



April-June 2021



About us

About Healthwatch Wiltshire

Healthwatch Wiltshire is your local health and social care champion. As an independent statutory body, we have the power to make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers listen to local feedback and improve standards of care. We also help people to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.

Our priorities

For 2021/22 are:

Primary care

- Gathering feedback on primary care services such as GP surgeries and dentists with a focus on access – both face to face and digital.

Mental health

- Listening to experiences of mental health services and shaping service redesign.

Children and young people

- Young Healthwatch volunteers will identify areas important to them and seek the views of children and young people.

Discharge pathways

- Hearing experiences of the discharge process from acute hospital to home.



Highlights

Published 4 reports – including our Annual Report



Set our priorities for the year ahead



Signed the Armed Forces Covenant



Recruited 4 new volunteers



Facilitated 3 workshops gathering people's views on community mental health support



Continued to update our Covid-19 advice and information pages

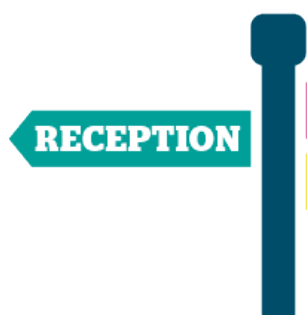


Talking & listening



321 people shared their experience of services with us

we attended **76** meetings, forums or events



49 contacts were given information and signposted through our Helpdesk Hub Team...

...with an average call time of **35** minutes

24 volunteers were involved...

...and volunteered over **304** hours



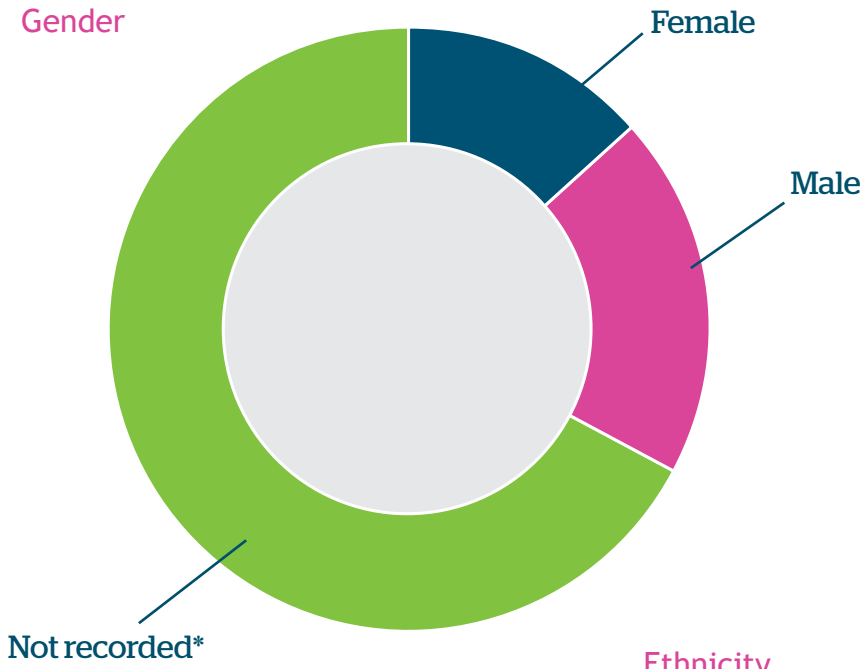
215 social media posts...

...reached **22,425** people

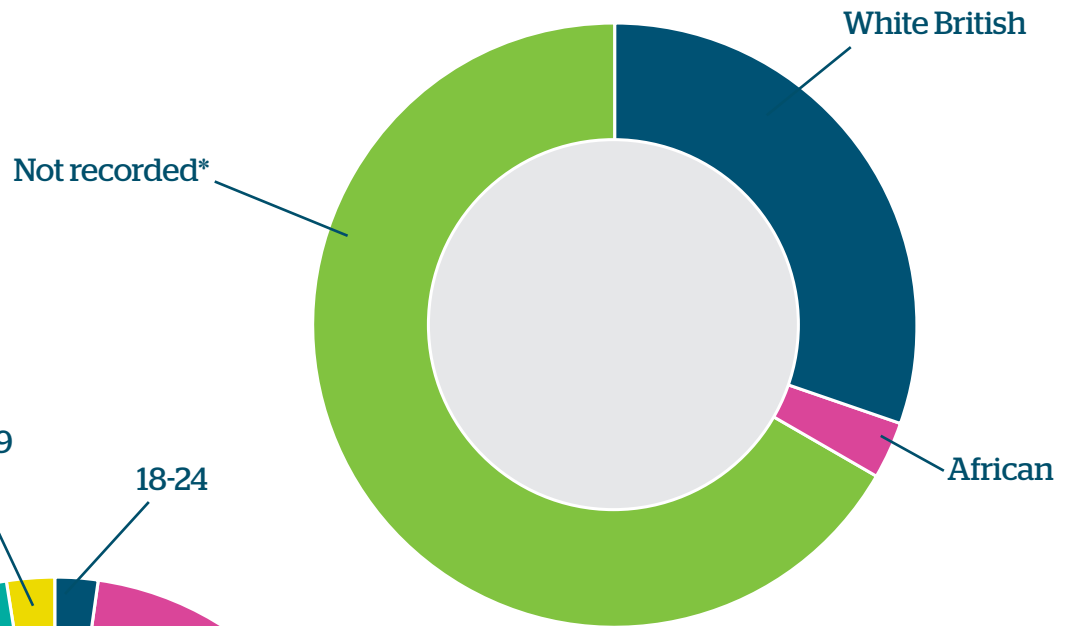
...and our website received **14,949** page views

Who shared their experience with us?

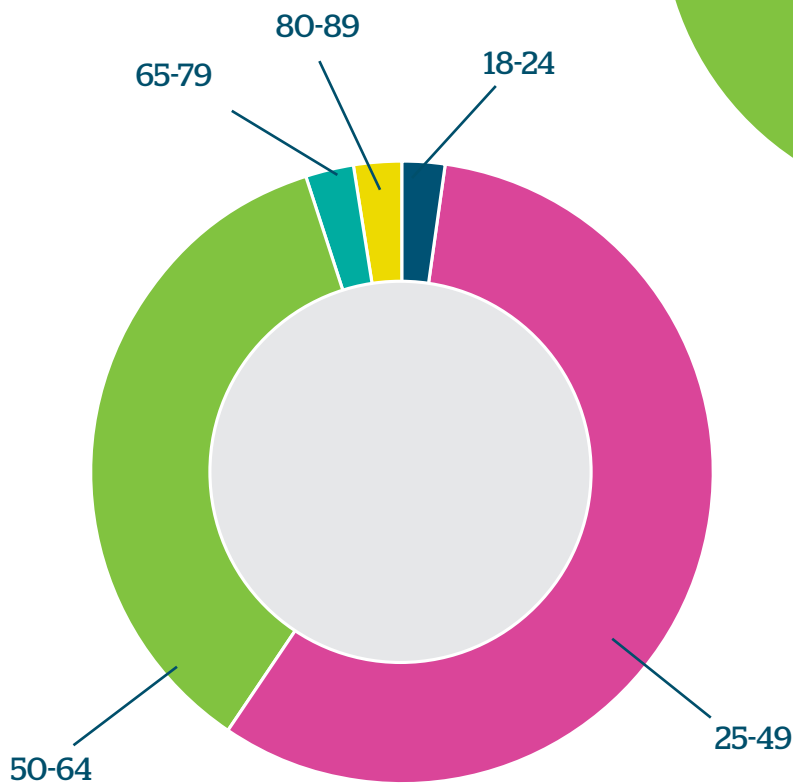
Gender



Ethnicity

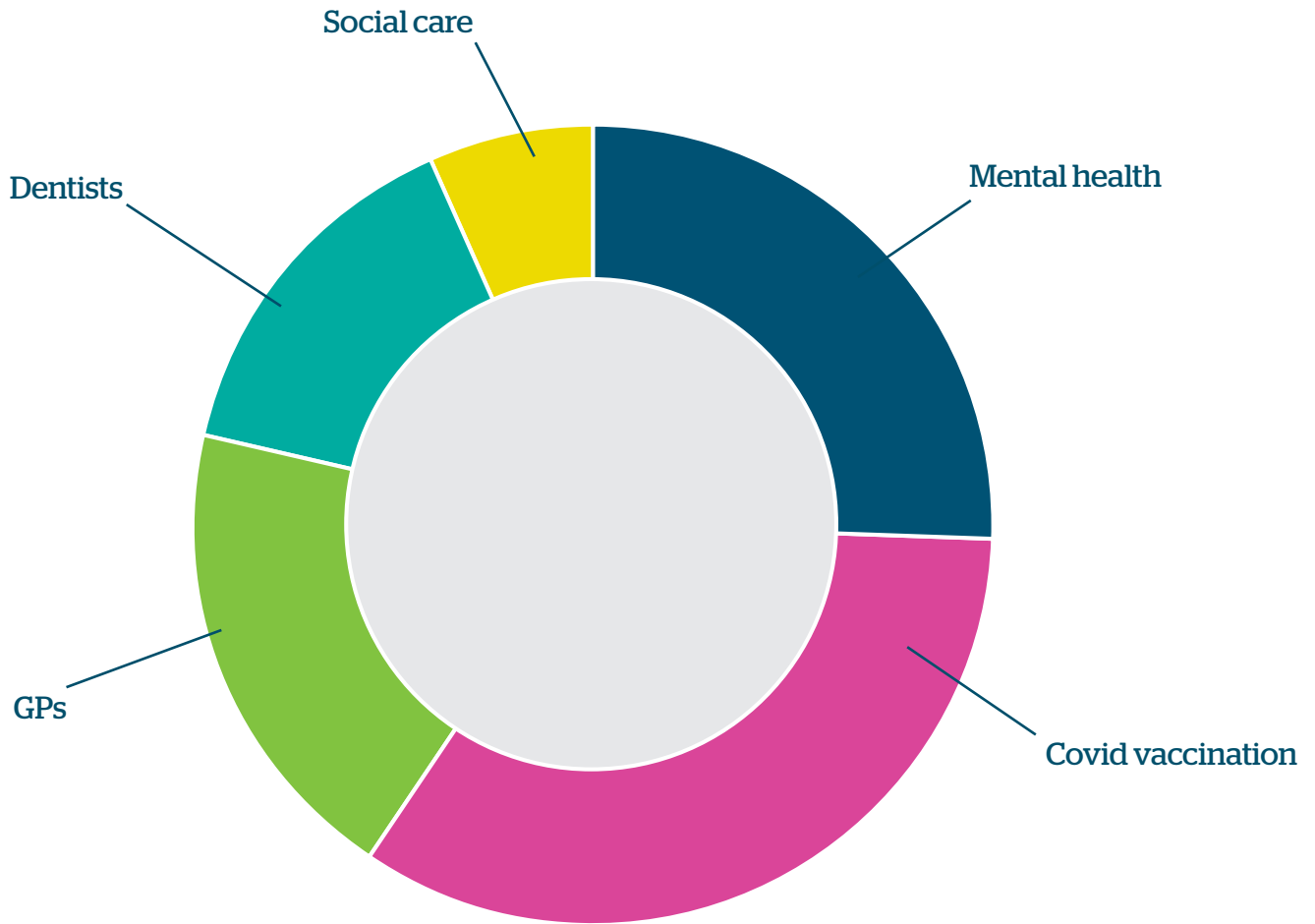


Age



*Not recorded could be due to interaction over email or telephone or the person not wishing to disclose.

What services did people speak to us about?



What were the comments about?

Service	Positive	Negative
GPs	Standard of treatment Staff attitudes	Access Communication
Mental health	-	Access
Dentists	-	Access
Covid vaccination	Standard of treatment Access	

Our work

Setting our priorities for the year ahead

Every year we set our priorities based on what we hear from local people. A robust process is used which looks at what we have heard over the past year, what work we could do and how this would have an impact for local people. This is shared with staff, volunteers and local commissioners for their input before the final decision is made by our Local Leadership Board.

This year our priority areas are:

- **Primary care** – Gathering feedback on primary care services such as GP surgeries and

dentists with a focus on access – both face to face and digital.

- **Mental health** – Listening to experiences of mental health services and shaping service redesign.
- **Children and Young people** – Young Healthwatch volunteers will identify areas important to them and seek the views of children and young people.
- **Discharge pathways** – Hearing experiences of the discharge process from acute hospital to home.

Hearing the voices of people who have gone through a mental health crisis

Working with BaNES, Swindon and Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BSW CCG) and Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust (AWP), we conducted 32 in-depth telephone interviews with people who had been taken to the Bluebell Place of Safety in Devizes. This is a place where people can be taken if they are in extreme mental distress and need to be detained for their own safety and that of others.

Our questions asked people to reflect on what happened before being taken to the Place of Safety, what they thought might have prevented them needing to be taken there, and whether they thought being taken there had been an appropriate course of action.

- Most people we spoke to felt that Bluebell provided a caring and appropriate environment for them at a time of crisis.
- Most said they understood their mental health assessment and its outcomes, although not everyone agreed with these.
- More than half said they had asked for help before going to the Place of Safety and

mentioned difficulties accessing the right support.

Although situations are often complex, our findings suggest there may be instances where the need for people to be taken to a Place of Safety could be avoided, and our recommendations include improving access to community mental health support to enable people to get the right support quickly when they are in crisis.

[Read the full report](#) on our website.



Focus on future of mental health support

We joined forces with Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living (WCIL) and Wiltshire Parent Carer Council (WPCC) in June to host a series of online focus groups asking local people what they think good community mental health support should look like.

Some of the things discussed included more

peer support, earlier intervention and having the opportunity to build relationships with key individuals.

All the feedback from the workshops is now being collated and will be used by BSW CCG to help plan future services in the region.

We sign Armed Forces Covenant

We are delighted to announce that we have signed the Armed Forces Covenant, a pledge that ensures those who serve, or who have served, in the Armed Forces, and their families, are treated fairly. By signing the Covenant, we will seek to uphold its principles

by continuing to build links with local military communities, and to actively seek the views of serving personnel, reservists, veterans, and their families on their experiences of health and care services. Visit our website for more on [our work with military families](#).

Our response to Covid-19

Gathering experiences

In June, we went along to talk to people who were getting their vaccinations at the roving vaccination bus in Trowbridge and Salisbury. We received nearly 100 comments about health and care services while people were waiting for their vaccination. It seemed that the bus was reaching those who may have been hesitant to get vaccine previously or were not able to get a vaccination centre. A report is being written to highlight what we heard that will be shared with those running the vaccination bus.

Information provision

We have continued to have a greater focus

on information provision, ensuring people can find the information they need easily. While information on our website about Covid vaccination centres and where to get test kits continues to see a high number of page visits, people have also begun to look for information about where they can get mental health support.

Articles added to our [advice and information](#) section this quarter include:

- **What you need to know about the Covid-19 vaccine** – with updated Q&A.
- **Where to get mental health support in Wiltshire** – with downloadable guides.
- **Where to get maternal mental health support.**
- **Which Covid-19 test is right for you?**

Where to get mental health support in Wiltshire

Advice and Information – 14 April 2021


Download our guides to help you find support for your mental health and wellbeing.



Where can I go for support for my mental health as a parent?

Advice and Information – 4 May 2021

Find out more about maternal mental health and where you can get help.





What people said

It is very hard to get through on the phone, it was a lot of hassle. Things were left longer. There were phone appointments. I was misdiagnosed due to a picture, and this meant I had to go to A&E. I think this would have been diagnosed correctly if I had been seen.

Because I hadn't used my own dentist for a while, I was taken off their list. I couldn't get another NHS dentist during lockdown and the pain got a lot worse. Then my old dentist told me about the Emergency Dental Service. I got an appointment within a couple of days in Chippenham. I got good treatment there and they fixed the problem.

I have been worried about having it [Covid vaccination] and have been thinking about it and talking to people about it. I have been hearing about all the work people have been doing. When I found out about the bus being here today, I thought that if health workers are going to all that effort, then I must go and have it to protect myself and the community.

I don't feel I can get the support I need [from mental health services]. I'm bipolar, but the only thing they have said they can offer me is anger management, but my bipolar doesn't really affect me in this way so I don't think this is what I need really.

I haven't used services but I have used the NHS website and have had no issues finding information. The NHS is doing a great job – keep it up.

Signposting story

A member of a military family emailed us to ask for help in finding an NHS dentist:

“We're a military family and have been in Wiltshire for over two years and still haven't managed to get access to an NHS dentist. Myself and my children only have the option to go private. This is what I have done for my three children but am unable to afford for me to be seen as a private patient as the children's six monthly check-ups alone are expensive.

“When I did see a dentist, which was an emergency, she relayed I have extensive damage to my teeth which would be in the thousands to fix privately. I am in pain daily from issues with my teeth.

This is affecting me massively.

“I have rang countless surgeries only to be told I can be seen as private or to try again, I have gone as far as an hour away which with me working full time would be impossible to get to but still no luck at all. I feel I've exhausted all avenues that I'm able to go down myself so need help. This isn't an isolated issue either, hundreds of military dependants are currently without dental care through no fault of our own from moving to Wiltshire.”

Our Helpdesk signposted them to NHS England and Oral Health Foundation helplines, SSAFA, and the Armed Forces Covenant.



Making a difference

Young volunteers make a difference to mental health support in Wiltshire

Reviewing mental health websites

When young people told us that being able to access information about their mental health and make informed choices was important to them, our team of young volunteers decided to review the online support available in Wiltshire in a mystery shopping project.

The [Young Healthwatch Wiltshire](#) volunteers created a series of scenarios around conditions such as depression and schizophrenia, to review Wiltshire Council's On Your Mind website, which is run by Barnardo's, and Wiltshire Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) website. The aim was to identify what was good about the websites and what could be improved.

While the volunteers saw the information provided as a good starting point, they thought

it didn't go into enough detail, particularly on some of the lesser known conditions. They also thought the information could be more accessible, and better targeted towards different age groups.

Their suggestions for improvement included a search bar to aid navigation, and a chat function to provide peer support in a safe environment. They also wanted to see young people involved in the future design and development of the websites.

In response to the young volunteers' findings, changes have already been made to the On Your Mind website with the introduction of a search bar, while a translation tool and chat function are currently being looked into. The young volunteers have also been invited to take part in future testing of the CAMHS website during its revamp. [More on our website.](#)

Creating their own guide to mental health support services

A team of Young Healthwatch Wiltshire volunteers have created their own guide to mental health services for children and young people in the county.

The Wiltshire Mental Health Support Services List for Young People follows on from a guide for adults, produced by members of our Wiltshire Mental Health Open Forum, as a way of helping people who are struggling with their mental health to find the right support for them quickly and easily.

The guides [can be downloaded](#) for free from our website.

It felt very good to have all this information in one place and in a way people could understand, and it felt even better knowing that this could make a huge difference to young people, especially when locating and finding the right organisations and helplines can be difficult.

I feel like this could really benefit children and young people in Wiltshire as it signposts them to various forms of help, and it is a great resource for somebody who may not know who to go to and how to access the information they want.

Erin, Young Healthwatch volunteer

Annual Report showcases work during tough year

Our Annual Report, On Equal Terms, was published at the end of June. This year we've focused on monitoring the response to Covid-19, asking people what they thought of information, health and care services, and community support during the pandemic, and we've shared this feedback regularly with providers and commissioners.

We've also strengthened our information and signposting service, helping people to get the information they need from a trusted source. A dedicated advice and information section on our website continues to help address people's questions and concerns.

Mental health remains a priority for us and our new mental health forum is giving people the chance to speak directly to those who run services in Wiltshire, while our online mystery

shopping project, run by our young volunteers, has led to them being involved in the future design of these websites.

And we're delighted that our work helping to improve care and support for people living with dementia received national recognition in November 2020 with a Healthwatch England award!

[Read more](#) on our website.



Find out more about our work at healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk

Coming up

Gathering experiences of access to GP services

Hearing the experiences of those that have used Great Western Hospital



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