

## **Appendix 9 –GPG – Summary Report to Board**

**Meeting date:** 9 December 2025 – 14.30pm – 16.00pm

Present: Ann Green (Chair), Chris Palmer, Jonathan Jelley, Jess Slater and Carole Rose.

Apologies: Frances Dewhurst (comments and questions sent via email)

### **1. Previous Minutes and Matters Arising**

The GPG confirmed the accuracy of the previous meeting minutes (September 2025).

### **2. Finance and Training Expenditure – Context and Clarification**

The Group discussed staff training expenditure referenced in earlier minutes (Sept 2025). Clarification was provided on the nature of training previously approved, including co-production and trauma-informed engagement approaches. Members noted that these approaches are widely recognised across the voluntary sector, social care and health system, although applied inconsistently in practice. The explanation was received positively and noted for assurance purposes.

- Co-production training focuses on sharing power with people with lived experience, involving them as equal partners throughout service design, delivery, and evaluation.
- It goes beyond consultation and engagement, embedding people in decision-making from the outset.
- Trauma-informed engagement focuses on understanding how past experiences affect people's interactions with services, shifting from "what is wrong with you?" to "what has happened to you?".
- The training is low-cost, short-course, non-accredited, and widely used across the voluntary sector and NHS.

### **3. Workforce Update**

The Group noted recent staffing changes. A new Head of Communications and Impact (Hannah settle) has joined the organisation and has made a positive early contribution. It was also noted for information that Victoria Herod (Information & Signposting) and Nabiha Asam (Data & Impact Officer) will be leaving the organisation, they had both started with the organisation in April 2025 prior to the announcement about Healthwatch. These changes are being

managed in line with organisational policies and do not alter the wider organisational direction.

Recruitment activity remains strong despite wider system uncertainty, with the organisation continuing to attract high-quality applicants. A future role focusing on data and insight is planned, reflecting an increasing emphasis on adult social care and system-level analysis.

#### **4. Staff Development and Workforce Strengthening Proposal**

The main item of discussion was a proposal to invest in structured staff development during a period of organisational transition. The Group considered this in detail, recognising both the importance of supporting staff and the need for public accountability.

The proposal focuses on strengthening organisational capability, supporting workforce resilience, and aligning skills development with future models of public voice, engagement and research. It has been explicitly framed as a strategic workforce development and change support programme.

Key points noted by the Group included:

- The proposal is aligned with the organisation's agreed direction of travel and emerging commissioning landscape.
- Development activity is tightly linked to organisational delivery, future readiness and value for money.
- Safeguards are built in, including phased spend, pro-rata allocation, and clear governance oversight.
- The proposal has been scrutinised in advance at GPG level to ensure that scrutiny is not concentrated at Board, and that the Board receives a refined and balanced recommendation.

Members agreed in principle that investing in staff during a period of change is appropriate and ethically sound. Further refinement was requested ahead of Board consideration, which has been reflected in the final proposal now presented.

## **5. Management Accounts and Forecast**

The October 2025 management accounts and forecast were reviewed and accepted. The Group agreed that paper copies are no longer required unless specifically requested by Non-Executive Directors.

The Chair of the Board of Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough announced he will be reducing his payment for the Chairs role from £817.08 to £500.00 per month due to a reduction in his duties as the ICB landscape continues to change. This will continue to be reviewed.

## **6. Policies**

- The Decision-Making Policy was reviewed and approved.
- The Managing Organisational Change Policy (includes redundancy procedures) was reviewed. It was agreed that, given the complexity of the organisation's future positioning, further legal advice will be sought before the policy is applied in practice. The policy will remain under review pending this advice.

## **7. Risk Register**

The risk register was reviewed and accepted. One amber risk remains in relation to future local authority funding beyond 2026–27. Members noted verbal assurances from system partners that funding levels are expected to be maintained, with formal confirmation awaited.

## **8. Investment Accounts**

The Group discussed the management of notice periods on long-term investment accounts and agreed that this should remain under active review. It was agreed that investment access and notice periods will become a standing agenda item to support forward planning and cashflow management.

### **Overall assurance:**

The GPG meeting demonstrated robust governance, constructive challenge and shared commitment to responsible stewardship of public funds, staff wellbeing, and organisational sustainability. The Board is asked to note this report and consider and approve the accompanying staff development proposal, which has already been subject to detailed scrutiny and refinement.

Meeting closed at 16.00pm