

Championing what matters to you

Annual Report 2021–22



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Message from our Chair

It's been another challenging year dominated by the consequences of Covid-19 but Healthwatch Wiltshire has continued to be your champion for health and social care services and make sure your voice is heard by those who plan and run services.

I'm proud of the work our small team and band of volunteers have achieved and this report summarises their efforts.

I would like to thank everyone who has shared their views and experiences with us in the past year. Sharing your feedback really does make a difference – not only have we been able to make 78 recommendations to services for improvements, we're delighted to see that changes are being made thanks to what you told us, such as at the Great Western Hospital in Swindon, at the new Devizes Health Centre and in the development of local mental health services.

But as ever the work doesn't stop there. We'll be looking at how our survey, which gathered the views of patients and staff on access to GP services during Covid-19, will bring about improvements to services across the south of England in 2022 and beyond.

With the introduction of the new Integrated Care System in 2022, there are lots of changes expected within the health and care system and we want to make sure that local people continue to play a key role in helping to shape services.

Please keep sharing your experiences with us so that we can champion your views and needs both locally and nationally.



Alan Mitchell
Healthwatch Wiltshire Chair



The Covid-19 pandemic has thrown long-standing health inequalities into stark relief. With NHS and social care facing even longer backlogs, the unequal outcomes exposed by the pandemic are at risk of becoming worse. Local Healthwatch play an important role in helping to overcome these adversities and are uniquely placed to make a positive difference in their communities.

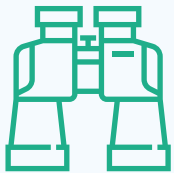
Sir Robert Francis QC, Chair of Healthwatch England



About us

Your health and social care champion

Healthwatch Wiltshire is your local health and social care champion. We make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.



Our vision

A world where we can all get the health and care we need.



Our mission

To make sure people's experiences help make health and care better.



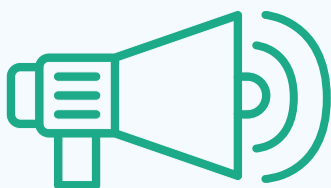
Our values

- **Listening** to people and making sure their voices are heard.
- **Including** everyone in the conversation – especially those who don't always have their voice heard.
- **Analysing** different people's experiences to learn how to improve care.
- **Acting** on feedback and driving change.
- **Partnering** with care providers, Government, and the voluntary sector – serving as the public's independent advocate.

Our year in review

Find out how we have engaged and supported people.

Reaching out



4,426 people

shared their experiences of health and social care services with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.

7,141 people

came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as mental health and Covid-19.

Making a difference to care



We published

12 reports

about the changes people would like to be made to health and social care services.

From these we made

78 recommendations

for improvement.

Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have

40

outstanding volunteers, who gave up 1,480 hours to make care better for our community.

We received

£179,617

in funding from our local authority in 2021–22.

We employ

5 staff

who help us carry out this work.

Listening to your experiences

Services can't make improvements without hearing your views. That's why over the last year we have made listening to feedback from all areas of the community a priority. This allows us to understand the full picture, and feedback to services to help them improve.



Improving hospital services

Thanks to people sharing their experiences of the Emergency Department and inpatient wards at Great Western Hospital (GWH) in Swindon, changes have been made to improve services.

Our joint project with Healthwatch Swindon and Healthwatch West Berkshire heard from 112 people who had used the Emergency Department (ED) or Urgent Care, and 84 people who had been inpatients at GWH during 2021. A mix of online surveys, Covid-safe face to face visits, virtual interviews, and phone calls were used to gather feedback.

- People told us they sometimes needed help finding the right service and suggested more information about other services available, and more urgent appointments at these services, would help reduce the need to go to ED.
- Patients said it was too noisy on the wards to get a good night's sleep, and felt that the food could be improved, with specific diets not being catered for. They also found it difficult to keep in touch with loved ones, especially if they didn't have a mobile phone.
- Carers said they felt less involved and communicated with than patients.
- And while the discharge process worked for some, for many there were delays and communication was often an issue.

What difference did this make?

Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust has since made a number of changes based on patient feedback, including:

- Introducing a Navigator in ED reception to direct patients on arrival.
- Improving information and signage about wait times in ED.
- Providing eye masks and ear plugs and removing noisy bins to help patients have a better night's sleep in hospital.
- Developing a new menu to offer more food choices.
- Providing dedicated Patient and Family Phones on all wards so patients can talk to loved ones.
- Installing more recliner chairs on wards so carers can stay overnight.
- Launching a Safety Netting process to call patients once they've been discharged to ensure services are in place for them.

Find out more: [You Said We Did: Changes at Great Western Hospital](#)



The experience of patients is key to helping us improve the care we provide and my thanks go to Healthwatch for providing us with this rich body of evidence... and to those patients who gave their views as part of this process.

Lisa Cheek, Chief Nurse
Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust



Putting people at the heart of service development

Feedback from people with lived experience of mental ill health is being used to shape and develop local mental health services.

In June 2021, Healthwatch Wiltshire, Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living (Wiltshire CIL) and Wiltshire Parent Carer Council (WPCC) were asked by Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BSW CCG) to host a series of workshops for people to tell us [what good mental health support looks like to them](#).

Getting early support that helps prevent mental health issues getting worse and having a sense of purpose in life were the key takeaways from these online focus groups, which heard from more than 30 people, including members of our Wiltshire Mental Health Open Forum.

The joint work follows the publication of the national Community Mental Health Services Framework, which looks at how support for people in the future can be delivered more locally, to help them live well.

We also worked with Healthwatch BaNES and Healthwatch Swindon to facilitate three online workshops, one in each locality, [to hear the views of organisations](#) across the area who support people with their mental health.

Organisations felt that individuals and care givers should have more involvement and control over their own care, including being involved in the design of services.

They suggested this could be achieved if mental health services worked with other health services more – treating a person as a whole – and more support for children and young people in schools was available from an early age to identify and address signs.

What difference did this make?

The feedback we shared from both of these reports supports previous work carried out by BSW CCG and will be used to help shape the new Community Mental Health Services Framework over the next three years. Next steps will include setting up a panel involving people with lived experience of mental ill health and local organisations.



Thank you to Healthwatch Wiltshire, Wiltshire Parent Carer Council and Wiltshire CIL for hosting these valuable sessions, and to those who took part for sharing their ideas. We'll be using all the feedback we've received to help shape and develop local mental health support services.



**Emily Shepherd, Senior Commissioning Manager for Mental Health,
Learning Disabilities and Autism, BSW CCG**

Improving information about new services

Thanks to thousands of people [sharing their views on Devizes Health Centre](#), due to open in September 2022, Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BSW CCG) have made changes to the project in response to what people told us.

More than 2,500 people responded to our survey, which we ran in early 2022 on behalf BSW CCG and local health and care organisations, to find out how local residents would like to access services at the new centre.

While the new facility was broadly welcomed by local people, some were disappointed there won't be a Minor Injury Unit on the site and there was some confusion over which services will be provided there.

Other feedback focused on:

- The need for ample free parking to minimise stress to patients and the need for a fast, frequent bus service to and from the town centre so people who don't have a car can get to the centre easily.
- Suggestions for accessibility and signage.
- Requests for more women's services, such as a menopause clinic.
- Concerns over a lack of x-ray and scanning facilities and no on-site pharmacy.

What difference did this make?

Since sharing this feedback with the CCG, they have updated information about the centre and revised their public engagement plan, which now includes:

- A leaflet detailing the services the new centre will provide.
- Public Q&A sessions which will also be made available online.
- Guided tours for the public before opening.

We will continue to work with the CCG so people will have a better understanding of what services will be offered, and how people's ideas could be used to inform the project.



The CCG will endeavour to keep the local community updated on the latest developments, and will also give people the chance to have their questions and queries answered by those closely involved with the project.

Dr Andrew Girdher, Clinical Chair BSW CCG



Ways we're making a difference for the community

Throughout our work we gather information about health inequalities by speaking to people whose experiences aren't often heard.



Projects to help us reach out across Wiltshire

Three projects that aim to reach out to seldom heard groups in Wiltshire were awarded a £1,000 grant from our Community Cash Fund in July 2021. The projects are providing a way for us to get more feedback on local services from people we might not otherwise hear from.

Mind Reset, which is based in Malmesbury, is hosting workshops for people living with bipolar disorder. The workshops will provide advice and information on the condition and where to access support, as well as being a sounding board for people to discuss their needs and how they think these needs could be met in the future.

Sounds Better CIC has launched a pilot project in Salisbury for families with primary school age children living with childhood asthma. Their course focuses on managing asthma and breath management techniques, and provides an opportunity for families to give their feedback on asthma services for children.

Wiltshire Hearing Voices Group provides a safe and non-judgemental space for people with unusual sensory experiences, such as hearing voices or seeing things, to share experiences and coping strategies. Our grant will help fund the Trowbridge-based group for a year, and to gather feedback on services through regular focus groups.

Each project will report back on their work later in 2022.



Forging links with the boater community

In December 2021, we went out with the asymptomatic testing van ran by Wiltshire Council, which aimed to support communities that found it harder to access Covid-19 tests.

We visited a canalside pub in Pewsey and spoke to several live-aboard boaters to hear their experiences of health and care services. They told us of their difficulties accessing GP services without a registered address and discussed the issue of mental health and isolation, particularly during the pandemic.

Since then, we have been setting up Healthwatch hubs at a number of canalside venues where we can gather feedback from boaters, share information on how to access mental health support and provide GP access cards that set out people's rights to NHS services.



Hearing the voices of young LGBTQ+ people

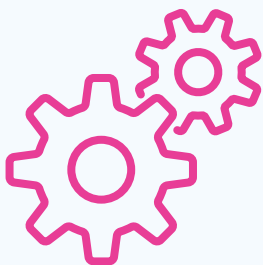
Our Young Healthwatch Wiltshire volunteers designed a survey to gather the views of young people who identify as LGBTQ+ about the local support available to them.

The survey, which ran in August 2021, came about after previous work by our young volunteers on the [Wiltshire Mental Health Services Support List for Young People](#), and identified there was little or no support for the young LGBTQ+ community in Wiltshire.

Our survey highlighted this gap in local health and care services, as well as a lack of understanding from healthcare professionals which left young people feeling unheard and disrespected.

More LGBTQ+ education in schools and better access to advice and information were seen as vital ways to help close the gap in LGBTQ+ support for both young people and adults in the county.

[The report we produced to highlight these findings](#) was presented to Wiltshire Council in March 2022 and we are now working with commissioners of local services to see how support for the LGBTQ+ community can be improved.



Understanding the experiences of people with autism

In a joint project with Wiltshire Service Users' Network (WSUN), which runs the Wiltshire Autism Hub, we listened to the experiences of people with an autism spectrum condition, and their carers, to understand what it's like to go for an appointment with a doctor or nurse, and what they think of other support that's available.

They told us that seeing a doctor is stressful, find it hard to explain their symptoms and often don't understand what they're being told about their treatment.

Most people felt that there's a lack of understanding about autism spectrum conditions, and of what can be done to alleviate the difficulties people experience.

Another key theme was the lack of services and groups for people with autism spectrum conditions, with most relying on support from family members.

[Our report](#), published in December 2021, will be used to inform Wiltshire's Learning Disabilities and Autism Transformation Programme and we'll be monitoring how services are developed in the future so they can better support people with autism.

Autism and learning disabilities will continue to be a focus of our work in 2022–23.

2021–2022 Outcomes

Project / Activity Area	Changes made to services
<p>Gathering feedback on primary care services such as GP surgeries and dentists with a focus on access – both face to face and digital.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In late 2021, we worked with Healthwatch teams across the south of England to gather the views of patients and staff on access to GP services during the Covid-19 pandemic. The project was carried out with the support of an advisory group which included GPs and practice managers, the CQC and the CCG. In Wiltshire, we heard from 509 patients and 113 staff, with limited availability of appointments, difficulty contacting practices, challenges of using online services, triaging, and barriers to access, such as working hours, being the key themes. Our report has already been shared with the CCG and clinical directors of Primary Care Networks (see quote, page 13), and will feed into an overarching report, with the results from all Healthwatch teams, to be published later in 2022. • In October 2021, we reviewed 48 dental practices across Wiltshire asking if they were taking on new NHS patients and waiting times. One practice confirmed they were taking on patients, while waiting lists were at 18 months or more. This work fed into Healthwatch England's call on the Government and NHS England to speed up dental contract reform and provide more funding to tackle the underlying problems of dental access and affordability. • In late 2021, we asked people what they thought of the Wiltshire Community Equipment Service, which is run by Medequip on behalf of Wiltshire Council and BSW CCG, and provides items such as walking frames, wheelchairs and hoists. Medequip and the Wiltshire Community Equipment Service commissioning and management team are now setting up an online forum to hear more from those who use the service, and their carers, about what they would like to see from the service in the future.

2021–2022 Outcomes

Project / Activity Area	Changes made to services
Listening to experiences of mental health services and shaping service redesign.	Our online mental health forum continues to provide a safe space for people to share their views directly with those who run services. In its first year , forum members created a guide to local mental health services, have helped shape services such as improving wait times for Psychotherapy Services, and provided input into the Community Mental Health Services Framework. The forum has 82 members and is supported by 30 organisations.
Hearing experiences of the discharge process from acute hospital to home.	A project with the Royal United Hospital (RUH) in Bath was delayed due to the pandemic and has been rescheduled for later in 2022.
Providing local and national information and guidance.	Our website is regularly updated with local and national information and seen as a trusted source for information. During 2021–22, our advice and information pages were visited 6,802 times.



Let me thank you for shining a specific, objective and helpful light on primary care and going through things in a systematic way which is very likely to be helpful to anyone who reads the [GP access] report. It is gratifying that there is understanding, and appreciation of what staff do for patients day in and day out in very difficult circumstances [and] it is helpful to see in black and white the main concerns that patients raise about general practice.



Dr Michele Giorgi, Clinical Director of Sarum Trinity Primary Care Network

Advice and information

If you feel lost and don't know where to turn, Healthwatch is here for you. In times of worry or stress, we can provide confidential support and free information to help you understand your options and get the help you need. Whether it's finding an NHS dentist, how to make a complaint or choosing a good care home for a loved one – you can count on us.

This year we helped people by:

- Providing up to date information on Covid-19
- Linking people to reliable information they could trust
- Supporting the Covid-19 vaccination and booster programme
- Helping people to access the services they need



Signposting to post-natal support

Lucy* contacted our Healthwatch Hub team because she was struggling with anxiety and emotions after having a baby, and it was affecting her relationship with her husband.

We signposted Lucy* to the National Childbirth Trust (NCT) which could help her to meet other new parents. She was also signposted to Wiltshire Mind, which offers counselling and peer support groups, and the Samaritans, who can be contacted at any time for support.



Finding an NHS dentist

Tom*, who provides information and signposting to military families in Wiltshire, asked for help in finding NHS dentists.

They said: "I know this is a problem across the UK... but Wiltshire has the largest population of military personnel and while they are able to access dental services through the MOD, the majority of their partners and children aren't able to. Due to the mobile nature of military life many spouses don't work and therefore can't afford to go private. Do you happen to have any details of dentists accepting NHS patients



in the Wiltshire area? There is the 'find a dentist' service on the NHS website but this doesn't always appear to be up to date."

We told Tom* we have found this to be an increasing problem across all areas and have contacted dental practices to urge them to update their websites and to help patients by stating whether they are accepting new patients. We will be presenting our findings to both local and national providers of these services.

- Find out more about [our dentistry project](#) on page 12.

Searching for social groups

Penny* got in touch to ask if there were any local social groups or daytime activities that may be suitable for her mother, who has mental health issues, to attend, as she has few friends and only sees her carers and husband.

We were able to signpost Penny* to adult social care who could advise on daytime clubs and groups. We also sent her information about Wiltshire Mind and other local organisations that may provide clubs and groups suitable for her mother to attend.



Volunteers

We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers who are the heart of Healthwatch. Thanks to their efforts in the community, we're able to understand what is working and what needs improving in NHS and social care.

This year our volunteers:

- Promoted Healthwatch Wiltshire and our role within their local communities
- Passed on advice and information and helped us gather feedback
- Helped people have their say from home by carrying out interviews over the phone
- Reviewed documents for us and our partners





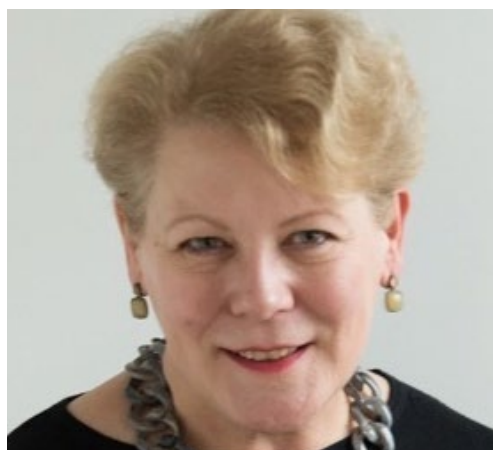
Robyn

"Through volunteering I've been able to get involved with projects that I'm really interested in and passionate about, such as a survey investigating support for LGBTQ+ young people. I can get involved in all stages of projects, from the original ideas, research, talking to young people, producing resources and reports and presenting our findings. It has improved my knowledge and skills in all of these areas, and it has been great to talk to and work with other organisations where I feel people are really listening and interested in what we have to say."



Sally

"I've worked in both the NHS and the voluntary sector locally and I'm passionate about people having their say about the services they use, so, when I took early retirement during lockdown, I got in touch with Healthwatch Wiltshire. I like the interesting mix of opportunities, the supportive staff, meeting other volunteers and doing something that feels worthwhile. I'm looking forward to doing some information stands this year. Join us - it's fun!"



Julia

"In one way or another all our lives are impacted by how we interact with the health and social care systems. A critical role for Healthwatch Wiltshire is to provide fresh insights into what's important for people and to help 'join the dots' about people's experiences. As a new Board member - and a newcomer to Wiltshire - I'm looking forward to understanding better how different parts of the health and social care system work and getting to grips with the best way of communicating across the system."



Do you feel inspired?

We are always on the lookout for new volunteers, so please get in touch today.

 healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk/volunteer

 01225 434218

 info@healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk

Finance and future priorities

To help us carry out our work we receive funding from our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Income		Expenditure	
Funding received from local authority	£179,617	Staff costs	£127,700
Additional funding	£5,750	Operational costs	£22,582
		Support and administration	£27,000
Total income	£185,367	Total expenditure	£177,282

Top priorities for 2022–23

1. Primary care – following on from the previous year's work
2. Mental health – with a focus on learning disability and autism
3. Children and young people – sexual health
4. Hospital discharge – exploring the links between discharge and social care

Next steps

The pandemic has shone a stark light on the impact of existing inequalities when using health and care services, highlighting the importance of championing the voices of those who all too often go unheard.

Over the coming years, our goal is to help reduce these inequalities by making sure your voice is heard, and decision makers reduce the barriers you face, regardless of whether that's because of where you live, income or race.

New projects for 2022–23 include working with Wiltshire Service Users Network (WSUN) again to review how mental health services are accessed by people living with autism or learning difficulties, or who are neurodivergent.

We will also be hosting information sessions with Fijian and Nepalese armed forces families to hear their feedback on services, while our Young Healthwatch Wiltshire volunteers will focus on access to sexual health services for young people who identify as LGBTQ+.

Plus, we'll continue to follow up our recommendations from this year's reports to see what impact changes to services have had for local people.

Statutory statements

About us

Healthwatch Wiltshire, The Independent Living Centre, St George's Place, Semington, Trowbridge BA14 6JQ.

Healthwatch Wiltshire uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

Help and Care hold the contract for Healthwatch Wiltshire. Help and Care, A49, Aerodrome Studios, Airfield Way, Christchurch, Dorset, BH23 3TS. Registered Company No. 3187574. Registered Charity No. 1055056.



The way we work

Involvement of volunteers and lay people in our governance and decision-making.

Our Local Leadership Board consists of 9 members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our Board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our local community.

Through 2021/22 the Board met 12 times and discussions included our role and relationship with the emerging Integrated Care System, the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Partnership (BSW).

Our work priorities are driven by what people have told us is important to them, through our surveys and feedback forms, information and signposting enquiries, web page views, and our mental health forum.

Methods and systems used across the year's work to obtain people's views and experience

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of health and care services. During 2020/21 we have been available by phone, by email, provided a webform on our website, provided a feedback centre/rate and review system, attended virtual meetings of community groups and forums, provided our own virtual activities and engaged with the public through social media.

We are committed to taking additional steps to ensure we obtain the views of people from diverse backgrounds who are often not heard by health and care decision makers. This year we have done this by, for example, launching our Community Cash Fund scheme and establishing links with the boater community.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. It will be published on our website and shared with our mailing list of 800 subscribers and on social media.

Responses to recommendations and requests

All providers responded to our requests for information and recommendations. While Wiltshire Council did not wish to provide a response to our LGBTQ+ report, we presented our findings to them and will be working with them to see how support for this community can be improved.

This year, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we did not make use of our Enter and View powers. Consequently, no recommendations or other actions resulted from this area of activity.

There were no issues or recommendations escalated by our Healthwatch to Healthwatch England Committee and so no resulting special reviews or investigations.

Health and Wellbeing Board

Healthwatch Wiltshire is represented on the Wiltshire Council Health and Wellbeing Board by Alan Mitchell, Chair of Healthwatch Wiltshire. During 2021/22 our representative has effectively carried out this role by regularly attending the meetings and workshops and reminding partner agencies about the importance of involving local people.



healthwatch Wiltshire

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