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**Healthwatch Swindon Annual report 2019-20**

# Guided by you

**healthwatch**  
Swindon

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# Message from our Advisory Group



I've been involved with Healthwatch Swindon and been a trustee of The Care Forum for over 18 months. In that time I've come to appreciate all the hard work put in by the volunteers and staff. We are in some challenging times with COVID-19, which has affected what Healthwatch Swindon can do.

At this time I'd like to thank Carol Willis for steering Healthwatch Swindon over the past two years and wish her well in her new role.

Over the next 12 months there will be new challenges in a post lock-down world and I know Healthwatch will be in good hands with Vanessa Scott.

## **This is what we've achieved this year:**

- Escalated the concerns of local people following problems with a private company taking over a primary care network. Local people were not happy with the service being provided and lack of communication. Healthwatch was able to challenge this and work with the Clinical Commissioning Group and the Care Quality Commission to improve services.
- Swindon was the lead Healthwatch for B&NES, Swindon and Wiltshire on the Healthwatch England commissioned survey for the NHS Long Term Plan (LTP)
- We based our priorities this year on those set by the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership for the Long Term Plan: ageing well and Primary Care Networks.

*signature*

Steve Barnes  
Healthwatch Swindon Advisory Group & Trustee of The Care Forum

**I've come to appreciate all the hard work put in by volunteers and staff**

# Our priorities

Last year people told us about the improvements they would like to see health and social care services make in 2019-20. These are our priorities for the year ahead based on what you told us.



- Gathering views on ageing well and frailty



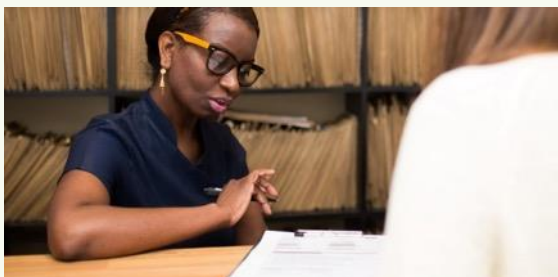
- Discussing the development of Primary Care Networks



- Regular attendance and facilitation at the Learning Disability Partnership Forum




- Providing NHS complaints advocacy



- Supporting people to have their say about health and care, including specialist dental care



- Carrying out Enter and View visits with Swindon Advocacy Movement

 Thanks for communicating. You and the team do a great work for the patients of Swindon.

# About us

## Here to make care better

The Healthwatch network's collaborative effort around the NHS Long Term Plan shows the power of the network in giving people that find it hardest to be heard a chance to speak up.

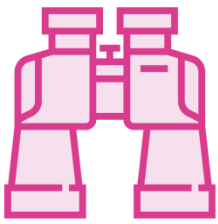
The #WhatWouldYouDo campaign saw national movement, engaging with people all over the country to see how the Long Term Plan should be implemented locally. Thanks to the thousands of views shared with Healthwatch we were also able to highlight the issue of patient transport not being included in the NHS Long Term Plan review – sparking a national review of patient transport from NHS England.

We simply could not do this without the dedicated work and efforts from our staff and volunteers and, of course, we couldn't have done it without you. Whether it's working with your local Healthwatch to raise awareness of local issues, or sharing your views and experiences, I'd like to thank you all. It's important that services continue to listen, so please do keep talking to your local Healthwatch. Let's strive to make the NHS and social care services the best that they can be.

 I've now been Chair of Healthwatch England for over a year and I'm extremely proud to see it go from strength to strength, highlighting the importance of listening to people's views to decision makers at a national and local level.

Sir Robert Francis, Healthwatch  
England Chair





## Our vision is simple

Health and care that works for you.  
People want health and social care support that works – helping them to stay well, get the best out of services and manage any conditions they face.



## Our purpose

To find out what matters to you and to help make sure your views shape the support you need.



## Our approach

People's views come first – especially those who find it hardest to be heard.  
We champion what matters to you and work with others to find solutions. We are independent and committed to making the biggest difference to you.



## How we find out what matters to you

People are at the heart of everything we do. Our staff and volunteers identify what matters most to people by:

- Visiting services to see how they work
- Running surveys and focus groups
- Going out in the community and working with other organisations



Find out more about us and the work we do

**Website:** [www.healthwatchswindon.org.uk](http://www.healthwatchswindon.org.uk)

**Twitter:** @HealthwatchSwin

**Facebook:** @HealthwatchSwindon



# Highlights from our year

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Find out about our resources and the way we have engaged and supported more people in 2019-20.



## Health and care that works for you



### 22 volunteers

helping to carry out our work. In total, they gave up 696 number of hours/days.

We employed

### 5 staff

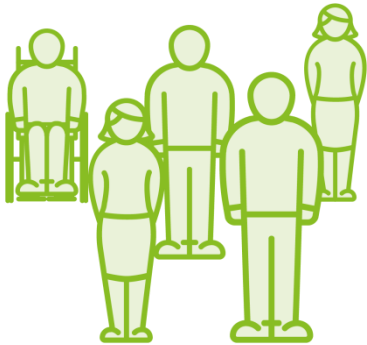
Which equates to the equivalent of three full time members of staff.

We received

### £137,424 in funding

from Swindon Borough Council in 2019-20, 4.18% less than the previous year.

## Providing support



### 818 people

shared their health and social care story with us, of which

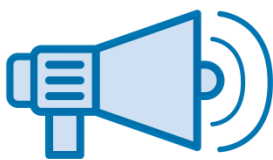
### 345 people

accessed advice and information online or contacted us with questions about local support, and

### 473 people

shared their experiences through the NHS LTP (**270**) and through our work with the Nepalese Association (**203**)

## Reaching out



### 3,428 people

Follow us on social media. We have 3,053 followers on Twitter and 375 followers on Facebook.

## Making a difference to care



We published

### 8 reports

about the improvements people would like to see with their health and social care; and, from this, we made 72 recommendations for improvement.



# How we've made a difference

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**Speaking up about your experiences of health and social care services is the first step to change.**

**Take a look at how your views have helped make a difference to the care and support people receive in Swindon.**

### Helping the Nepalese community of Swindon have their say about what they need to support their health and wellbeing

In total 203 members of the [Nepalese Association of Wiltshire \(NAW\)](#) shared their views with us via a survey. The key findings in our report were:

- Language was a barrier for over half of the respondents. There was a clear request for more interpreters across practices to be provided.
- There was a request for an alternative way to get prescriptions to help those experiencing language barriers.
- The majority of respondents cited a need to eat more healthily and take more exercise
- Concerns were raised about the lack of appointments and therefore long wait times to see a doctor and a call for more staff.



The Nepalese Association of Wiltshire meeting to discuss our survey

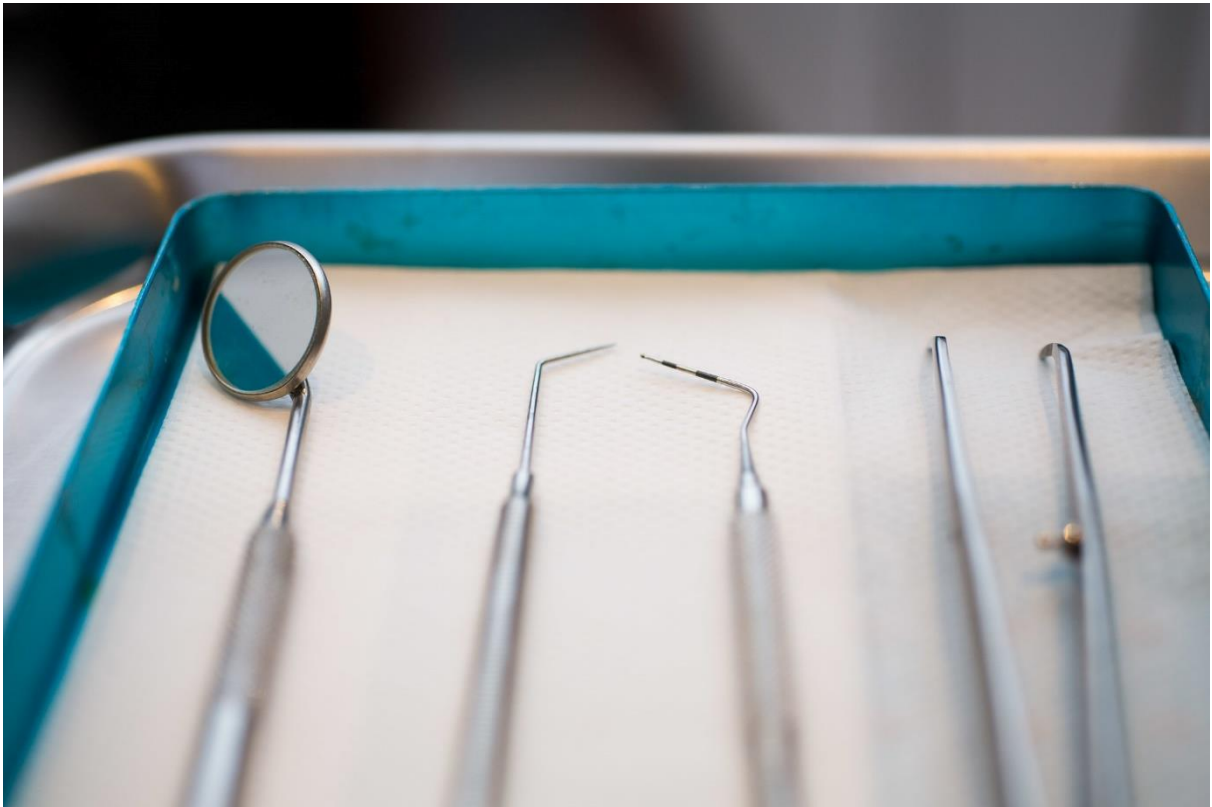
[Read our final report here.](#)

#### Next steps

Our report has been sent on to commissioners for review. We have also sent this on to Swindon Borough Council to discuss the possibility of providing healthy eating courses.

Our contact at NAW has been abroad since lockdown started but we plan to resume talks once he returns to the UK.

**I** was really pleased to read through your reports. It's impressive and informative '



## Reviewing Specialist Dental Care across the South West of England

In September 2019 the [South, Central and West Commissioning Support Unit \(SCW CSU\)](#) carried out a review of specialist dental care in the South West, with the help of local Healthwatch across the region.

They developed a survey, also in Easy Read, which was available online and in paper format, which we invited people in Swindon using the service to take part in. We also carried out face-to-face engagement at West Swindon and Swindon NHS Health Centre, Islington Street.

The service in Swindon is provided by Great Western Hospital Community Dental Service. In total we received 25 pieces of feedback about the service.

Some of the contracts across the South West had been due to end in March 2021. Approval has now been secured at national level for these to be extended until March 2023. The work around these contracts will be substantially informed by the engagement work we and other Healthwatch undertook in 2019.

[Read more about this piece of work and the eligibility criteria about who can use this service on our website.](#)



Patient Participation Group Forum – discussing the development of Primary Care Networks

## The development of Primary Care Networks in Swindon

We ran an extra Patient Participation Group (PPG) Forum to gather feedback on Primary Care Networks (PCN), provide local PPGs with information and give them the opportunity to ask questions.

PCNs were one of the regional priorities by identified B&NES, Swindon and Wiltshire Sustainable Transformation Partnership (BSW STP).

### Some of the things the PPG Forum told us were:

- The need to communicate to patients clearly and well in advance of changes.

- That patients understand that they may not (need to) see a GP and that other clinicians may be most appropriate.
- That patients feel confident that reception staff are trained to an appropriate degree in order to ask the right questions and respond to callers' queries.
- There were mixed views on the options of travelling between different surgeries for services: those with transport were willing to travel, whilst those reliant on public transport would prefer not to.

You can read more about this in [our NHS Long Term Plan report](#).



### Share your views with us

If you have a query about a health and social care service, or need help with where you can go to access further support, get in touch. Don't struggle alone. Healthwatch Swindon is here for you.

**Website:** [www.healthwatchswindon.org.uk](http://www.healthwatchswindon.org.uk)

**Twitter:** @HealthwatchSwin

**Facebook:** @HealthwatchSwindon





Jim Hogg – NHS Complaints Advocate for Healthwatch Swindon

## NHS Complaints Advocacy

We are commissioned to provide 20 hours per week of free, confidential and independent NHS Complaints Advocacy to the residents of Swindon.

As well as complaints advocacy, we also support clients to appeal Continuing Health Care (CHC) funding decisions.

Between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020, we supported 97 new clients to pursue complaints through the NHS Complaints Procedure.

### These clients can be separated into two groups:

- 66 Clients who were able to self-advocate using our 'self-help' pack
- 31 Clients who required advocacy support, which may include multiple consultations and communication with outside agencies.

A further 17 clients were 'carried over' from the previous year.

### Providers who were the subject of a complaint:

- Hospital: 42
- GP: 32
- CCG (CHC funding appeal): 7
- Mental Health Services: 5
- Dentist: 3

### Complaint classification:

- Care and treatment: 42
- Access to services: 13
- Not specified: 11
- Administration: 7
- Delay: 6





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## NHS Complaints Advocacy Case Study

The client needed advocacy support as English was not their first language and they found communicating in English difficult.

The client was the full time carer of a disabled child and felt that the treatment provided by the community service was not in the best interest of the child and that they were being bullied.

As a result of this the parent took the child for private treatment. The child received the treatment they needed, which community services had said they would not be able to provide due to the complexity of the child's disability.

The private treatment incurred significant cost, for which the parent was seeking reimbursement.

Our advocate supported the client via a number of meetings and by drafting a complaint letter. This was sent to the Community Team once the client was happy with its content. The client was copied in to all correspondence.

On receipt of a response the advocate read this aloud to the client and helped them understand it. They were not satisfied with the response so another complaint letter was sent.

**Case study continued.....**



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## Case Study continued

Following this, the client decided to escalate the complaint to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO). Once again we repeated the process to complete the PHSO complaint forms.

This process was repeated each time the client received a response until the complaint was resolved to the client's satisfaction.

The client was grateful for the support which they had received from us.

## Find out more about our NHS Complaints Advocacy

You can read about the service we provide, including Continuing Healthcare (CHC) Funding Assessment appeals [here](#).

# Long Term Plan

**#WhatWouldYouDo**

## Highlights



More than 40,000 people shared their views nationally with Healthwatch.



Our network held over 500 focus groups reaching different communities across England.



Healthwatch attended almost 1,000 community events.

‘There should be an experienced older parent on every team, NHS, Social Services, GP units, to help and support younger parents.’ Parent of a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder

### NHS Long Term Plan

With help from our volunteers and through online engagement, we heard from 270 people in Swindon. What we heard was then analysed and put into [a final report, sharing people’s views from across B&NES, Swindon and Wiltshire](#).

#### Key findings:

- Prevention and knowledge to lead a healthier lifestyle was important to people
- Issues around misdiagnoses for long term health conditions
- Using technology to make healthcare more efficient

#### Our recommendations:

- Provide more public health information on healthy eating and exercise
- A review of service provision for long-term conditions such as autism should be carried out to ensure patients are able to access services and interventions as quickly as possible
- Prioritising the use of technology without excluding those that are not online

Our findings were used to help inform [B&NES, Swindon & Wiltshire Strategic Transformation Partnership’s five year plan](#).

# Helping you find the answers

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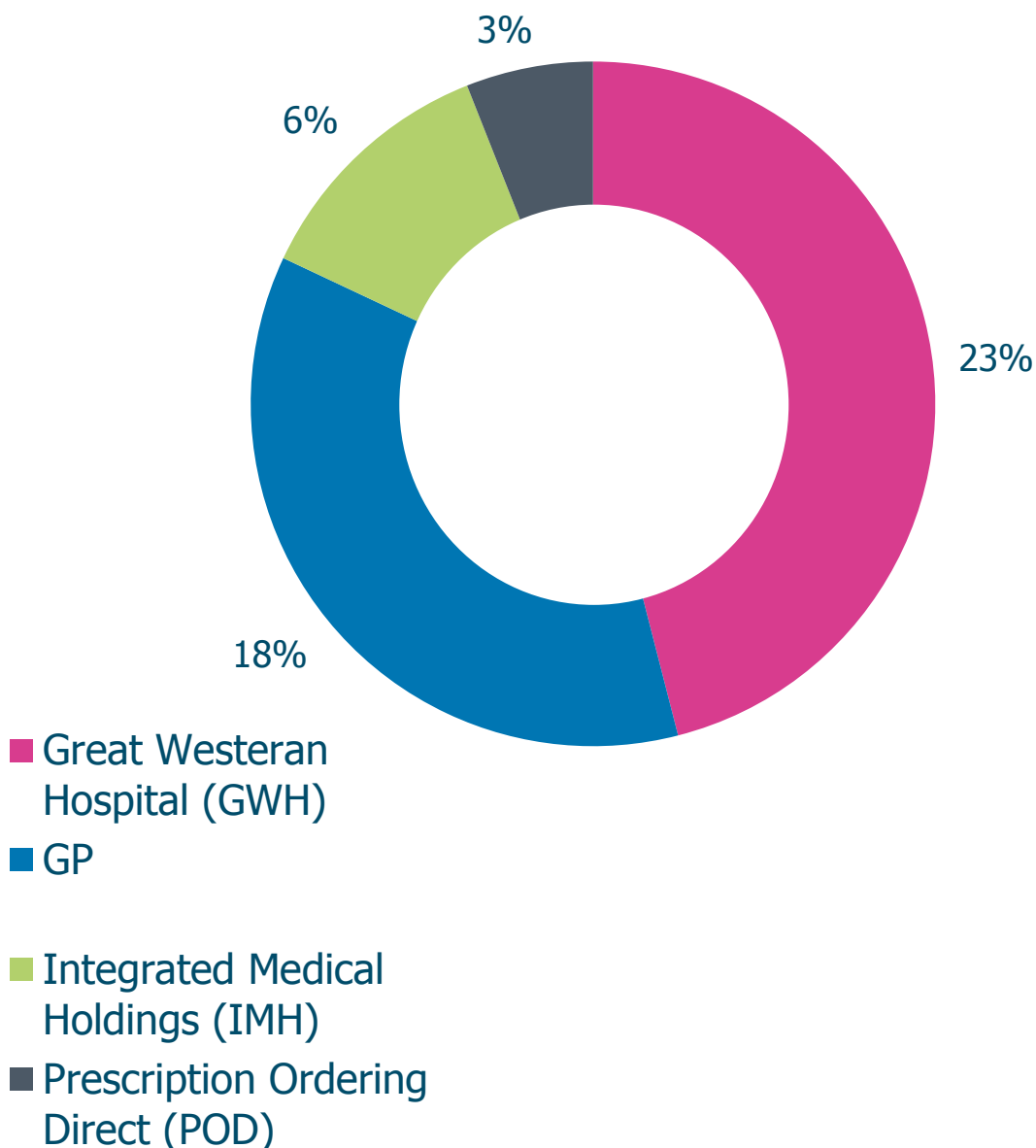


**Finding the right service can be worrying and stressful. Healthwatch plays an important role in helping people to get the information they need to take control of their health and care and find services that will provide them with the right support.**

This year we helped 345 people get the advice and information they need by:

- Providing advice and information articles on our website.
- Answering people’s queries about services over the phone, by email, or online.
- Talking to people at community events.
- Promoting services and information that can help people on our social media.

**Here are some of the areas that people asked about:**



## Case Study

[The Harbour Project](#), an organisation in Swindon working with refugees and asylum seekers wrote to us asking:

**I was hoping you might be able to point us in the right direction for chasing up some HC2s. We've had two new recent arrivals that we're having problems with. One [person] arrived in Swindon with no Aspen card and no HC2. [They are] diabetic and is dependent on medication to manage [their] blood sugar levels. [They've] already run out of meds once, and we have paid for [their] prescription, but [they're] about to run out again. The second [person] arrived in Swindon with no HC2 and broken glasses. [Their] eyesight is quite**

**poor and [they're] finding it hard to get around without them. We've gone through the usual channels and in both cases we're being told it will still be up to 6 weeks still for the HC2s to arrive. Is there anyone we can escalate this with?"**

We recommended a call to the NHS Business Services Agency and the information in their booklet which made people's rights clear - and gave contact details.

We have built up a good working relationship with The Harbour Project and have awarded them funding from our community pot for 2020/21 to gather the views of the people they work with.





### Integrated Medical Holdings:

The appointment of IMH continued to cause problems for the residents of Swindon throughout most of 2019. We were asked to produce and present a report for the Overview and Scrutiny board in September. We also attended the Clinical Commissioning Group update meetings with a view to sharing information with the public about the full withdrawal of IMH from primary care. All new providers were in place by 1 December 2019. [Read more.](#)



### Moving Swindon’s walk in centre:

Another change to services which raised many concerns for Swindon’s residents was the moving of the Walk-in Centre to the Great Western Hospital site. Many felt that this would disadvantage vulnerable people, particularly Swindon’s homeless population. We sat on the board for the Walk-in Centre to ensure we provided feedback that we were hearing from the public directly to the CCG.



### Learning Disability Partnership Board Forum:

We sit on the Learning Disabilities Partnership Board and we help facilitate its quarterly forums which actively involve people with lived experience and service providers. This year forums included one reviewing the new database of services, Swindon Local Offer; one reviewing the 2012 LD Joint Strategic Needs Assessment which is urgently in need of updating; and one about people’s experience of hospital and what might make it better.



#### Contact us to get the information you need

If you have a query about a health or social care service, or need help with where you can go to access further support, get in touch. Don’t struggle alone. Healthwatch is here for you.

**Website:** [www.healthwatchswindon.org.uk](http://www.healthwatchswindon.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 01793 497777

**Email:** [info@healthwatchswindon.org.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchswindon.org.uk)

# Volunteers

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**At Healthwatch Swindon we are supported by 22 volunteers. In relation to health and care services, they help us find out what people think is working and what people would like to improve.**

**This year our volunteers:**

- Raised awareness of the work we do at events, in the community and with health and care services.
- Visited services to make sure they are providing people with the right support.
- Helped support our day-to-day running.
- Listened to people's experiences to help us know which areas we need to focus on.

**Mark Court is a volunteer from Swindon Advocacy Movement, who took part in a number of 'Quality Checkers' Enter and View visits to local services.**

Mark, a volunteer for Healthwatch Swindon, has been carrying out Enter and View visits on our behalf for about a year. 'I have really enjoyed doing them' said Mark. He especially appreciates how he is helping to make sure services cater for people with learning disabilities as he has a learning disability himself so can see it from his perspective. Mark stated 'I think services should be accessible for everyone', and Enter and View visits help to make this happen.

Mark recently attended a GP appointment with an advocate. He was nervous of going because of the current issues. Mark stated 'When I arrived, the receptionist spoke to the other person and not to me'.

Having experience of carrying out Enter and View visits gave Mark the confidence to challenge this behavior by telling the



Mark Court – Volunteer from Swindon Advocacy Movement (SAM) who took part in our 'Quality Checkers' Enter and View visits in Swindon from 2018 - 2019

receptionist that he is able to communicate effectively and to speak directly with him as the patient.

[Read our 'Quality Checkers' Enter and View reports.](#)



### Volunteer with us

Are you feeling inspired? We are always on the lookout for new volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, please get in touch at Healthwatch Swindon.

**Website:** [www.healthwatchswindon.org.uk](http://www.healthwatchswindon.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 01793 497777

**Email:** [info@healthwatchswindon.org.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchswindon.org.uk)



# Our volunteers

We could not do what we do without the support of our amazing volunteers. This year we have asked Harry to tell us why he decided to volunteer for us.



## Harry

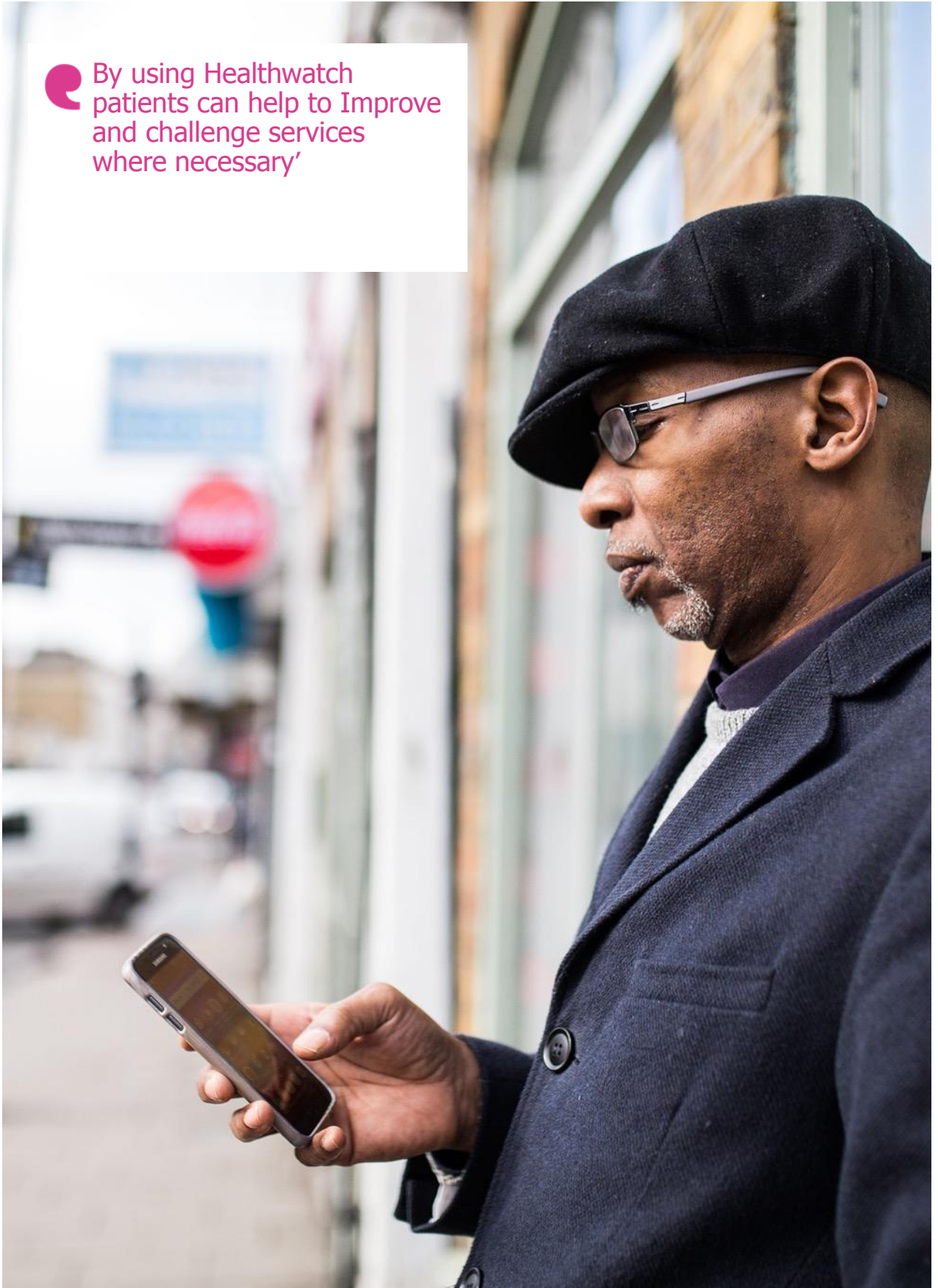
I joined the Healthwatch team just over a year ago, having worked locally within a number of health settings as a Governor at Great Western Hospital, as a Patient Lead with the NHS and as Chair of a local Patient Participation Group.

The difference at Healthwatch for me is that it is the voice of the patient, not affiliated to any of the health providing organisations, so truly represents the views of patient and service users.

I believe that it does good work taking the voice of patients forward and allowing patients to express positive and negative views on the services they receive in a more open way than many other organisations involving patients.

By using Healthwatch, patients can help to improve and challenge services where necessary.

By using Healthwatch patients can help to Improve and challenge services where necessary'

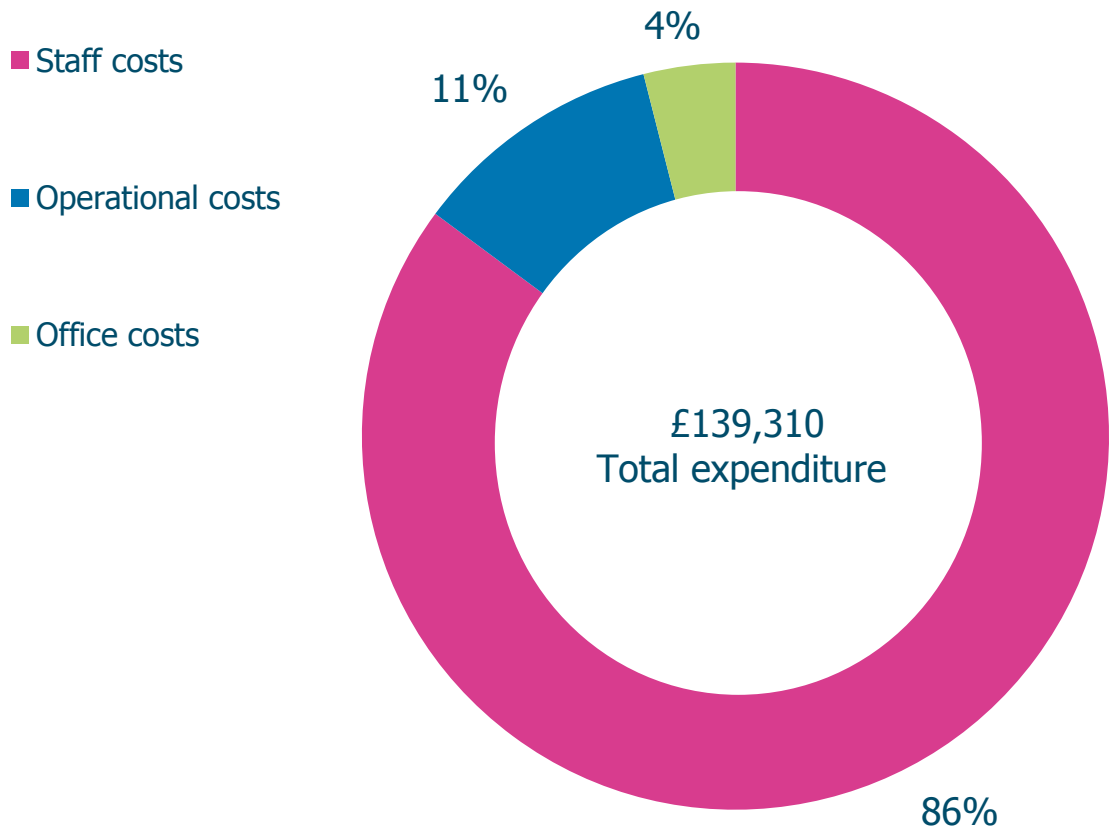


# Finances

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**We are funded by Swindon Borough Council under the Health and Social Care Act (2012). In 2019-20 we spent £139,310.**





# Our plans for next year

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## Well it's goodbye from me.....

### Looking ahead

- Healthwatch Swindon will continue to support Swindon Borough Council and the voluntary section providing a resilience hub during the pandemic.
- Pre-Covid-19 we were planning to carry out a joint Enter and View with our neighbouring Healthwatch partners at Great Western Hospital. This was following an increase in feedback across the area. We will continue with this at an appropriate point with Healthwatch Wiltshire and Healthwatch West Berkshire.
- We will feed our findings into the hospital's quality improvement plan.

### Thank you

- I would like to thank the public for all the information and feedback you provide to us. Without this it would be difficult to influence change.
- I would also like to thank our valued volunteers. They are our eyes and ears out in the community. We appreciate all that you do.

I have had an amazing two years and really appreciate all the help I have had from the team here at Swindon - both the staff and the volunteers. I will miss you all!

We all worked incredibly hard to produce the NHS Long Term Plan report last June, with Swindon leading across the Bath & North East Somerset, Wiltshire and Swindon area. We carried out many focus groups and surveys to support our findings and we will continue to use our findings to influence change and improvements locally.



Carol Willis, Healthwatch Swindon Manager

Finally, I would like to welcome Vanessa Scott as the new Healthwatch Swindon Manager and wish her all the best in her new role.



It's been an amazing two years with support from a great team of staff and volunteers.

C A W W S

## Message from our CEO

Morgan Daly, CEO of The Care Forum, wishes to thank volunteers working for Healthwatch Swindon for all the time and commitment given to making it a vibrant and active project. 2019/20 has been a busy year and our volunteers have been integral to this.

The need to hear the public views on the NHS Long Term Plan came at a time when we were already talking to the community so this gave us the opportunity to extend our focus groups to hear a wider public view of the NHS. We couldn't have done this without the help dedicated work of our volunteers.

Thanks also to the staff who hear the stories from local people and communities about the delivery of health and care services and have ensured these are shared with services, commissioners, regulators and Healthwatch England. They have been able to share the impact to ensure that changes can be made to make services fit for purpose.



**Morgan Daly – CEO, The Care Forum**

**We couldn't deliver the work we do without the hard work and dedication of our brilliant volunteers.**

# Thank you

Thank you to everyone that is helping us put people at the heart of social care, including:

- Members of the public who shared their views and experience with us.
- All of our amazing staff and volunteers.
- The voluntary organisations that have contributed to our work.



Safeguarding Focus Group

# Contact us

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The Care Forum.

Charity Number: 1053817

We confirm that we are using the Healthwatch Trademark (which covers the logo and Healthwatch brand) when undertaking work on our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

If you need this in an alternative format please contact us.

The Care Forum is a charitable company limited by guarantee.  
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