to 12.00pm

meeting will be held at The Wheelhouse (Council House).