

**healthwatch**  
Wiltshire



# **Wiltshire Mental Health Open Forum**

**The first year**

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# What is the Wiltshire Mental Health Open Forum?

The Wiltshire Mental Health Open Forum was established in August 2020, and is run jointly between Healthwatch Wiltshire, mental health service users, and mental health service provider Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust (AWP).

The forum provides a safe space for service users, and those who support them, to speak directly to those who run mental health services, to get involved in helping to shape the design of these services and highlight gaps in mental health support.

The forum has a current membership of 80 and a wide range of organisations attend alongside service users, their parents/carers, and supporters (see Appendix).

The forum also provides a platform for sharing information about local support available and for organisations and community groups to showcase the services, and activities, they provide. Guest speakers are regularly invited to attend the forum and some examples of these include Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, The Advocacy People and Rethink.

## Highlights this year



We've met **12** times.

There are **82** forum members



...and an average of **25** people attend each session.



We've had **12** guest speakers.

Feedback we've collected has helped shape **4** services.



We've created mental health resources lists for adults and children and young people which can both be [downloaded from our website](#).

# You said, we did

At every forum meeting, there is a You said, we did session. Issues shared at the forum are taken to a monthly Quality and Standards meeting held by AWP. Feedback and any actions are reported back at the next meeting.

Some examples include:

- **Issues regarding access to mental health services if you do not have a registered GP** were raised (this was a particular concern from the Rough Sleepers Team). The Clinical Lead reported back that not having a GP should never be a barrier to receiving support.

The AWP Access Service Manager for Wiltshire attended the [Homeless Link](#) Community of Practice meeting and discussed the referral process with those working with the homeless community.

- Concerns have been consistently raised around **waiting lists for the Improving**

**Access to Psychological Therapy (IAPT) service.** The Acting Manager reported that the service has received additional funding to train more staff. The service is also undertaking waiting list management processes to keep non-attended appointments to a minimum, in order to see clients on the list more quickly. These processes have reduced the number of people on the waiting list and will in the future reduce the waiting time.

Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon, and Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BSW CCG) and AWP have met to discuss these concerns and AWP are now leading on an improvement plan for the service.

- Comments around **patients not being asked about their sexuality in relation to their mental health needs** was fed back to the Quality and Standards meeting. AWP managers have put this forward as a staff training need.

# Helping to shape services

As well as sharing their experiences, forum members are able to get involved in the shaping and development of mental health services in Wiltshire.

- Wiltshire Council commissioners attended the forum to consult with the members on the redesign of the [Recovery and Inclusion service](#) in response to an expected increase in demand for mental health services following the Covid-19 pandemic. The commissioners used the feedback to develop the contract which was launched in July 2021 by Rethink.
- Feedback was given on a new initiative by Wiltshire Citizens Advice to run a pilot Advice/Support Scheme for those with poor mental health who need support with life's practicalities: budgeting, bill paying, form

filling, preparing for any appointments and supporting them to act on the advice they have been given. The pilot would also include mental health training for Wiltshire Citizens Advice staff and having Mental Health Champions.

- BSW CCG asked for input on the national Community Mental Health Services Framework. The framework outlines changes in community mental health services for people aged 16+ and looks at how future support could be delivered through more local, community-based services. Several forum members attended online workshops facilitated by Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living, Wiltshire Parent Carer Council and Healthwatch Wiltshire to discuss what good community mental health looked like to them.

# Creating a guide to mental health support

In response to the recurring theme that service users were unaware of, or not able to access, up to date information on services and activities in the community, the forum produced their own comprehensive guide to mental health and wellbeing services on offer in Wiltshire.

The aim was to help people struggling with their mental health to find the right support for them quickly and easily. The guide lists details of where adults, children and young people can get support, counselling, and advice on topics such as addiction, bereavement, and homelessness.

This guide is [available on our website](#). So far it's been downloaded 420 times and a communications plan was put in place to ensure it was distributed as widely as possible by local

## Where to get mental health support in Wiltshire

Advice and Information – 14 April 2021

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



### Support for adults

Members of our [Wiltshire Mental Health Open Forum](#) produced their own comprehensive guide

people and organisations across Wiltshire.

The creation of a list for adults was quickly followed by a similar list for children and young people, developed by our [Young Healthwatch Wiltshire](#) volunteers.

I found, as a mental health service user, it was especially useful to learn more about the different organisations that are out there and to be able to contribute my opinions and ideas and for them to be listened to by professionals. Being part of the creation of the list was very exciting. – Forum member

After being involved with the Mental Health Forum's resources list and seeing how well it had been received it seemed like a great idea to create a version specifically for young people. It was really interesting putting it together and realising just how many organisations were out there. – Robyn, Young Healthwatch Wiltshire volunteer

## What's next?

The forum continues to meet online on the first Wednesday of each month and we have a number of speakers booked in for the coming months including an update on the mental health community services framework and the next steps.

You can find out more about the forum on the [Healthwatch Wiltshire website](#).

# Responses

 **Jonathan Baker, Digital Officer, Rethink** 

As a mental health service provider, the Mental Health Open Forum has been an extremely beneficial platform, not just from a client perspective but also from the organisational perspective.

It has enabled a unique way to allow service users to have a voice on the matters that are important to them and provide a proactive and healthy pathway for individuals to address matters in their mental health provision and care. At the same time, for our organisation, it has provided an invaluable way of hearing the key issues from those we are aiming to support and therefore provides us with a significant feedback loop and enables us to form or transform service provision appropriately in a client-focused way.

In addition, it has also brought benefits to networking with other services and forming great links across relevant organisations and services, which itself has aided better support for service users as it's resulted in questions being addressed quicker and more efficiently.

 **Christina Gregory, Local Involvement Coordinator, Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust** 

When we started the Open Forum in the middle of the pandemic, our aim was to ensure that we were still hearing the voices of mental health service users. Even though we couldn't physically meet, we didn't know how many would turn up to the first Zoom meeting or if it would work at all, but what a success it has been.

We have had monthly meetings with fantastic representation from service users, carers and a wide range of mental health support services. We have had a huge amount of feedback and learning that we can take forward. Most importantly, I think that everyone that attends takes a new piece of information away each time, that they then can use to better support their own or others' mental health.

 **Clare O'Farrell, Director of Locality Commissioning for Wiltshire, Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BSW CCG)** 

The Mental Health Open Forum is an extremely valuable meeting and is welcomed by the CCG.

As a CCG, it is imperative that we have the opportunity to listen to service user feedback, and the forum has enabled us to hear what matters to people who are accessing mental health services in Wiltshire. We have benefited from seeking the views from forum members on important pieces of transformation work, such as the Mental Health Community Services Framework and will seek the views of forum members for other exciting projects in the future.

We look forward to continuing to be involved with the forum and hearing about what matters to people in our area.

# Appendix

These organisations attend the forum alongside Healthwatch Wiltshire:

- Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership Trust (AWP)
- Rethink
- The Rough Sleeper Team (Wiltshire Council)
- Whole life commissioning team (Wiltshire Council)
- Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living
- Wiltshire Citizens Advice
- Family and Community Learning
- Malmesbury Wellbeing Group
- Wiltshire Parent Carer Council
- Dogs for Health
- Carer Support Wiltshire
- Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon, and Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BSW CCG)
- Shared Lives Wiltshire
- Wiltshire Community Foundation
- Health Improvement Coaches
- Child and Youth Voice Team, Wiltshire Council
- Wiltshire Wildlife Trust
- Alabaré
- Wiltshire Service Users Network
- Wiltshire Police
- Aster Housing
- Wiltshire Autism Diagnostic Service
- The Well City Project
- Armed Forces
- The Advocacy People
- Tedworth Equestrian – The Armed Forces Equine Charity
- South Western Ambulance Service
- Salisbury Foodbank
- Wilton Help
- Victim Support
- Wessex Community Action
- Response

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