

The value of listening

Healthwatch Swindon
Annual Report 2023–2024



healthwatch
Swindon

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"Over the last year, local Healthwatch have shown what happens when people speak up about their care, and services listen. They are helping the NHS unlock the power of people's views and experiences, especially those facing the most serious health inequalities."

Louise Ansari, Chief Executive at Healthwatch England



Message from our Chief Executive Officer

As CEO of TCF with oversight of the delivery of Healthwatch Swindon, I am pleased to present this report summarising our activities, achievements, and ongoing efforts over the past year. Healthwatch Swindon has continued to serve as an independent champion for people who use health and social care services. Our role is to ensure that the voices of the community are heard and that their experiences and concerns are used to improve these services.

Throughout the year, Healthwatch Swindon has engaged in a variety of activities aimed at gathering feedback from the community and advocating for improvements in health and social care services. Our efforts have been focused on understanding the needs and concerns of Swindon residents, providing them with relevant information, and ensuring that their voices influence decision-making processes.

Our work with refugees, cancer services, and understanding barriers to health research demonstrates the breadth of our efforts. Our staff and volunteers continue to deliver high-quality service using a trauma-informed approach.

Finally, I continue to be impressed with all of our volunteers who help us dream big. Our Young Healthwatch team members, in particular, enable our services to reach new people and create new pathways for listening.



“To our volunteers and staff, your compassion, insight, and laughter have shaped another incredible year for us. Thank you.”

Kevin Peltonen-Messenger -CEO The Care Forum



Message from Our Healthwatch Swindon Manager

Healthwatch Swindon is a valuable community resource that strives to ensure the voices of all individuals are heard when it comes to healthcare services.

As the Healthwatch Manager for Swindon, I am pleased to present our annual statement of achievements for 2023 to 2024. This past year has been filled with hard work, determination, and a dedication to improving the health and well-being of our community.

Throughout the year, we have successfully advocated for better access to healthcare services, pushed for improvements in mental health support, and worked tirelessly to amplify the voices of those in need. Our team has conducted numerous public consultations, gathered valuable feedback from members of the community, and provided insightful recommendations to local healthcare providers and authorities.

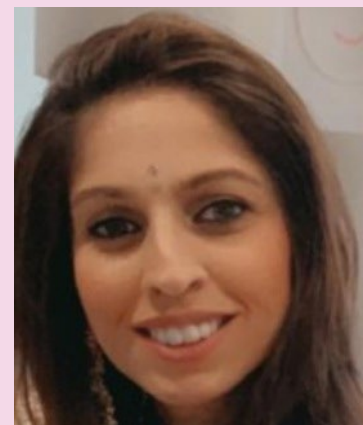
We have also focused on increasing awareness around health issues, hosting educational events, and creating informative resources for both residents and healthcare professionals. Our efforts have led to positive changes in the community, with increased support for vulnerable populations and a renewed commitment to addressing health disparities.

Moving forward, we remain dedicated to our mission of empowering individuals to have a voice in their healthcare and advocating for a healthier, more equitable Swindon. We are grateful for the ongoing support of our volunteers, partners, and community members, and we look forward to another year of making a difference in the lives of those we serve.



"Thank you for entrusting us with this important work. Together, we can continue to build a healthier Swindon for all."

Amritpal Kaur –Healthwatch Swindon Manager



About us

Healthwatch Swindon is your local health and social care champion.

We make sure NHS leaders and 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 are:

- **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.



Year in review

Reaching out:

3,103 people

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

8,203 people

came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as mental health and the cost-of-living crisis.



Making a difference to care:

We published

11 reports

about the improvements people would like to see in health and social care services.

Our most popular report was

[My Voice Matters: Experiences of refugees accessing and using health and social care in BaNES and Swindon](#)

which highlighted the struggles refugees face in accessing Healthcare



Health and social care that works for you:

We're lucky to have

36

outstanding volunteers who gave up **146 days** to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our local authority. In 2023 - 24 we received

£107,000.00

which is **0.47% less** than the previous year.





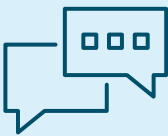



We currently employ

3 staff

who help us carry out our work.



How we've made a difference this year

Spring	 <p>We provided people with information on how to obtain a Hep C Test Kit by providing the following Link Home - HepC (hepctest.nhs.uk)</p>	 <p>Be Bowel Smart : We raised awareness of knowing the Key 5 symptoms of Bowel Cancer.</p>
Summer	 <p>The NHS announced changes to their contract with dentists, after our data showed widening inequalities.</p>	 <p>We shared resources from St Johns Ambulance and the NHS to improve awareness of basic life support , ensuring everyone has access to training in person or online.</p>
Autumn	 <p>Our "Because we all care" campaign encouraged more people to share their experiences, helping us improve care further.</p>	 <p>We highlighted key facts about Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) during ADHD Awareness month</p>
Winter	 <p>We shared information on how to find out about measles, who can get the vaccine, and what you can do to stay safe</p>	 <p>We highlighted the impact of the soaring cost of living on healthcare.</p>

Your voice heard at a wider level

We collaborate with other Healthwatch to ensure the experiences of people in Swindon influence decisions made about services at Bath and North East Somerset ,Swindon and Wiltshire (BSW) Integrated Care System (ICS) level.

This year we've worked with Healthwatch across Bath and North East Somerset and Wiltshire to achieve:



Achievement one: We took forward your feedback and concerns about the future of Prescription Ordering Direct. We showcased what you said worked well and what could be improved on when considering options for a new system .

Achievement Two: We sit on the following groups for primary care representing Patient Voice in the BSW ICB : Which include BSW Primary Medical Care Operational Group, BSW Pharmacy Operational Group, BSW Dental Operational Group and BSW Eye Care Operational Group. We hold them to account based on the feedback we receive from you.



Achievement three: We are part of the Women's Health Hub task and finish Group for the Integrated Care System. We represent service users across BSW, to ensure the funding available is appropriately allocated to support the needs of girls and women locally.

Achievement four: We joined the BSW Intergrated Care Board Inequalities Strategy Group, to ensure your voice is heard when looking at awareness of health inequalities within BSW ICS



Statement From Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Intergrated Care Board.



On behalf of the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon, and Wiltshire (BSW) ICB I would like to state that we recognise and appreciate the good working relationship we have with Healthwatch Swindon.

Over the past year we have received invaluable advice, support, and contributions across a range of primary care work programmes including:

- the review and introduction of the Extended Access Plans received by the Primary Care Networks (PCNs).
- changes to some of our GP Practices and PCNs.
- attendance at the ICB Operational Group for our primary medical (GP) services; and
- the delegation of community pharmacy, optometry, and dental services to the ICB from NHSE since April 2023, and the setup of BSW Operational Groups to cover each of these services.

The input into these meetings and discussions, alongside other partners including clinicians and local representative committees, has kept the focus on our patient and public experiences of our primary care services which is essential.

I would personally like to thank the team for their time, attention, and contributions to our work programme.

many thanks

Jo Cullen
Director of Primary Care
NHS Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire
Integrated Care Board (ICB)



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 feed this back to services and help them improve.

Macmillan Cancer Support

Earlier this year, we published findings and experiences the public shared with us about where would people and communities of Swindon like to find Cancer information and support. The insights from the report were shared with Macmillan, who commission the project to ensure they provided support where it is needed. We highlighted our findings to our local authority, NHS Integrated Care Board and Healthwatch England.

We spoke to people who had experienced cancer either themselves or with a family member. Most of these people said they had a negative experience and felt the system did not do enough to support them or their loved ones.

54%

Of people who received a cancer diagnosis in 2020 felt they did not receive adequate support from their GP surgery within Swindon.



What did you tell us about how you would like to receive information on cancer

- 42% of respondents stated they would prefer information stands and drop-in sessions in community spaces.
- 31% of respondents indicated they would prefer to use leaflets to get information.
- 26% indicated they would prefer posters with QR codes in community and Primary Care spaces.

What difference did this make?

- In response to this piece of work, we were invited to the Cancer unit at GWH to observe from a patient's perspective and make recommendations for improvement.
- Our research has highlighted the need to continue face to face engagements to avoid members of the public being digitally excluded and unable to share their thoughts on how services should be provided.
- We have identified several key areas to focus on and support the implementation of Macmillan services in Swindon.
- Based on the recommendations a new central webpage is being developed by the ICB with the local cancer support information for all the GP surgeries to use .

Diabetes Awareness Event

Our free community events, allowed the people of Swindon to speak to a variety of health practitioners including NEC Care who provide the Diabetic Eye Screening for the NHS. The aim of the event was to both raise awareness and provide information, to ask questions and seek support to live well with diabetes.

We invited various organisations, each offering support to help manage lifestyle choices and improve overall wellbeing at a central location in Swindon. These included Pharmacy, Diabetic Eye Screening, a Diabetic Nurse, Swindon Borough Council Live Well team, Xyla Health's Diabetes Prevention, Healthwatch, NHS Talking Therapies, Wiltshire Sight and Diabetes UK.

The NHS defines diabetes as a condition that causes a person's blood sugar level to become too high. There are 2 main types of diabetes:

- Type 1 diabetes – a lifelong condition where the body's immune system attacks and destroys the cells that produce insulin type 2 diabetes – where the body does not produce enough insulin, or the body's cells do not react to insulin properly
- Type 2 diabetes is far more common than type 1. In the UK, over 90% of all adults with diabetes have type 2.
- High blood sugar that develops during pregnancy is known as gestational diabetes. It usually goes away after giving birth.

What difference did this make?

- People living with diabetes or at a higher risk of diabetes are advised to exercise regularly, eat healthily, and maintain a healthy weight. In addition, it is advised to try and cut down on alcohol and quit smoking. Those diagnosed with diabetes are at an increased risk from diabetic retinopathy and damage to the nerves in their feet. If left un-checked and treated, both can cause life altering issues. With so many health issues related to diabetes. **Creating this 'one stop shop' for the people of Swindon, provides the opportunity to reduce the impact of diabetes especially as we hear that people struggle to get appointments in a timely manner.**



- "It is hard to get an appointment with a diabetic nurse so being able to talk to one here has been great!"**
- "I am prediabetic and am not sure what to do, this was really helpful"**
- "The liver scan was really helpful"**
- "Really useful to know what the best food is to eat as I am new to this and really do not know"**
- "Having mental health support here is really good as I need to get some support"**



Diabetes Awareness Events

FREE EVENT
Swindon Diabetes Awareness Morning

Saturday 7th October
9 - 11:30am

Swindon Town Football Club Foundation Park
County Ground,
Swindon, SN1 2FD

Free refreshments provided, and raffle prizes on the day

Nurses
Nutrition
Eye Screening
Psychology
Podiatry

A collaboration of NHS Services and Healthwatch Swindon
Enquiries to 01225 582303

Scan me!

A morning event full of information, advice and support for people living with diabetes and their families, or those with borderline pre-diabetes, to help you manage the condition, lifestyle choices and health outcomes. Come along and meet the health professionals involved in diabetes care in Swindon to learn more about diabetes, how to get support and how to reduce its impact on your health and wellbeing now and in the future.

healthwatch swindon NHS

IN COLLABORATION NHS SERVICES & HEALTHWATCH SWINDON

Swindon Diabetes Awareness Morning
Saturday 23rd March

Get all the expert advice you need in one place direct from

DIABETES HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

9 - 11.30am
Central Community Centre
Emlyn Square, Swindon SN1 5BP
Enquiries to 01225 582303

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NHS

Three ways we have made a difference in the community

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

Creating empathy by bringing experiences to life

My Voice Matters

My Voice Matters, we have published a number of reports ensuring the voice of people with diverse lived experiences and backgrounds are heard.

We are proud to be able to give the opportunity for seldom heard voices to be heard by providers and wider organisations in their own words.



Getting services to involve the public

The Great Western Hospital

We have collaboratively been working with GWH in their Equality, Diversity and Inclusion work to ensure that the trust is engaging and hearing from seldom heard and minority groups.

By working very closely with their Head of Patient Experience and Engagement we have been supporting the trust to engage with Local Communities by attending our events. Including Community Cafes; Changing Suits Health Events; North Swindon Bazaar; Dementia UK Carers Events



Improving care over time

Change takes time. We often work behind the scenes with services to consistently raise issues and bring about change.

Learning Disabilities community

We work closely with the Learning Disabilities community and local decision makers listening to their issue and concerns.

We are working with them to improve services including looking at Annual Health-checks and accessing GP services. In the next year we plan to train members of the LD community up to undertake Enter and Views to ensure their voice is heard.



There's a summary of other outcomes we've achieved this year in the Statutory Statements section at the end of this report.



Hearing from all communities

Over the past year, we have worked hard to make sure we hear from everyone within our local area. We consider it important to reach out to the communities we hear from less frequently to gather their feedback and make sure their voice is heard, and services meet their needs.

This year we have reached different communities by:

- We attend events in our local communities like the Swindon Mela and community spaces giving people from diverse backgrounds the opportunity to be heard.
- We have regularly attended community fridge and community café's giving advice and information.
- We listen to the feedback we receive from our local communities and ensure their voice have been heard by local NHS leaders and Integrated Care Systems.

Dementia accessing care in Swindon

The Great Western Hospital trust are addressing the concerns of those accessing their services with dementia based on a case study which shares the personal account of a loved one with dementia, accessing care in Swindon.

The case study was co-written by the daughter and carer of an individual with dementia alongside the Healthwatch Swindon Development Officer. The details shared, were captured through interviews and are the personal accounts of events leading to the death of a loved one

My story

On the 4th of April 2023, my father was taken to the Emergency Department (ED) at Great Western Hospital (GWH) by ambulance due to falling out of bed at home. Prior to this, Dad had lived with me. He had dementia and following a seizure years ago, moments of absences/seizures but fortunately they were infrequent. He had a good appetite, was able to use the toilet with support and wore size large clothing. This all changed after being taken to hospital. After numerous tests for suspected heart attack, stroke, or possible epileptic seizure it was never quite clear the root cause of why Dad had fallen. But he was left with injuries to his arm, side, and knees. He was unable to fully communicate, with hardly any voice just raspy croaks. Dad had been in the ED all day and ended up staying in overnight. Due to lack of beds, he had been placed in resuscitation until there was a bed to formally admit him. Dad was moved around from resuscitation to an ED ward and then to Linet ward, each time these moves took place during the night. Each time my sister or I would visit and discover he had been moved again. Eventually whilst on Linet, I completed his admittance along with medication list, and informed the nursing team of his needs and that he is a level 6 for food, as he struggles to swallow, requires prompting to drink etc. and only able to drink from a bottle with an inbuilt straw (which we provided). It was at this point I discovered he had not received any dementia medication and I was required to bring his in from home. Following day, I went to visit, and Dad had been moved again to Meldon ward. No one had notified me, even though I'm his registered carer. Again, I eventually found him. Dad had been given toast for breakfast, even though he can't chew or swallow properly. He'd been given a cup of tea but can only drink orange squash with his special bottle. No one on Meldon had been informed of my Dad's needs, despite completing the admission forms and informing the team on the Linet ward the previous day.

Speaking to the sister on ward, I explained the situation and questioned the cold tea and toast, asking where his dementia medication was. The team apologised, no medication had been handed over during the move and they were unaware of his level 6 swallow needs but advised it would be easier for me to collect his medication rather than wait for it to be brought up. Worryingly, it was still in the drawers next to where he was on the Linet ward. A new patient in the bed but with my Dads' belongings in the drawers next to him.

Abstract from Daughter's account of her father's story



"It was a constant fight; I had spent 6 years providing care and knew my Dad's needs inside and out. But still this was ignored by clinicians."



Healthwatch Swindon connections with the Alzheimer's Society provided the platform for this individual to speak out about the care her father received. This account highlights the need to not only acknowledge carers exceptional knowledge about the friend/family member they support, but also the need for greater understanding about the limitation's dementia has on one's ability to undertake tasks such as eating and toileting.

This case study was shared with the Great Western Hospital, Integrated Care Board for Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire and the local authority. Along with Public Health, Healthwatch England, The Care Quality Commission and published on our website.

As a result of sharing the lived experience of the daughter's story of her father's care whilst in Hospital, the Great Western Hospital has committed to :

"We were very sorry to hear about the experience of this patient and his daughter, and recognise that this care falls below the standard we expect.

- In the past year, we've been making improvements to the experience for our patients with dementia, including introducing a new pilot of Dining Companions who are corporate staff who assist patients with their eating and drinking, offer companionship during mealtimes and encourage patients to drink regularly.
- We've also raised more awareness of our carers passport, to ensure all staff know how to recognise a carer and make necessary accommodation for them, and have re-introduced our Carers Café as a safe space for carers to come together.
- In May, we'll be introducing open visiting across the hospital, alongside a visiting charter, to allow families to spend more time with their loved ones and as a platform to promote the importance of valuing carers expertise."

Lisa Cheek, Chief Nurse

Healthwatch Swindon is passionate about supporting our community's needs and helping to shape services. We recommended that GWH equip all their staff with the knowledge to be dementia friendly. To improve the basic non-medical care, they deliver. In addition, we believe an understanding of the carer's passport and the valuable insight carers can bring when providing both care and medical treatments needs to be embedded deeper within the ethos of all staff members.

People's lived experience is paramount when reshaping or improving services.

"Special thanks to the Alzheimer's Society for welcoming Healthwatch Swindon to their groups and supporting the families and individuals affected by dementia in Swindon. "



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, making a complaint or choosing a good care home for a loved one – you can count on us.

This year we've helped people by:

- Providing up-to-date information people can trust
- Helping people access the services they need
- Helping people access NHS dentistry
- Supporting people to look after their health during the cost-of-living crisis

Community Paediatrics Neurodevelopmental Conditions (NDC) Pathway Fact Sheet.

It's essential that people have clear, accurate communication about their care including what to expect from an assessment and diagnosis .

Healthwatch Swindon in collaboration with Barnados and healthcare professionals , developed a fact sheet to help parents understand the process of a community Paediatric Neurodevelopmental Conditions assessment for their child. Including what to expect from your child's assessment .

Neurodevelopmental conditions are disorders of early brain development that alter neurological development and cause difficulties in social, cognitive, and emotional functioning

- Autism spectrum disorder (ASD)
- Intellectual disability
- Motor disability (e.g. cerebral palsy)
- Seizures
- Learning disabilities (e.g. dyslexia)
- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

Co-produced to help parents and guardians understand what to expect.

Community Paediatrics Neurodevelopmental Conditions (NDC) Pathway -

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM YOUR CHILD'S ASSESSMENT

STEP 01

Your child has been accepted on to the NDC Pathway, your child will be placed on a waitlist to be seen



STEP 02

You will receive a letter and a text reminder from GWH with an appointment. Your child may be seen in a community clinic.



STEP 03

Questionnaires may be sent out to gather more information following the initial appointment



STEP 04

Further appointments will be arranged to complete the assessment depending on need.



STEP 05

Following assessment there are various possible outcomes for your child:

- A neurodevelopmental diagnosis
- No diagnosis but onward referral for further assessment
- Presentation is complex and referral will be made to a wider team



Experiences of refugees accessing and using health and social care in Swindon and Bath &NES.

Healthwatch Swindon wanted to understand the experiences of refugees accessing and using health and social care in Swindon and Bath and North East Somerset

We worked with the university MSc GlobMSc Global and Public Health Policy degree undertaken by Dr Aanchal Rana, al and the of Bath tof Bath to aid a Practice track report for the MSc GlobMSc Global and Public Health Policy degree undertaken by Dr Aanchal Rana, al and Public Health Policy undertaken by Dr Aanchal Rana who studied at the University of Bath.

Aims of the project

- To understand the healthcare needs of refugees in Swindon and Bath and North East Somerset
- To understand what works and what doesn't for refugees when engaging with healthcare services
- To explore ways to improve how healthcare services can meet the needs and expectations of refugees.

What we did

The Masters student from the University of Bath undertook research by:

- Interviewing refugees, third sector organisations who work with refugees and NHS staff.
- Visiting community cafes, food pantries, English language courses and hotels
- Undertaking a literature review of existing research.

What we heard

- "First and foremost is a language barrier that's why they don't understand the protocols and procedures for registering with the GP or any hospital"
- 'Accessing dentists is a task in UK'
- 'I am aware of the difficult situation due to the war but we can't get help, its better to go back to the Ukraine for the treatment than dying of pain here for 12 months'
- 'Yes, I feel I want to talk to someone about my mental health, but I am not sure whom to talk to or approach'

The findings of this report were presented to the BSW Health Response Board which co-ordinates health care for our asylum hotels, ARAP/ACRS hotels and accommodation and people who have fled the Ukraine. To understand better what actions they could take to improve outcomes for refugees/asylum seekers.



Volunteering

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

This year our volunteers:

- Visited communities to promote their local Healthwatch and what we have to offer
- Collected experiences and supported their communities to share their views
- Carried out research and reported back on a variety of topics.



Jasmine has been a part of the team for the last nine months and in that time become an invaluable part of it.

"During my time with Healthwatch I have acquired valuable knowledge about the health and social care system which I do not think I would have been able to achieve elsewhere. The team was highly supportive and were extremely helpful when I was unsure or faced barriers to the eating disorder project I led on.

Training in project management was highly beneficial and is a skill I will take forward in my studies.

I would recommend to any students interested in research to work with Healthwatch as I was able to lead a project whilst having the knowledge and experience of the Healthwatch team to support me."

At Healthwatch Swindon we strongly believe that the young person's voice needs to be heard and offer a range of volunteering opportunities to young people.

Jasmine is a good example of how we can support them to understand and work with the health and social care system in the future, she plans to go onto be a social worker using her experience at Healthwatch as a foundation.



Jasmine

Do you feel inspired?



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



www.healthwatchswindon.org.uk



01793 49 7777



info@healthwatchswindon.org.uk

Statement From Swindon Borough Council

Healthwatch Swindon pride ourselves on the relationships we have forged over the past years with educational establishments from Schools and colleges to universities to co-produce reports (My Voice matters) including valuable insights and feedback.



Healthwatch Swindon has revolutionised the involvement of young people and students in the healthcare system through the development and innovation created by "My Voice Matters". By fostering partnerships with educational establishments, they have effectively ensured that young people play an essential role in influencing front-line care delivery and strategic changes. Through the initiative's focus on enabling young people to write reports and conduct research on topics of interest, students are empowered to contribute actively to healthcare decision-making processes, ultimately leading to a health and social care system that truly meets the needs of all members of society.

Joy Kennard
Head of Commissioning, Adults
Adult Social Care
Swindon Borough Council



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.

Our income and expenditure

Income		Expenditure	
Annual grant from Government	£107,000	Expenditure on pay	£98,111
Additional income	£300	Non-pay expenditure	£22,637
		Office and management fees	£2,835
Total income	£107,300	Total expenditure	£123,583

Additional income is broken down by:

- £300 received from Healthwatch England for training.

Next steps

Over the next year, we will keep reaching out to every part of society, especially people in the most deprived areas, so that those in power hear their views and experiences.

We will also work together with partners and our local Integrated Care System to help develop an NHS culture where, at every level, staff strive to listen and learn from patients to make care better.

Our top priorities for the next year are:

1. Supporting the health needs of marginalised groups in particular:
 - Drugs & alcohol
 - Unpaid Carers
 - Refugees
 - Those on Probation
 - Users of Nelson Trust
 - The Global Majority
2. Children and Young Peoples Voice heard in the delivery of healthcare
3. Mental health and emotional wellbeing
4. Learning Disabilities and Autism
5. Primary/secondary Care with a strong focus on accessibility
6. Social Care



Statutory statements

Healthwatch Swindon, Sanford House, Sanford Street, Swindon,
SN1 1HE

The Care Forum



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

The way we work

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

Our Healthwatch Board consists of Volunteers and TCF –The Care Forum Board members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny of our activities. Our Board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community.

Throughout 2023/24, the Board met 3 times and made decisions on matters such as setting out our key priorities based on the feedback we receive.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities.

Methods and systems used across the year to obtain people's experiences

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible can provide us with insight into their experience of using services. During 2023/24, we have been available by phone, and email, provided a web form on our website and through social media, as well as attending meetings of community groups and forums.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We will publish it on our website and will share this on our Social Media channels.

Responses to recommendation

We Had 0 providers who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations. There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to Healthwatch England Committee, so no resulting reviews or investigations.

Taking people's experiences to decision-makers

We ensure that people who can make decisions about services hear about the insights and experiences that have been shared with us.

In our local authority area, for example, we take information to Health and Well-being boards and Public Health Boards .

The way we work

We also take insight and experiences to decision-makers in Bath and North East, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board and Partnerships (BSW ICB) For example, we attend the following Groups/boards/meetings to ensure the patient voice is brought to the forefront of decision making in the delivery of our Health and Social care services.

- BSW ICB Population Health Meeting
- BSW Primary Medical Care Operational Group
- BSW Pharmacy Operational Group
- BSW Dental Operational Group
- BSW Eye Care Operational Group
- BSW Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Alliance meeting
- BSW Carers Partnership Forum
- BSW System Quality Group (April 2024)
- Swindon Partnership catch-up
- BSW Inequalities Strategy Group
- BSW ICB Public and Community Engagement Committee
- Swindon Intergrated Care Alliance

We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

Enter and view

This year, we made **Two** Enter and View visits. We made **13** recommendations as a result of this activity.

Location	Reason for visit	What you did as a result
Chemotherapy Cancer Services at Great Western Hospital specifically the Dove Ward, Osprey Ward and the unit within the Swindon Intermediate Care Centre	To review and understand how cancer services for chemotherapy are being provided at Great Western Hospital. We were invited to visit by the cancer team.	Wrote a report with recommendations Department Response We acknowledge the concerns raised and are committed to joining efforts between the Trust and local partners, to obtain meaningful improvement for our chemotherapy units and the patients that receive care in them. This includes improvements such as, a dedicated space in the waiting area that allows the staff to maintain patient confidentiality and privacy, and improved access and signage for patients requiring chemotherapy and radiotherapy.
Maternity Services at Great Western Hospital–Day Assessment Unit, The Delivery Suite, Hazel Ward and White Horse Birthing Centre.	To review and understand how Maternity Services are being provided at Great Western Hospital.	Wrote a report with recommendations. Department response We appreciate the concerns raised and have been working very hard to make improvements across the service. This includes introducing a new triage system, which opened shortly after the Healthwatch visit, that is ensuring most women and birthing people are seen within 15 minutes and more robust processes for audits and reviews. We recognise that there is still more work we need to do, and our maternity leadership team, supported by the wider maternity team, is working hard to drive forward continuous improvement to enable us to provide the very best level of service to our community

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Swindon is represented on the Swindon Health and Wellbeing Board by Amritpal Kaur Healthwatch Swindon Manager. During 2023/24 our representative has effectively carried out this role by representing the patient voice by sharing feedback and lived experiences of services within Swindon

Healthwatch Swindon is represented on Bath and North East Somerset , Swindon and Wiltshire (BSW) Integrated Care Partnerships and BSW Integrated Care Boards by Amritpal Kaur

2023 – 2024 Outcomes

Project/activity	Outcomes achieved
<p>We Supported the South Asian Community Event for Learning Disabilities & Autism. The event was held by Changing Suits a local charity representing the South Asian community in Swindon . The whole event was commissioned by the NHS to better understand gaps and improvements needed.</p>	<p>We Shared our findings and feedback received on the day with the Patient Safety and Quality Lead for Learning Disability and Autism/LeDeR Local Area Coordinator (LAC),Nursing and Quality, for NHS Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board (ICB)</p>
<p>Community Engagement with the NIHR (Clinical Research Network West of England)</p> <p>We worked with the NIHR (Clinical Research Network West of England) to understand current perceptions of Health and care research, and what the barriers are</p>	<p>We wrote a report with recommendation “Thanks so much for this really thorough report and clear recommendations. It’s really impressive that you were able to engage with such a large group of people and I think the findings are really interesting and will help direct where we go from here.”</p> <p>Tamsin Pearce – Community Engagement Officer LCRN West of England Core Team NIHR Clinical Research Network (CRN)</p>
<p>My voice matters: Social Isolation in Children and Young People.</p>	<p>our voice matters- gives people who are not normally heard a voice to be heard and taken into account. Healthwatch Swindon has been actively sharing these reports with Key Stakeholders.</p>
<p>WORKING WITH STUDENTS</p> <p>We as a team at Healthwatch Swindon welcome the opportunity to work with students and to give them the chance to understand the different aspects of health and social care</p>	<p>Healthwatch Swindon believe that supporting students and allowing them to gain experience across the health and social care system will help encourage young people to consider a career in this area. This has been evidenced by one of our college students going onto university to become a pediatric nurse this September.</p>
<p>Cancer Support available on GP websites and support available-A review was undertaken by one of our Healthwatch Volunteers with lived experience of cancer asking five questions to understand what online support is offered via the GP surgeries locally</p>	<p>Our findings have been published in a report and shared with Primary Care Networks (PCN) . Including decision makers in BSW ICB .</p> <p>Follow up work has been done on this as part of the Macmillan cancer work and a central hub is being developed with the ICB.</p>
<p>We provided annual statements for Great Western Hospital Foundation Trust and Prospect on their Annual Quality Account for 2023-24</p>	<p>This allows us to highlight the collaborative approach to improving services.</p>

Project/activity	Outcomes achieved
<p>On Thursday, August 3rd from 12-4 pm, we attended the academy department at Great Western Hospital celebrating South Asian Heritage Month alongside the Live Well team and Swindon Carers Centre.</p>	<p>We attended with the Healthwatch Stand giving South Asian employees of the Great Western Hospital the opportunity to see what we do and ask questions. We heard stories of how staff at GWH have been supported as international recruits and the support given.</p>
<p>Dementia Case Study</p>	<p>Wrote a report with recommendations – Improvements made by The Great Western Hospital based on the findings presented.</p>
<p>Where would the people and communities of Swindon like to find Cancer information and support</p>	<p>Wrote a report with recommendations and shared the findings with Macmillan who commissioned the report.</p> <p>Based on the recommendations a new central webpage is being developed by the ICB with the local cancer support information for all the GP surgeries to use .</p>
<p>Project carried out on Behalf of First city looking at What do the people of Swindon think about the future of community care?</p>	<p>Wrote a report with recommendations and shared findings with First City .</p> <p>First City will use the results of this survey to inform its own ongoing service design and development. The results will be shared with Commissioning bodies in terms of system wide service design across the spectrum of social care. The results will inform how First City monitors its own performance in terms of the quality and effectiveness of the service it provides. Key questions will be asked to staff and those receiving care & support to ensure the desires expressed in the survey are being met. First City will work with all of it's provider partners in Swindon (who deliver care & support on First City's behalf) to ensure they are aware of the findings and can incorporate into service development and quality assurance.</p>
<p>My Voice Matters: Experiences of refugees accessing and using health and social care in BaNES and Swindon</p> <p>This report was written by Dr Aanchal Rana as a practice track report for the degree of MSc Global and Public Health Policy at the University of Bath</p>	<p>The findings of this report were presented to the BSW Health Response Board meeting which co-ordinates health care for our asylum hotels, ARAP/ACRS hotels and accommodation and people who have fled the Ukraine.</p> <p>To understand better what actions they could take to improve outcomes for refugees/ asylum seekers.</p>
<p>How easy do people in Swindon find it to order prescriptions</p>	<p>The findings /Feedback was shared with the Intergrated care board for consideration when looking at potential options to replace the current Prescription Ordering Direct System.</p>



We are committed to the quality of our information. Every three years we perform an in depth audit so that we can be certain of this




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Swindon

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