



**October–December 2022**

# 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 2022/23 are:

### Primary care

- Following on from our work on accessing GP services and how they are recovering post-pandemic.

### Mental health

- Monitoring services in light of increasing demand, with a particular focus on learning disabilities and autism.

### Children and young people

- Young Healthwatch volunteers will focus on sexual health.

### Hospital discharge

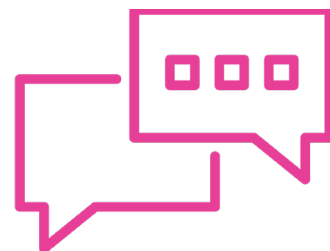
- Exploring the links between discharge and social care.

# Highlights

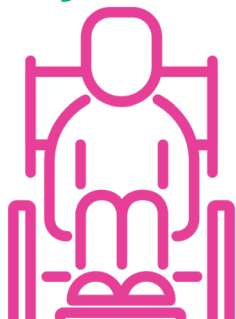
**Published 2 reports**



**Hosted a new  
Independent Living Open  
Forum**



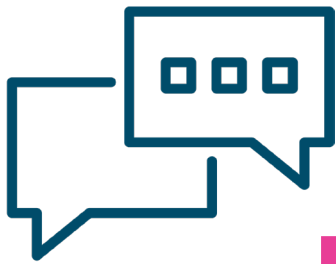
**Visited a care home to  
gather feedback on new  
rehabilitation project**



**Planning a new project  
to hear views of  
minority groups**

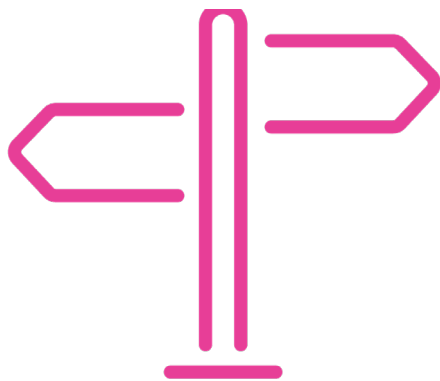


# Talking and listening



**51** people shared their experience of services with us

We attended **50** meetings, forums and events



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

...with an average call time of **21** minutes

**18** volunteers were involved...

...and volunteered over **217** hours



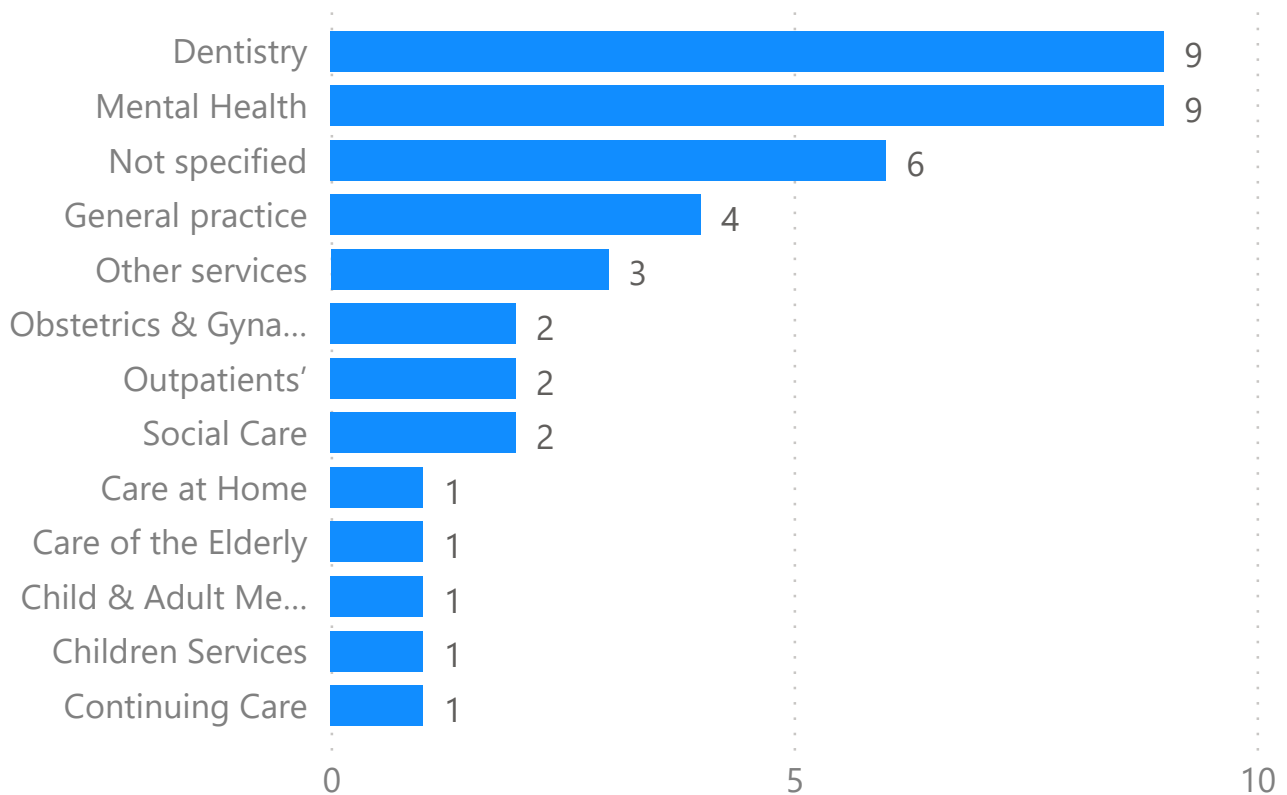
**198** social media posts...

...reached **14,650** people

...and our website received **6,612** page views

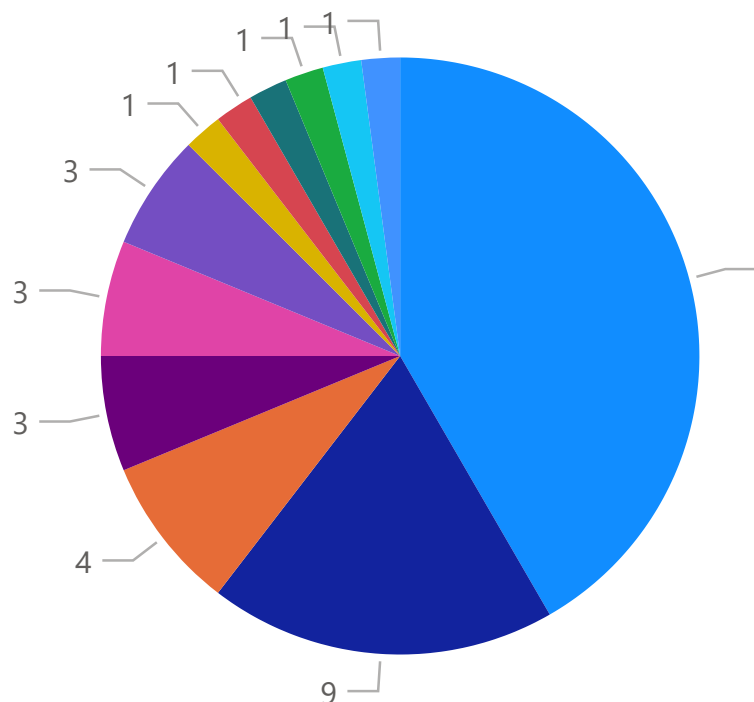
# Experiences you shared

## Top 10 Services

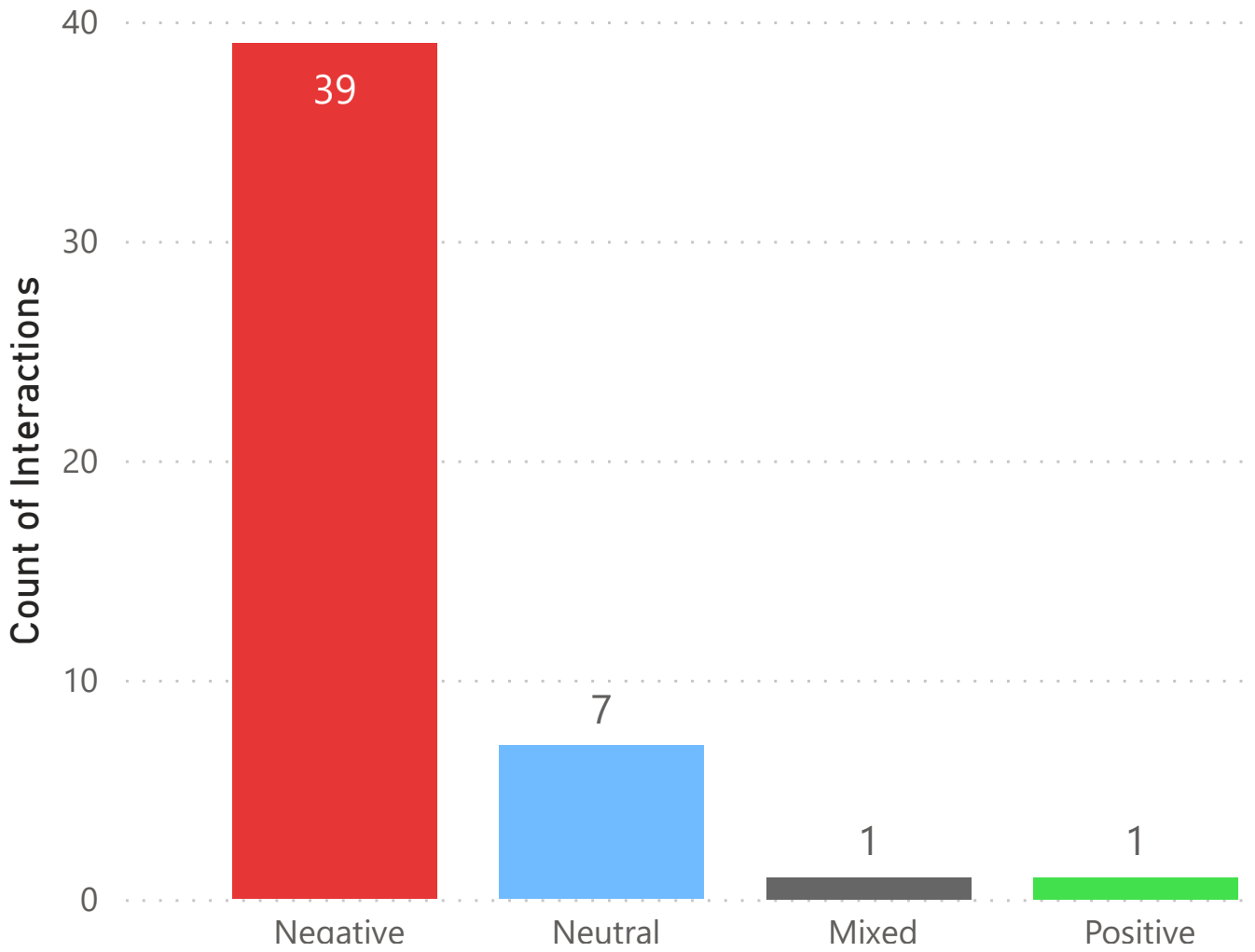


## Top 10 Themes

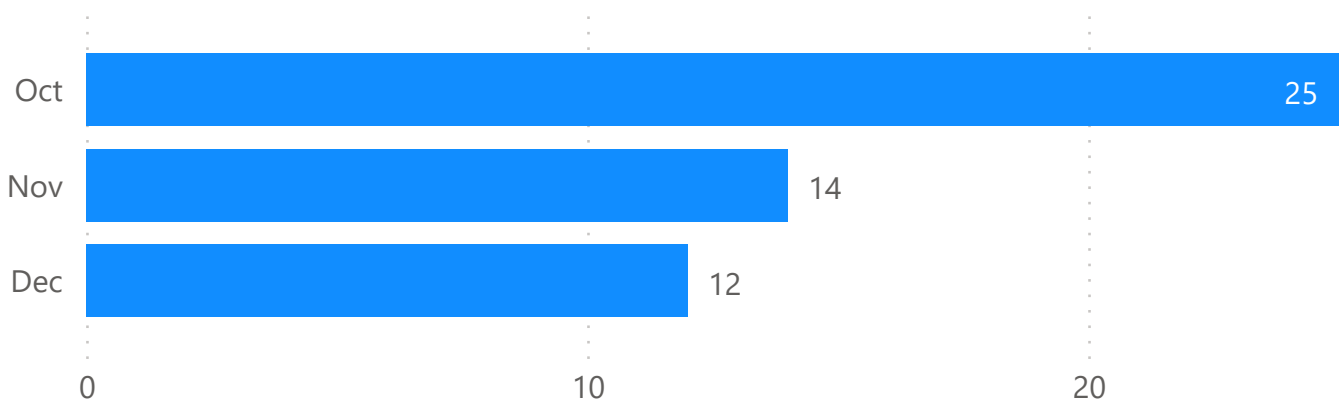
- Access and Choice
- Support available
- Not specified
- Communication
- Staffing/Staff attitudes
- Treatment/Care
- Diagnosis
- Funding available
- Medication
- Pathways of care
- Safety
- Waiting times



# Story Sentiment



## Number of people who shared their feedback/raised issues about health and care services





# Our work

## Patients positive about rehabilitation scheme

In October, we visited Little Manor Care Centre in Salisbury, where a new hospital discharge project is being trialled, to interview patients, care staff and therapists.

Questionnaires were also sent out by the care home to families and carers to invite them to give their views.

Feedback about the pilot project, known as Pathway 2, was overwhelmingly positive, except for comments on the lack of communication to patients around their discharge from hospital.

The multi-disciplinary team approach, based on one site and working collaboratively, was seen as beneficial to patients, speeding up the rehabilitation and recovery process so that most patients are ready to move on after 28 day stay.

The findings of our interim report were incorporated into Wiltshire Council's Better Care Fund paper for consideration of continued funding approval at the council's Cabinet meeting in December. Our full report will be out in the spring.

## Sessions to focus on minority communities

We have started working with Wiltshire Council's Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service team (EMTAS) and children's charity Spurgeons on a two-year project to engage with six minority communities.

The project will cover two years, and 24 sessions, with the first year focusing on Travellers, Boaters and Eastern European communities.

The aim will be to signpost them to key medical services and deliver activities to support them with their mental health and wellbeing.

The sessions will also provide support to older members of these communities to help their children and grandchildren with learning.

The project is being funded by NHS Charities Together through Royal United Hospitals Bath.

## Forum launched to hear views of service users

In November, we hosted the first Independent Living Open Forum, which was open to anyone who uses the Wiltshire Community Equipment Service provided by Medequip.

The forum was launched to provide a unique opportunity for people using Medequip's services to talk to the directly about their lived experiences and suggestions about service.



# Latest advice and information

Our website offers a range of advice and information to help you keep up to date with the latest changes in health and care.

Over the last quarter we have published the following articles:

- Where to get cost of living support in Wiltshire
- How to stay well this winter including information on Strep A, warm spaces and Christmas opening hours for pharmacies
- Looking after your mental health this winter

Our Cost of living advice page was the most visited page of the quarter, with more than 250 views, and will continue to be updated.

Our mental health resources list, which can be found on the Where to get mental health support in Wiltshire page, continues to be popular, and was downloaded 76 times between October and December 2022.

[Visit our advice and information section](#) to find out more.

## Where to get cost of living support in Wiltshire

Advice and Information - 28 November 2022

**Local organisations that can give you practical help and support.**





# Making a difference

## Review of GP surgeries' websites produces good practice guide

Our [GP Websites Review](#) is an observational assessment of information provided on GP practice websites in Wiltshire, carried out by our team of volunteer researchers.

Our review was designed to examine the current content of websites for all 49 GP practices in the county.

The aim of this piece of work was to look at how useful, accessible, up-to-date and informative the GP websites were and identify examples of best practice.

Six volunteer researchers took part, putting themselves in the position of someone needing to contact their surgery. The majority of the websites were easy to find, navigate, read and understand, but there was significant variation in the quality and quantity of the information.

This was largely a benchmarking exercise and



our recommendations for improving the websites can be used as a checklist for GP practices to follow.

Since this review has been carried out, NHS England have produced a guide, *Creating a Highly Usable and Accessible GP Website for Patients* (August 2022), which echoes much of our work and which we recommend practices follow.

We have also been asked by Wessex Local Medical Committees Ltd, who represent GPs and practices across the region, to join them in a podcast highlighting

what we do, how we can help people and how GP practices can use our findings to improve their websites' communication and accessibility.

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



Constructive feedback with examples of what 'good' looks like are always welcome. Your list of recommendations will provide a useful crib sheet for practices to refer to when reviewing their websites.



**Dr Andy Purbrick, Joint Chief Executive, Wessex LMCs**

# Report highlights difficulty in accessing services during Covid

We worked on a project with Healthwatch Bath & North East Somerset and Healthwatch Swindon to look at [how people with mental ill health accessed services during the Covid-19 pandemic](#).

This research and engagement project was commissioned by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), the independent regulator of health and social care in England.

## What did we find out?

- The most common theme was people living with mental ill health are unable to access mental health services.
- People feel that mental health services should be preventative rather than reactive.
- Access is reliant on very high thresholds for receiving care; ongoing support should be provided that is more tailored to the individual.
- Waiting lists are very long and people felt they 'get lost' in the system.
- Some people reported that they found their mental health issues made it more

difficult to access services, particularly when they were in crisis.



- The transition from children's to adult services is problematic, with a perception that you have to start again.

- Carers feel they are not being listened to and as a result their own mental health is being adversely affected, which can impact negatively on the person they are caring for.

- Care coordinators are overstretched, with a high turnover, which further impacts on unpaid carers and service users.

- Feedback also highlighted gaps in services for people with autism or learning disabilities, the LGBTQ+ community, children and those suffering from trauma or eating disorders.

We recommended that significant training and additional support is provided, particularly across the less well-served areas, such as children's services, eating disorders and for people suffering from trauma. Our report has been shared with the CQC, Clinical Directors and Wiltshire Council.

The report was published in October and is available [on our website](#).

# What people said



## Signposting story – getting answers

**Our Hub team received a call from a person wanting advice about how to get answers and treatment for a problem that she has had since 2010.**

“I had surgery in 2010 at Salisbury hospital when it was discovered that I had endometriosis. I wasn’t given any information about it, apart from being told that I would find it difficult to conceive and put on the waiting list for IVF. Following this, my marriage broke down and I was in severe pain so hasn’t taken the IVF any further.

“I’ve recently been experiencing additional symptoms. I had a consultation at Southampton Hospital

where I was told I’d need an MRI scan. An appointment was made but was cancelled.

“I don’t agree with what has been written on my notes, so would like some advice on how to tell them I’m not happy. I’d also like advice about what questions to ask to ensure I have the correct treatment, including access to IVF.”

Our Hub team advised her how to access medical records and to write a letter if she doesn’t agree with the summary of her recent consultation and to speak to PALS or the consultant’s secretary. Our Hub team also signposted her to the Endometriosis UK helpline.



## Signposting story – mental health treatment

**Our Hub team had a lengthy and complex call from a caller about their treatment for mental health issues.**

Two years ago, the caller was accused of a crime and has since then has been struggling with his mental health. He is under mental health services (MH) but has been told he can’t talk about what happened. The caller now has PTSD and has been suicidal. He feels MH services have made his situation worse: when he has called the crisis line he has been told that if he was going to kill himself he would have done it by now and to call the Samaritans. They advised him to find a distraction which he says isn’t helpful as this hadn’t worked previously. MH services also

said he is not engaging and that he has a personality disorder but feels this has not been explained to him.

He is worried that at the trial, he will be unable to speak about what happened as he is now unable to remember. The caller said that he now lacks trust and feels relationships with MH services need to be rebuilt.

Our Hub team suggested he ask his solicitor for a letter stating there are no restrictions on his being able to discuss the crime with MH services. We signposted him to The Advocacy People for further support and to NHS Talking Therapies, although warned they may not accept him if under MH services.



# Coming up

A new project focusing on the sexual and mental health of people who identify as LGBTQ+

Review of how mental health services are accessed for people with autism, learning disabilities or neurodivergence

Revisiting our work on Continuing Healthcare to review progress made since our report

Find out more about our work at [healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk](https://healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk)



# healthwatch Wiltshire

Healthwatch Wiltshire  
Freepost RTZK-ZZZG-CCBX  
The Independent Living Centre  
St George's Road  
Semington  
Trowbridge  
BA14 6JQ

[healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk](http://healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk)

t: 01225 434218

e: [info@healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk)

 @HWWilts

 HealthwatchWiltshire

 healthwatchwiltshire