

The value of listening

Healthwatch Wiltshire
Annual Report 2023-2024



healthwatch
Wiltshire

Message from Chief Executive Officer

As CEO of TCF I am SO proud that we are now able to deliver Healthwatch Wiltshire as part of our Healthwatch family, more specifically as part of the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) footprint.

Healthwatch Wiltshire has a wonderful history. Our volunteers, staff and stakeholders have worked incredibly hard over the past 12 months, this document goes some way to share the work and passion that they share for Healthwatch.

This year has been a time for reflection and vision planning. There are many good things about how Healthwatch has been delivered in Wiltshire, but I look forward to establishing new approaches to listening, planning and implementing an effective service. I am keen that during the course of the coming year we involve student placements and embed our new governance approach.

Healthwatch Wiltshire is incredibly well respected and comes with a dedicated group of advocates. Ensuring that the people of Wiltshire are heard and informed is key to our continued success. Our focus will remain on a locally delivered service whilst creating regional intelligence. We seek to create cohesion across our projects at a strategic level ensuring that peoples views are always shared locally and when necessary shared as part of a regional approach.

I'd like to place on record my thanks to all involved in the transition period, volunteers, staff and commissioners, and look forward to working alongside you all in the coming year.

Kevin Peltonen-Messenger
CEO,
TCF



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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





Clockwise from top: Melksham Fete in July 2023; the Healthwatch England Conference in September 2023; welcoming David Croisdale–Appleby, Chair of Healthwatch England, in August 2023; a volunteer day focusing on future project ideas in November 2023; and our Christmas party in December 2023.

Message from our Chair

As your health and social care champion, the Healthwatch Wiltshire team continues to ensure that your voice is heard by local services.

I hope this report finds you well. This year has had a big focus on reaching out to communities we don't often hear from.

Our work with Wiltshire Council's Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS) and children's charity Spurgeons has helped us to understand more about the experiences of Afghan refugees, Eastern Europeans and Boaters in how they access services.

We've also heard from autistic people and their carers on what they think of mental health services in Wiltshire and we're keen to see how these services can be developed following the recommendations we've made in our report.

Working closely with our partners across the health and care system has been another key theme this year. We're pleased to have been involved in the development of information and resources to help ease the process of leaving hospital, and be at the heart of the new network of Neighbourhood Collaboratives as they launch across Wiltshire.

And I'm particularly proud that our volunteers have played a pivotal role in the design of a new complaints guide for Salisbury District Hospital. The volunteers' meticulous work to ensure the new guide was patient friendly has meant it's the hospital's first publication to carry the coveted 'patient reviewed' stamp.

I would like to extend a huge thanks to our dedicated staff team and our wonderful volunteers whose hard work and commitment enabled us to achieve so much over the year.

Following a procurement exercise undertaken by Wiltshire Council, Healthwatch Wiltshire moved to a new provider in January 2024.

Thank you to everyone who has shared their views and experiences with us. Sharing your feedback really does make a difference.



Alan Mitchell
Healthwatch Wiltshire Chair



This year has had a big focus on reaching out to communities we don't often hear from.

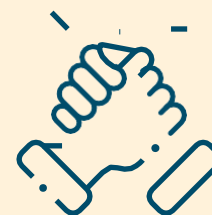
About us

Healthwatch Wiltshire 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:

1,142 comments

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

4,397 people

came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as mental health and registering with a GP.



Making a difference to care:

We published

3 reports

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

From these we made

14 recommendations

for improvement.



Health and social care that works for you:

We're lucky to have

15 volunteers

who gave up **470 hours** to make care better for our community.

We currently employ

4 staff

who help us carry out our work.

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

£165,496



Your voice heard at a wider level

We collaborate with other Healthwatch and the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board (BSWICB) to help influence decisions made about services across the region.



Developing resources to support hospital discharge

We have been working with staff across the BSW health and care system to develop new leaflets, videos and information resources that help provide extra support for patients, families and carers during their discharge from hospital.

The resources, which also provide information and support for health and care professionals, support a new programme of work called Caring Steps Together, which has been established to improve people's understanding of what can sometimes be the confusing process of leaving hospital and accessing follow-up care.

The new resources, which launched in December 2023, will help support patients, their families and carers to understand the process of leaving hospital and the other services available to provide support in the community. The resources are available digitally and as printed leaflets to download from the [BSW Together website](#).



“In late 2022, partly through work led by Healthwatch Wiltshire, BSWICB identified a need to significantly change and improve the way we share information about being discharged from hospital if people need support at home or are going into a care home. It took a year to work with partners to truly understand what our population and colleagues needed, how they wanted to access it and even how they wanted it to look.

“Caring Steps Together launched in late 2023 and has reached and helped thousands of people to understand what their pathway looks like, what decisions they might want to make and who they can talk to for more support. Healthwatch Wiltshire was a consistent and supportive partner through that process, always advocating for Wiltshire residents at every opportunity and fundamentally helped to shape and deliver on our shared ambitions to help improve people’s experience of our services.”

Emma Higgins, Associate Director – Wiltshire Integrated Care Alliance Programme and Delivery Lead, BSW ICB



We join new neighbourhood initiative

In 2023, we were invited to join the Neighbourhood Collaboratives initiative, which aims to reduce health and wellbeing gaps in our local communities.

The collaboratives, which include partners from health and social care, local authorities, the voluntary and community sector and police and fire services, are currently being set up across the region by the BSW Integrated Care Board.

We have joined the steering group of the Wiltshire Collaborative Network, which oversees these Neighbourhood Collaboratives, and brings them together to share information and learning.

As more Neighbourhood Collaboratives become established, we'll be monitoring how they work together to tackle local health and wellbeing challenges.



“We’re two years into the [Neighbourhood Collaboratives] work to build broad alliances across Wiltshire and in each Primary Care Network neighbourhood, focusing on prevention and reducing health inequalities. Healthwatch Wiltshire has been an integral part of developing this approach and has walked side by side in promoting and supporting it towards sustainability.

“Neighbourhood Collaboratives aim to be led by the voice of residents in each area – Heathwatch Wiltshire continue to be a partner and critical friend in building new relationships and connection with our residents to ensure our work is meaningful and focused on things that matter to the community.”

Emma Higgins, Associate Director – Wiltshire Integrated Care Alliance Programme and Delivery Lead, BSW ICB



Survey focuses on eating disorders

Working with our Healthwatch colleagues in Swindon and Bath and North East Somerset, a survey was launched in early 2024 which asked for people's views on eating disorders and disordered eating – and if enough support is available in the region. Volunteer Jasmine Fawcus-Smith presented the project at our Mental Health Open Forum in March 2024 and highlighted that a lack of communication between patients and services, a lack of knowledge among healthcare professionals, and delays in accessing support were coming through as key themes. The survey has since closed and we'll be sharing the findings in due course.



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.

Improving mental health services for autistic people

In May 2023 we launched a project to find out what autistic people thought about mental health services in Wiltshire. BSW ICB is now developing an action plan to address the issues we raised in our report.

Working with Wiltshire Service Users Network (WSUN), we developed two surveys – one for autistic people and one for their families and carers. Autistic people told us of their desperation and frustration at not being able to get the support they need for their mental health. They said they felt isolated and misunderstood, falling between the gaps in services which aren't designed to meet their needs and where staff lack training and awareness to support them.

What did we recommend?

- Deliver autism training for all mental health staff, preferably led by an autistic person or someone with lived experience.
- Provide more staff in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and mental health services who understand autism.
- Create mental health solutions/therapies that are more suited and helpful to autistic people, recognising their neurodivergence.
- Recruit specific professionals to help at times of crisis with respite/practical support/network coordination and support for the carer.
- Recognise that an autistic person may mask their condition – assess them more than once or ask a carer/family member for their input and views.
- Provide options for how people contact a service – offer online/email contact to those who have difficulty making phone calls, and vice versa.
- Provide more face to face contact if it's easier for the autistic person.



“The findings and outcomes of this report shine a spotlight on the importance of continuing to improve access and service provision for people with autism and their families and carers in Wiltshire.

“The views and experiences of people who have accessed services are paramount in guiding service transformation, and this report highlights where people want to see improvement in current service provision.

“We will ensure that their recommendations form part of our review of the Wiltshire Autism Strategy as well as the further development and implementation of our BSW ICB Learning Disabilities & Autism, and Mental Health transformation programmes.”

Gordon Muvuti, Director of Place Swindon and BSW Executive Director for Mental Health, BSW ICB

Improving a hospital's complaints process

In autumn 2022, we carried out a piece of work to [hear your views on making a complaint at Salisbury District Hospital](#), which made several recommendations to make information about the complaints process easier to understand.

Following on from this work, the hospital has since introduced a new Complaints Handling Policy and created a new Guide to Complaints, Concerns, Comments and Compliments.

The redeveloped leaflet underwent a vigorous review by Healthwatch Wiltshire volunteers and further reviews by the hospital's patient readership groups. See our [You Said, We Did](#) for more.

What difference did this make?

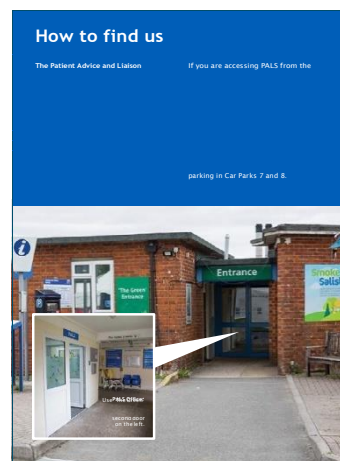
Our volunteers, as well as the hospital's Patient Experience Steering Group, were involved in the development of a new leaflet to ensure that it's patient friendly. Their suggestions included:

- A clear, Plain English guide to the process with a reassuring, friendly tone
- An emphasis on who the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) team are and what they do
- Map and photos of where the team is

Digital and printed versions of the guide are now available, as well as an accessible version compatible with screen readers, and an Easy Read version.



The new-look leaflet was launched in October 2023 and is the first publication to carry the hospital's new 'patient reviewed' stamp.



“Healthwatch Wiltshire continue to work in collaboration with the Patient Experience team here at Salisbury Hospital. They are a regular and valued presence within our monthly Patient Experience Steering Group (PESG) and continue to support our service improvement plans related to our Complaints process.

“I would like to take this opportunity to extend my thanks to our colleagues at Healthwatch Wiltshire who continue to work with us to improve our services for the benefit of our patients.”

Victoria Aldridge, Head of Patient Experience at Salisbury District Hospital

Understanding how people order prescriptions

We worked with Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board (BSW ICB) to find out which prescription ordering service people liked to use, how easy they found the process, and how important the service was to them.

We received 380 responses to our short survey, which ran for two weeks in October 2023. As well as an online survey, we took paper copies to several pharmacies across Wiltshire, where we talked to patients as they collected their prescriptions.

What did people tell us?

- Most people told us they found ordering prescriptions easy, and used a variety of methods including SystmOnline, the NHS App and Prescription Ordering Direct (POD).
- The majority of respondents said being able to order repeat prescriptions was very important to them, but long waits for medication and shortages of preferred brands were among the concerns they raised.
- Other issues included poor internet availability, or a lack of confidence in using online services, as well as a frustration at not being able to get repeat prescriptions for longer than one month, particularly when someone had a long term condition.

We made a number of recommendations based on our findings, which included:

- Improve awareness of the NHS App among patients, as most people only use the system selected by their GP surgery or Primary Care Network.
- Consider increasing the length of timeframe for repeat prescriptions.
- Improve the reliability of collection or delivery dates for prescriptions.
- Address concerns about availability/shortage of medications.
- Consider how changes to brands of medication could be accommodated without needing to revisit a surgery for a new prescription if the prescribed medication is not available.
- Ensure patients are aware that some pharmacists offer a delivery and a postal service.

The feedback we received was welcomed by BSW ICB. With the current winding down of the POD service in Wiltshire, which is due to close in June 2024, we will continue to monitor feedback on prescriptions.



“We will be reviewing the feedback and using it to help inform our understanding. We recognise not just the different perspectives reflected in the report, but also the differing needs of our population with some patients potentially very well served by digital solutions and others where alternative access routes are more suitable. Should anything need to be undertaken differently we will be clearly communicating in a planned and considered way.”

Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board

Ways we're making a difference

Throughout our work we aim to ensure everyone's experiences are heard.

Key recommendation leads to creation of women's clinic

Our survey asking [which services people would like to see at the Devizes Health Centre](#), which opened in 2022, has led to the creation of a women's health clinic.

More women's services was one of our key recommendations from the survey, which heard from more than 2,500 people. Devizes Primary Care Network (PCN), a collective of four GP surgeries in the town, took this on board:



“Following a comprehensive survey completed by Healthwatch, we were informed that improved Women's Health Services in our PCN would be welcomed by our patients. We now provide comprehensive women's health services in a dedicated clinic, once a week, between 6.30pm and 8pm. The clinic is staffed by clinicians who are interested and trained in Women's Health, who opt to work in the clinic instead of, or in addition to, their core hours. To date, the clinic has never been short staffed and is proving popular with patients and staff alike.

“Patient feedback has been sought after every consultation and has been overwhelmingly positive. Demand is extremely high [and] we have applied for local funding which is aimed at expanding the service. We intend to use the funding to provide some dedicated training to clinicians interested in developing their skills, so we can improve patient access for these appointments, in a sustainable way.”

Helen Scott, Primary Care Network Manager, Devizes

School sessions focus on wellbeing

In early December we visited Warminster School to continue to hear the views and experiences of children and young people, particularly around emotional wellbeing.



We shared a wellbeing session with 60 students across Years 10, 11 and Sixth Form followed by a discussion around what wellbeing was to them and what they thought about services.

Key themes that emerged were how aware they are of things that can affect people's wellbeing and also of the warning signs that all is not well. Coping strategies were discussed, both positive and negative, and there was some useful feedback on services in Wiltshire.

We call on local people to help us set our priorities

In March 2024, we called on local people to tell us what they thought our priorities should be for 2024-25. We travelled across Wiltshire and hosted an online survey asking people to choose from six potential projects:



- The wellbeing of children and young people
- Pharmacy
- Care at home
- Accessibility of health services
- How the cost of living is affecting our health
- The impact of living in a rural county

We were delighted to receive 211 responses to our short survey, and a wealth of comments and insights. Our work for the year ahead will be driven by what people told us is important to them and we will ensure Wiltshire residents continue to play a key role in helping to shape services.

See **page 23** for our new priorities.

Mental Health Forum helps highlight gaps in services

Our Mental Health Open Forum is a collaboration between us, services users and mental health provider Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust (AWP) and provides a unique opportunity for people to speak directly to those who run services.



The online forum has regular guest speakers, which this year covered a wide range of topics including AWP's North Wiltshire Intensive Service, advocacy, domestic abuse, and Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide. It also provided a way for members to hear progress on the Community Mental Health Framework and an update on AWP's Care Quality Commission inspection.

This sharing of information means members are able to get involved in the shaping and development of mental health services in Wiltshire. In 2023-24 members have highlighted where there are gaps in local services for conditions such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and that adapting existing services to suit autistic people's needs, such as Talking Therapies, should be considered.



“As a mental health service provider, the Mental Health Open Forum continues to be an extremely beneficial platform, not just from a client perspective but also from the organisational perspective. The forum provides a great two-way link to the NHS mental health services and strengthens the communication, feedback and learning between the clinical provision (under AWP) and the community provision our charity provides. Most importantly it provides a useful channel for those we are supporting to give their comments on the care they have been receiving, for this to be heard and for actions to be taken – the key element being ‘You Said, We Did’. It also enables great networking and information sharing opportunities, providing the right contacts and an audience where questions can be answered and followed up on efficiently – all aiding our organisations awareness and the cascading of information to those we support.”

Jonathan Baker, Digital Officer, Rethink



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:

- Working with Wiltshire Council's Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS) and children's charity Sprugeons to offer advice and support to minority groups including Eastern Europeans, Afghan refugees and Boaters.
- The project continues in 2024, where we'll be talking to Bangladeshi and Nepali communities, and Travellers.

Hearing from minority groups

We're working with Wiltshire Council's Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS), and children's charity Spurgeons to offer support and advice to minority groups, particularly where English is not their first language.

This work, funded by NHS Charities Together, aims to signpost key medical services and deliver activities to support families' mental health and wellbeing.

Supporting the Eastern European community

Sessions in June and July 2023 were held at the Polish Community Centre, Trowbridge, with interpretation provided in Polish, Romanian, and Ukrainian. We were there to provide information and signposting, while Spurgeons ran activities for children and offered practical advice for families. Common themes included:

- Finding support for children with special or additional needs
- Where to get support for domestic abuse
- Dealing with loneliness and isolation
- Accessing GP services.

Supporting the Boater community

We also held sessions with the Boater community in July 2023, at the Canal Tavern, Bradford on Avon and the Barge Inn, at Honeystreet, near Pewsey. Boaters told us of their difficulty accessing services such as GPs and dentists, and their problems collecting prescriptions, often because they have no fixed address and have to move moorings every two weeks.

Women in the Boater community highlighted their uncertainty around antenatal care and childbirth due to their constant travelling patterns, and were reluctant to engage with health visitors as they didn't seem to understand the Boater lifestyle. A lack of public transport in rural areas also creates difficulties getting to healthcare appointments, as few Boaters have a car. Read more about this work [on our website](#).

Supporting Afghan refugees

In March 2024, we met around 40 families of Afghan refugees who had helped British forces in Afghanistan and have been settled in army bases across Wiltshire. We visited military bases at Perham Down, Larkhill and Lyneham to find out how these families were accessing health and care, education and early years support, and to hear their experiences of getting the help they needed. Key themes included:

- Lack of ability to speak English makes accessing health and care very difficult particularly as Dari and Pashto interpreters are not always available
- Difficulty/unavailability of accessing public transport and cost of getting to appointments
- Lack of social integration and isolation
- Not knowing where to go to get help or access sports and social activities.

What happens next?

The final phase of this project, in summer 2024, will see us reach out to Bangladeshi and Nepali communities and Travellers.



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.

This year we've helped people by:

- Providing up to date information people can trust
- Helping people access the services they need
- Supporting people to look after their health

Explaining GP access rights to a Boater

James*, a single older man, had suffered a brain injury after being attacked. He has ongoing medical issues and needs daily medication. He uses the NHS App but, as a Boater, finds it difficult to collect prescriptions as he uses his sister's address and does not have a fixed address. He explained he was not getting the correct dosage of one of his medications and had tried to speak to the GP receptionist to have this corrected. They insisted he needs to see a doctor but that is not possible given his travelling pattern.

We were able to give the man [a card that outlines his rights to access GP services](#) despite having no fixed address. We directed him to a surgery that is accessible given his current cruising pattern and where we know the needs of the Boater community are well understood. The man was grateful for being listened to and thanked us for our support.

Helping to find an NHS dentist

Cynthia* was pregnant and moved around a lot as her husband was in the military. She needed her teeth looked at as they were sensitive and bled often due to pregnancy. Her midwife advised her that she is entitled to free dental checks as she is pregnant. Cynthia told us she had already contacted NHS England who advised there was nothing they could do to help at the time and advised her to continue to look around.

We suggested she visited the NHS website to find a dentist and organisations who can provide advice online, such as the Oral Health Foundation and eLearning for Healthcare. We also advised her to contact NHS 111 if she experienced any pain or discomfort.

Advice on registering with your GP is most visited page

An article which helps people [understand their rights when registering with a GP](#) has been the most visited page in the advice and information section of our website.

The page provides answers to frequently asked questions such as how do I register? and advice on what to do if you have problems registering. There are links to further information, particularly if you are an asylum seeker, refugee, a homeless patient or an overseas visitor, as well as to the My Right to Healthcare card to help people register.

The page has been visited 619 times this year.

*Names have been changed.



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:

- Attended events to promote Healthwatch Wiltshire and what we have to offer
- Collected experiences and supported local people to share their views
- Passed on advice and information



“I decided I’d like to do some volunteering and was introduced to Healthwatch by a friend. With my background as an Occupational Therapist, I have always been interested in health issues. I am particularly interested in improving health care for older people, as after being a carer for my parents for over 10 years, I realised there are often gaps in the care provided. Also, after working in a primary school, I developed an interest in the emotional wellbeing of children and young people. I feel this is an area that needs more research and resources. I have only joined Healthwatch recently and I am planning to help with a Mental Health Awareness Week at local colleges. I have also offered to help with a project looking at how the health and support needs of military personnel and their families are being met in Wiltshire. I look forward to being part of Healthwatch Wiltshire.”



Alison



“My background is in care and education working for Social Services in Berkshire and then across the South of England inspecting for Ofsted. I moved to Wiltshire in 2005 and on early retirement I wanted to continue to support families. I firstly volunteered for Homestart before transferring to Healthwatch on its formation in Wiltshire. I have undertaken a range of activities with Healthwatch giving talks, conducting surveys, helping at events, and developing materials, to support our work in Enter and View visits to publicly funded health and care providers. I help to train other volunteers in our role as visitors to the providers and particularly enjoy supporting others in this way. Volunteering is a great way of meeting new people and giving your spare time to supporting improvements for Wiltshire residents.”



Elizabeth

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.

Our income and expenditure - Help and Care (April-December 2023)

Income		Expenditure	
Funding received from local authority	£119,746	Staff cost	£80,042
Additional income - NHS Charities Together EMTAS project	£600	Operational costs and administration	£16,424
		Support and administration	£45,835
Total income	£120,346	Total expenditure	£142,301

Our income and expenditure – The Care Forum (January-March 2024)

Income		Expenditure	
Funding received from local authority	£44,250	Staff cost	£32,842
Additional income – NHS Charities Together EMTAS project	£900	Operational costs	£11,938
		Support and administration	£2337
Total income	£45,150	Total expenditure	£47,117
Overall income 2023-24	£165,496	Overall expenditure 2023-24	£187,451

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 three priorities for the next year are:

- **Pharmacy** – a review of the Pharmacy First scheme.
- **Living in a rural county** – focusing on the issues people face living in isolated areas and how they access services.
- **Care at home** – hearing the views of people who have an NHS@Home (virtual ward) package to provide care at home and how this is working for them.

New projects for 2023–24 include talking to military personnel and their families about how they access health and care. We'll also be continuing our work with Wiltshire EMTAS to engage with Bangladeshi and Nepali communities, and Travellers.

And we'll follow up on our recommendations from our previous reports to see what impact changes to services have had for local people.



Statutory statements

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

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

The Healthwatch Wiltshire service was transferred to a new provider on 1 January 2024, following a procurement exercise by Wiltshire Council.

For the period 1 April 2023 to 31 December 2023, the Healthwatch Wiltshire contract was provided by **Help & Care**, A49, Aerodrome Studios, Airfield Way, Christchurch, Dorset, BH23 3TS. Registered Company No. 03187574. Registered Charity No. 1055056.

On 1 January 2024, the Healthwatch Wiltshire contract was awarded to **The Care Forum**, The Vassall Centre, Gill Avenue, Fishponds, Bristol BS16 2QQ. Registered Charity No. 1053817 and a Company Limited by Guarantee in England No. 3170666.

Most of the work featured in this report was carried out under Help and Care, apart from the priority survey and engaging with Afghan refugees, which were between January-March 2024.

The way we work

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

Our Healthwatch Board consists of 4 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 6 times and made decisions on matters such as partnerships with stakeholders and our contributions to their strategies.

Our wider group of volunteers were involved in a priority setting workshop to decide our projects for the forthcoming year. We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities.

We are committed to taking additional steps to ensure we obtain the views of people from diverse backgrounds who are often not heard from. This year we have done this by talking to Eastern European, Fijian and Afghan communities and Boaters.

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. Our survey to hear Wiltshire people's views on possible projects for next year gathered 211 responses.

Methods and systems used 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 libraries and community campuses, community groups and forums. We've also heard people's experiences at health and wellbeing fairs, Armed Forces events, Freshers Fairs and at WI meetings.

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 share it with our mailing list subscribers and on our social media channels.

Responses to recommendations

All providers responded to our requests for information and recommendations. There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to Healthwatch England Committee, so no resulting reviews or investigations.

Enter and View and PLACE visits

Healthwatch Wiltshire has a statutory right to carry out Enter and View visits in health and social care premises to observe the nature and quality of services, as set out in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

Enter and View visits could be to NHS organisations, GPs, dentists, opticians and community pharmacists. Visits are not inspections but aim to offer a layperson's perspective.

Patient-Led Assessments of the Care Environment (PLACE) assessments look at the care environment of services such as hospitals and day care centres.

We did not carry out any Enter and View or PLACE visits this year but are planning more for 2024/25.

Taking people's experiences to decision-makers

We ensure that people who can make decisions about services hear about the insight and experiences that have been shared with us. In our local authority area we take information to a number of committees and forums, including:

- Wiltshire Council's Health and Wellbeing Board and Health Select Committee
- BSW VCSE Alliance (Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise)
- Children and Families Voluntary Sector Forum
- Neighbourhood Collaboratives
- Health and Wellbeing Forums
- Patient experience groups (run by the hospital trusts)
- Wiltshire Integrated Care Alliance Partnership Meeting (NHS, council, VCSE, care homes)
- Wiltshire Youth Partnership

This year we've also shared feedback to inform the Integrated Care Board's work to improve prescription ordering services.

We also take insight and experiences to decision makers in Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care System, in meetings that include the BSW System Quality Group (NHS providers and local authorities).

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

Health and Wellbeing Board

Healthwatch Wiltshire is represented on the Wiltshire Council's Health and Wellbeing Board by Alan Mitchell, Chair of Healthwatch Wiltshire, where we have voting rights.

During 2023/24 our representative has effectively carried out this role by regularly attending meetings and workshops and reminding partner agencies about the importance of involving local people.


Integrated Care Board


Alan also represents Healthwatch Wiltshire on the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire (BSW) Integrated Care Partnership (ICP), and the Wiltshire Integrated Care Alliance (WICA) Partnership Committee.

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