



January-March 2024

About us

About Healthwatch Wiltshire

Healthwatch Wiltshire is your local health and social care champion. As an independent statutory body, we have the power to make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers listen to local feedback and improve standards of care. We also help people to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.

Our priorities

For 2023/24 are:

Hospital discharge and care at home/virtual wards

- Hearing the views of people who have been discharged from hospital with an NHS@Home (virtual ward) package, and how this is working for them.

Children and young people's wellbeing

- Finding out what young people are concerned about and what local support they would like.

Mental health and autism

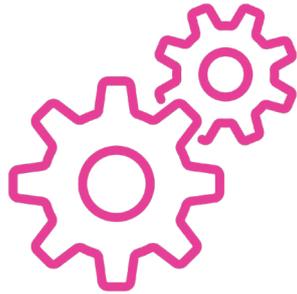
- Our joint project with Wiltshire Service Users' Network to find out what autistic people, and their carers and families, think of local mental health services.

Access to GP services

- Continuing our work to see how practices are adapting and changing since the pandemic.

Highlights

Transferred to new provider - The Care Forum



Held 3 engagement sessions with Afghan families



211 people shared their views in priority survey



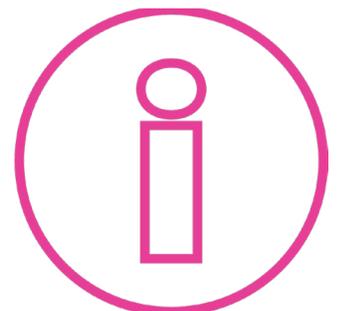
Shared a survey gathering experiences of eating disorders



Recruited 2 new volunteers

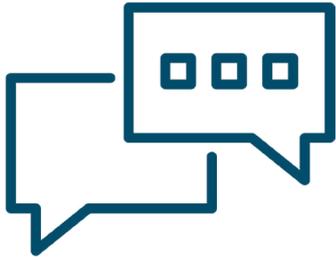


11 advice and information articles published



Talking and listening

Due to contract changes, stats are from October and November 2023 only



290 people shared their experience of services with us

We attended **15** groups, community hubs to hear the views of local people

We attended **39** meetings, forums and events



4 volunteers were involved...

...and volunteered over **32** hours



155 social media posts...

...reached **7,278** people

...and our website received **26,165** page views

Experiences you shared



Our work

We transfer to new host organisation

Healthwatch Wiltshire's contract with its previous provider, Help and Care, has come to an end after five years. Wiltshire Council went out to competitive tender and organisations were able to bid for the contract. The Care Forum (TCF) gained the highest score and were awarded the contract, which started on 1 January 2024.

What will be different?

TCF will be responsible for delivering the new contract from 1 January. They have been working with the previous provider, Help and Care, to ensure the transfer process goes smoothly.

What about volunteers?

Healthwatch Wiltshire volunteers have been kept informed about arrangements for the contract transferring to TCF, who are keen to continue the great work of the current volunteers while developing new ways to volunteer.

What's next for Healthwatch Wiltshire?

Healthwatch Wiltshire will continue to serve the people of Wiltshire although there might be a slight pause while the new organisation sets up policies and processes. The logo and branding will remain the same and a staff team and volunteers will be in local communities

gathering the views and experiences of people who use health and care services.

Kevin Peltonen-Messenger, CEO at The Care Forum, said: "For over a decade we have provided robust, innovative and caring Healthwatch services across the South West of England, so I am incredibly proud to announce that following a successful tendering process, TCF will take on the delivery of Healthwatch Wiltshire.

"Our work at System and Place across Wiltshire, Swindon and Bath and North East Somerset Healthwatch will enable us to represent important local issues whilst being able to work even more effectively across a single Integrated Care Board system. We're really excited to start seeing some of our ideas take root!"



We call on public to help set priorities

Each year we decide on our key projects, based on public feedback, and we heard your views to help us plan what we should be focusing on in the next 12 months.

We have shortlisted six potential projects for 2024/25:

- 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 ran an online survey throughout March and visited local groups, libraries and community hubs to talk to people there.

Thank you to the 211 people that shared their thoughts with us. We are now looking at what we heard and will meet with our board and volunteers to decide our final priorities for the year ahead.

Engaging with Afghan refugees

Healthwatch Wiltshire has been working with Wiltshire Council's Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS) and children's charity Spurgeons on a two-year project funded by NHS Charities Together to reach out to minority communities across Wiltshire.

In this second year we have met communities of around 40 families of Afghan refugees who had helped British forces in Afghanistan and have been settled for three years in army bases across Wiltshire.

In March 2024, we jointly held three

engagement sessions with Afghan families. We visited four military bases: Perham Down, Larkhill, Corsham and Lyneham. The aim of the engagement was to find out how these families were accessing health and care, education and early years support and their experience of getting the help they needed.

Some of the feedback received included comments about access to interpreters, isolation and poor transport and financial difficulties having an impact on accessing care. Look out for more on this project in the coming months.

Case studies

Zahra told us that she has persistent back pain which is now severe but has been unable to get an appointment with GP as she cannot speak or read English, meaning she cannot telephone or book online to get an appointment. There is a very limited bus service to the nearest town, Ludgershall, making access to the GP challenging. We looked at the possibility of using a translation app on their mobiles to explain their health issue to a GP's receptionist if they went to the surgery. The surgery does not have an appropriate translator at present.

Maryam told us that she was struggling with her mental wellbeing. She had had a high level job in Afghanistan. They were not sure what help was available, so the list of mental health resources was discussed and a copy given together with information on vaccinations, how the NHS works and dental services. The latter three were provided in Pashto and Dari. Sewing and gardening were identified as activities they enjoyed and so we discussed the possibility of setting up or joining an existing sewing group and planting their gardens to help with their mental health and socialisation. We also talked about a book club but there are only five Afghan families settled at Perham Down for three years so opportunities to meet new people are limited.

Hearing your views on eating disorders

Working with our Healthwatch colleagues in Swindon and Bath and North East Somerset, a survey was launched which asked for people's views on eating disorders and disordered eating, and if enough support is available in the region. The survey is now closed and the findings are being analysed. We will share the findings with you in due course.

Advice and support when you need it

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

Over the last few months we have added articles on topics such as measles and diabetes, explainers on [the Pharmacy First scheme](#), [virtual wards](#) and [social prescribing](#), as well as advice on [where military families can get support](#).

Our news item [announcing the launch of the Pharmacy First scheme](#) attracted the most page views on our website this quarter, with [advice on registering with your GP](#) and [mental health services for children and young people](#) in the top 10.

Visit the [advice and information section](#) on our website for more articles.

What can the Pharmacy First scheme do for you?

Advice and Information - 13 February 2024

The new Pharmacy First scheme enables your local pharmacy to treat some common conditions with prescription-only medicines, without you visiting your GP. Find out everything you need to know.



The NHS has launched a major transformation to try and make it easier for patients to access the care they need.

What is Pharmacy First?



Making a difference

Women's health hubs prove popular

Our survey asking [which services people would like to see](#) at the new 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. Manager Helen Scott shared this update with us.



"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 for the service is extremely high which means that 14 months since inception, our waiting times for the service are becoming longer. To address this, we have applied for local funding which is aimed at expanding the service. In addition, we intend to use the funding to provide some dedicated training to any of our clinicians interested in developing their skills, so that we can improve patient access for these appointments, in a sustainable way."

Helen Scott, Devizes Primary Care Network Manager

What people said

It is increasingly difficult to access GP appointments and if we are advised to consider pharmacists as a first point of call, there needs to be information as to what help is available.

Telephone calls can be difficult even with hearing aids. Certain voices it is almost impossible to hear at all as deafness is tonal and some voices I can hear OK and others just cannot hear. Also certain accents make hearing even worse and without seeing the face and mouth it takes a lot longer to process the information contained in the words so questions need longer thinking time to catch up, the brain uses so much energy just to get each word processing the conversation can take much longer. Even when you tell the other person that you are deaf and could they slow down they find it hard to comply.

Via my NHS App I accessed NHS 111 a few days ago, was spoken to and advised to contact my GP's surgery. My GP rang within 30mins, made an appointment for me. I was prescribed antibiotics. I am slowly improving. All very efficient. Thank you!

I requested a referral to physiotherapy for my 11 year old son who was experiencing neck and back pain as a result of a recent injury and as a follow up to an examination at A&E. I was given a call back within a day or two and a referral was made by the GP. Very speedy, the GP listened and took action.

Twice recently I have contacted my GP via their new online booking system. Both times a GP phoned me within an hour and resolved my issues - once with a prescription sent to my local pharmacy straight away and once with some advice which I asked for. Excellent service!

I have been in Trowbridge for more than a year now and every time I am in need of health assistance it would take me hours upon hours of trying to call them just to get an appointment. If I do talk to someone they will just say take your previous medicine that helped you. It would be best if someone would actually check their reviews and ratings on the NHS website. I think they don't want to help people and be an actual GP service.

GP advised self-referral to local mental health service. Initial telephone appointment was good, offered CBT [Cognitive Behavioural Therapy] in one of three ways. Once I started CBT I was advised by someone else I'd be better off talking to someone as CBT was unlikely to help me. Offered 'Counselling for Depression' one-to-one talking therapy but advised of an 11 month wait as there is only one (yes just 1) staff member for the whole area who conducts this therapy! Very poor when you're struggling and suicidal! Named 'Talking Therapies' but there's no one to talk to! There's nowhere else they can advise, or refer you to, to get help other than private therapy.

Coming up

Listening to the
experiences of
military personnel

Find out more about our work at healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk



healthwatch Wiltshire

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