



Healthwatch Somerset
Annual Report 2016/17





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Message from our Chair



Healthwatch is led by an Executive Group made up mainly of lay people who oversee the work plan and who bring specialist knowledge to the project.

I was pleased to be nominated as Chair this year in order to make use of my knowledge on behalf of local people.

This year has been a year of change, development and challenge across health and social care. We have seen changes to how some services are delivered: like the early supported discharge for stroke patients which Healthwatch has previously helped to evaluate. We have also been able to influence, including by formally supporting the proposal for the County to create a university to address local skills gaps.

Healthwatch continues to develop our reach and visibility and has successfully advocated

on behalf of hundreds of patients, carers and members of the public this year. We are grateful to all our volunteers, and to organisations with whom we have worked in partnership including Somerset Rural Youth Project, Swan Advocacy, Compass and many others.

As we move forward into the final year of the current contract, we are looking again at how we deliver our work to make sure we reach all districts of the county, and hear the voices of those who have not spoken to us before.

Cliff Puddy, Chair



Message from our Chief Executive

I am pleased to commend this annual report to you, and satisfied to be able to reflect on the positive work that has been delivered by Healthwatch Somerset this year.

The Care Forum is proud to host a project in a way which empowers staff and volunteers to be able to act as advocates, champions and supporters to those who most need to be heard.

As always, our volunteers are at the heart of what we do – and this is especially apparent in the enter and view work we have delivered, which has continued to provide valuable insight into the lived experiences of people using local health and social care services. This year, the volunteers have taken a close look at mental health inpatient services. This has resulted in a series of recommendations which are being used to monitor the quality of mental health services for local people.

It is also clear that the public is increasingly aware of what Healthwatch can offer them – as over 600 people took part in surveys to share their views this year.

We were also delighted to work closely with Somerset Rural Youth Project, a local voluntary sector organisation that works with young people, in order to empower young Somerset residents to have their say about a wide range of important health and social care issues.



We heard accounts of patient dissatisfaction with a local orthotics service from our advocacy partner SWAN advocacy, and via personal testimony shared by a patient with our Executive Group. We've asked challenging questions on their behalf to try and support them to improve their outcomes, and we are looking further into this matter in 2017/18.

I would like to thank each volunteer for the way in which you have held us to account, shown leadership, inspired us and directed the work of the project.

I would also like to thank the staff who have worked tirelessly to ensure that Healthwatch Somerset continues to develop and deliver this year.

Vicki Morris, Chief Executive - The
Care Forum



Highlights from our year

This year we've reached 10,144 people on social media



Our volunteers help us with everything from enter and view to reviewing quality accounts



We've visited mental health wards and learning disability services



Our reports have tackled issues ranging from mental health to leaving care



We've spoken to nearly 600 people about their GP services



We've met hundreds of local people at our community events





Who we are

Healthwatch Somerset is a strong voice for children, young people and adults in health and social care.

Anyone can speak to Healthwatch about their experiences of health or social care services (including GPs, hospitals, mental health services, social care teams) and feedback what was good and what was not.

We ensure that service providers and commissioners hear this feedback and make changes to their services

When someone gets in touch, Healthwatch will:

- ++ signpost them to other helpful services via Somerset Choices
- ++ help them to access advocacy support
- ++ record their feedback and ensure that service users have their voice heard in decisions about the running of health and social care services

Our vision

Healthwatch works hard to be the independent consumer champion for health and social care in Somerset. We promote better outcomes in health and social care for both adults and children.

We work collaboratively with local infrastructure by maintaining a wider associate membership of relevant organisations through our network of networks.

We have built on, developed and broadened the role of the Somerset Local Involvement Network (LINK), taking equal account of both health and social care issues. We achieve this by being representative of the diverse communities and regions of Somerset.

Our priorities

The Executive Group meets at the start of each year to review the previous workplan and to refresh it if necessary. This process involves examining local priorities (like the health and wellbeing strategy), information given to Healthwatch by the public, and using it to decide on priorities for the coming year.

This process ensures that we focus on what matters most to local people, and the areas within which we can make the most difference.

The workplan can change throughout the year if a new priority arises.

This year, the following priorities were identified :

- ++ Accessibility of information
- ++ Connectedness
- ++ Transition into adulthood
- ++ Reviewing quality accounts
- ++ Promoting mental and emotional health with young people

We are accountable to, and driven by, a network of volunteers who help to create the annual workplan and who represent Healthwatch at a variety of meetings and events across Somerset.

Accessibility of information

In order to investigate whether the people of Somerset are receiving accessible information, Healthwatch delivered a survey which asked about local services including GP services. This survey was designed to allow people to tell us how they understood their services worked, and also whether information from NHS111 and pharmacy was working for them.

We also began work on a series of enter and view visits to find out whether people with a learning disability were being informed about their right to choose the services they use.

Connectedness

Our GP and other services survey also asked local people to tell us about their use of support services such as their pharmacy. Building on this survey, Healthwatch worked with other stakeholders to design a second survey which focuses on connectedness. This survey was rolled out at the end of 2016/17, and will be used to inform the STP and other planning and commissioning in the coming year.

Young people

Young Healthwatch consulted young people about leaving care and mental health.

“She finds (leaving care) very lonely at times but has settled and feels happy with the support from her leaving care worker” - young person’s comment

The Team

The Healthwatch staff team work to engage with communities across Somerset, support our volunteers and engage with social media and online activity.

Jono Yelland, Development Officer



I have worked in the field of public and patient engagement for 11 years and I passionately believe that people can make a real difference to improving local services by sharing their views and experiences.

My job involves listening to people about their concerns and experiences and finding opportunities for that voice and that experience to make a positive difference. Sometimes that’s about knowing what consultations are happening that experiences can inform and sometimes it’s simply about knowing the right person to go to and their role, so networking is essential. My role is also to try and signpost people to the best support or advice so keeping up to date with a changing health and social care landscape is very important.

Jacquie Franks, Development Officer

I make sure Somerset health and social care services are the best they can be by:

- working to ensure that local residents know who Healthwatch

Somerset is and why it is good to talk to us;

- creating opportunities for local residents talk to us regularly about health and social care through a variety of mechanisms;
- collecting feedback from local residents on their experiences of health and social care in Somerset, as well as promoting Healthwatch Somerset initiatives.

Karen Ball, Information, Marketing and Signposting Officer



I enjoy working for charities and find it extremely rewarding.

My post involves keeping the website up-to-date, using social media to keep people informed of the team's work, and marketing and promoting what we do. I produce the Healthwatch Somerset monthly e-bulletin.

My role also includes organising and attending meetings and events, and networking with voluntary sector and other organisations I give people relevant information on complaints procedures, and advocacy services for health and social care.

I feel that it is important that people's voices are heard by those that make on decisions, and that by listening to the people of Somerset we can help to improve their future health and social care services.

Elena Dorso, Volunteer Support Officer



Elena provides support to our volunteers, which includes helping new volunteers with their DBS checks and supporting them to work out how we can find a role which fits with their interests and experiences

Elena works with the rest of the team to make sure that feedback from volunteers is passed on, and to support volunteers who take part in engagement at community events or other meetings.

The Executive Group

Cliff Puddy, Chair and Equality of Access

Janet Bond, Enter and View

David Boyland, Vice Chair and Quality in Health

Judith Goodchild, Health and Wellbeing Board

Ruth Hobbs, Children and Young People

Rachel Mason, Quality in Social Care

Jane Allin, Compass Carers

Steve Baker, Young Healthwatch

Andy Roger, Swan Advocacy



*Your views on
health and care*

Listening to local people's views

This year we heard hundreds of comments, views and experiences from local people.

You spoke to us at the focus groups we helped to organise to get your feedback about your stroke support. You filled in hundreds of online surveys about the services you use, and told us how much you value your local GP. You reviewed services local to you using our online review centre. And you told us you would like to know more about the staff who support you on mental health inpatient wards.

We were proud to listen to you - and we hope that what we have done with what we heard has helped to make improvements for the future.

“All wards currently display notice boards with staff pictures with Job titles. The uniform policy is being reviewed but once completed then this can be added to inpatient notice boards for information”

- Somerset Partnership response

Life after a stroke

Healthwatch worked with local commissioners to talk to people who have had a stroke about their care. A model of care called Early Supported Discharge is now being used in Somerset to help people who have had a stroke return home more quickly and get back to everyday life.

We designed this work to explore the perceptions of patients, the carers and family members by asking:

- What did you feel you needed the most following your stroke or brain injury?
- What was provided to you by the Early Supported Discharge service?
- How well did the service meet your needs?
- Do you feel you went home at the appropriate time?
- Was there anything that could have been done differently to improve the support you received?

By offering phone interviews, we made sure that patients who were not able to take part in focus groups at local hospitals were able to have their say.

The focus groups that were held were facilitated by Healthwatch volunteers, with patients offered a supportive and relaxed opportunity to feedback about their experiences.

Overall, the feedback about the Early Supported Discharge service was excellent.

One gentleman shared his joy at being able to rehabilitate and build up his strength whilst doing his gardening at home.

The report can be read on our website <http://bit.ly/2ur6ueT>

Your local services

How do local services work together to support the people of Somerset? Does NHS111 help us to understand where to go and when to ask for help? What about community pharmacies, and the role they can play? These were a few of the issues Healthwatch explored in our major survey work this year.

During this project Healthwatch received feedback from 587 local people. We spoke to patients via their GP, people who heard us on BBC radio and people who saw one of our posters placed by volunteers in community centres. Many of those who gave us feedback did so via paper copies of the survey, as we know that not everyone uses the internet. We also heard from large numbers of carers who were signposted by Compass. Overall, the following trends were identified:



Firstly, the majority of participants demonstrated a clear preference to receive direct support from a familiar GP within their local practice.

This is interesting as modern GP practices offer a wide range of services from a range of professionals - and current proposals for the future of Primary Care often involve changes to this more traditional approach. We know that there are significant challenges at the moment, with fewer GPs being recruited and large numbers approaching retirement - and so this result is a clear challenge to those planning future service provision.

We were pleased to be able to share this finding with the Sustainability and Transformation Plan lead, and Judith Goodchild our Health and Wellbeing Board lead presented our findings to the Board.

Those who spoke to us showed relatively little appetite for visiting an unfamiliar GP practice or seeing a professional who is not a GP - which shows that there is lots of work to do to win patients over if NHS planners intend to implement new approaches to the provision of primary care.

Secondly, if a GP is not available, a clear majority of respondents would favour contact with a nurse for support.

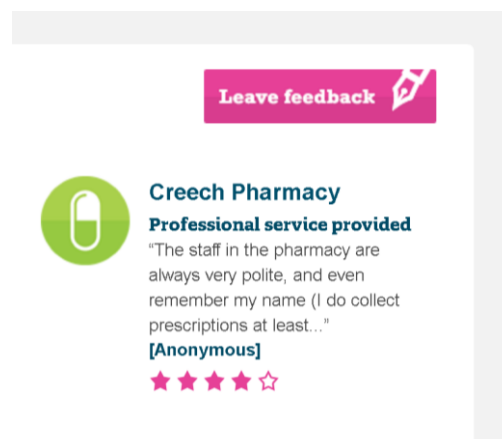
Thirdly, experiences of NHS111 and NHS Choices appear to be highly polarised, though positive experiences generally outweigh negative experiences.

Respondents who have experienced good outcomes were strongly favourable and language used was very positive “excellent”, “high quality”, “useful”.

Those who had experienced delayed or poor quality outcomes often used highly negative language to describe their experiences, “useless”, “dangerous”, “a waste of time”. The CQC have already made use of this feedback when planning inspections of NHS111.

Feedback centre

To date we have heard 26 reviews on our online feedback centre ranging from mental health services, medical centres, hospital wards and pharmacies.





*Helping
you find the
answers*

healthwatch
healthwatch.co.uk

We work with two partner agencies to ensure that local people are able to obtain the information and support when they need it, in ways that work for them.

Somerset Choices

SOMERSETChoices

Somerset Choices is a website that gives you information and advice on care and support services and local groups in Somerset.

You can use the website to search for all kinds of care and support services including equipment providers, home care, accommodation options, support for carers, local events and local groups.

You can contact local services and groups through the website to order or book what you need.

On Somerset Choices you can find information and advice for:

- Support at home
- Planning for your care
- Support for carers
- Accommodation options
- Equipment to help you live independently
- Local support groups and networks
- Health conditions, such as dementia
- Money
- How to stay healthy
- Keeping safe
- Finding an independent advocate
- And much, much more!

SWAN Advocacy

Their specialised advocacy service enables some of the most disadvantaged residents of Somerset to make their own decisions and be in control of their own lives. They have a range of advocates with specialist knowledge, skills and expertise to help people who are struggling, to give them a voice.

They have a dedicated office in Taunton and provide support across all districts of Somerset. Their advocacy includes supporting people with their mental health, mental capacity, and to make informed decisions about the Care Act and when making an NHS complaint.



This year, SWAN told us about a theme they were hearing from their clients. Some people who needed orthotics support (such as orthotic shoes) were struggling to get the equipment they need.

Following this feedback and some further investigation, we have included this subject in our workplan for 2017/18.



*Making a
difference
together*

Have you
visited
Care Home
Rel
What was it like?

Enter and View: how your experiences are helping influence change

The mission of Healthwatch is to ensure that:

People shape health and social care delivery

People influence the services they receive personally

People hold services to account

We know that we are fulfilling our mission when there are examples of this happening. This year, we have delivered enter and view within mental health inpatient wards which has particularly empowered services users to 'influence the services they receive personally'.

Pyrland Wards, Yeovil, July 2016

What did we find?

The Enter and View Team felt that overall, Pyrland Wards met the needs of the clients in a supportive and caring environment. Although Ward One was attractive and welcoming, the manager and staff are aware that Ward Two needs refurbishing to provide a more cheerful, welcoming and relaxed atmosphere. Staff were observed interacting with clients in a friendly manner, and in Ward One clients were observed to be sensitively supported at meal times.

Clients spoken to enjoyed the gardens and opportunities to help water and maintain

the plants. They also enjoyed the cooking sessions. Some patients told us that there was little to do to pass the time. It was identified that it would be beneficial if a greater range of activities could be made available, for example through links with the Reminiscence team. The care and support given to clients was thought to be caring and friendly.

"It's lovely here in the garden" - Pyrland Ward patient.

Magnolia Ward, Yeovil, August 2016

What did we find?

The Enter and View team felt that overall, Magnolia Ward provides a suitable environment for patients. Staff were observed to be supportive and caring. In particular the garden was found to be therapeutic and enjoyed by many of the patients. There are a number of opportunities for patients and family members to have their say and information about these was clearly displayed.

The Ward has taken some innovative steps to help lessen the national problem of recruiting qualified staff.

On the day of the Enter and View visit, it was felt that more could be done to provide patients with therapeutic activities and the Team's recommendations reflect this.

"I want to finish sanding and varnishing the outside furniture that we're waiting for more paint and sandpaper for" - Magnolia Ward patient

What did we do?

We heard concerns about staffing - and feedback that it can be very difficult to recruit staff. And so we decided to write to the council and offer our support for the idea of a University for Somerset to help to address this.

We made suggestions about drug, alcohol and legal highs awareness and training, which have been acknowledged by Somerset Partnership. We reported to the Health and Wellbeing Board, who have forwarded it to the Mental health Strategy Group to ensure that those using these services are receiving the best possible support and care.

We recommended that the Trust talk to Reminiscence Learning about their involvement in activities and advice for Pyrland and Magnolia Ward, which they have agreed to do.

Sharing good practice

This year we have distributed and promoted our 'good practice guides' during all elements of our work. The guides were designed to use feedback gathered from previous enter and view work to help local people to understand what to expect from good quality services. They have been well received by patients and service providers.

The following guides have been distributed this year across Somerset.

Discharge:

"Always send an 'Improving Discharge Form' when difficulties are encountered. This is a form to notify hospitals of difficulties relating to discharge"

Involving the local community:

"Find residents from other homes who share similar interests with residents at the home to start an activity"

Dignity in care training:

"Staff training is everything! Nothing makes more of a positive impact to the residents"

Environment:

"Personalise doors and walls outside people's rooms"

Staffing:

"Consider welcoming social care students on placements. They can provide a fresh pair of eyes and up to date knowledge in exchange for gaining experience"

Participation:

"Ensure that residents have the opportunity to add to the agenda - and ensure that they receive the agenda well in advance"

Activities:

"Display an activities timetable on the notice board and provide a copy to each resident"

Working with other organisations

Somerset Rural Youth Project: Young Healthwatch

Mental Health

Young Healthwatch surveyed 67 young people regarding their mental health.

Young people identified a wide range of factors that contribute to poor mental health.

49% of young people identified other people as significant contributors to poor mental health.

18% listed stress anxiety caused by school / college

6% identified loneliness / isolation

4% identified diagnosable / treatable mental illnesses (e.g. depression).

Education, Health and Care plans

Young Healthwatch supported Somerset County Council by engaging with young people and parent carers with a focus group approach to provide a more qualitative perspective on their experience of EHC plans.

The first group engaged with were the SEND Participation Group – the Unstoppables. All findings will be used to inform Somerset County Council’s review of how EHC plans are working.

Speaking up for local people at the Health and Wellbeing Board

Judith Goodchild is our volunteer lead for the Health and Wellbeing Board. This means that she takes part in both our Executive Group and the Health and Wellbeing Board to make sure that we scrutinise decision-making on health and social care.

Judith has regularly asked questions and introduced the ‘lay perspective’ into the debate – she is our eyes and ears at the Health and Wellbeing Board!

“I have attended the Board meetings and also the development days on behalf of local Healthwatch. Reports are presented to the Board for members to receive and comment”.

“On behalf of Healthwatch I have made comments on the report of the Children’s Safeguarding Board asking how they intended to achieve the recommendations at the end of the report. The Chair’s reply said it depended on funding from Somerset County Council. A report presented by Children and Young people highlighted the high number of children on permanent exclusion from schools. I followed this up by asking the cabinet member of this committee the reasons for this. She is aware this is an issue but there are no current plans to address this”.

“On behalf of Healthwatch I raised concerns about the closure of chemists in some areas as this would impact on rural communities and increase isolation. I was assured that closures would only apply to areas where there was more than one in the locality for example where there were two competing pharmacies on the same street”.

“I have also asked questions when the STP has been discussed particularly about the impact it would have on Primary Care”.

“On behalf of Healthwatch I presented the results of the GP survey carried out in 2016”.

Following Judith’s feedback we have been able to do the work of Healthwatch better – which is to her credit and illustrates the value of her role. For example, her concerns about closures of pharmacies had led to us being involved in the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment, so we can keep an eye on what is happening.

Our plans for next year



What next?

Our workplan for 2017/18

Key themes:

Connectedness (avoiding loneliness & isolation)

Choice and Control for people with Learning Difficulties

Young Healthwatch

Complaints



Linking to initiatives and planning:

Somerset Commitment to Carers

Accessible Information Standard (NHS England)

The Somerset Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP)

Transforming Care & integration with the STP

The Health & Wellbeing Strategy

Local service provision:

Orthotics Services

Mental Health services



Our people

Decision making

Project proposals that arise during the year are discussed at our Executive Group in order to make sure that they fit with our current priorities.

For example, in May 2016 the Executive Group were asked whether they would be happy to approve a request to create an online survey about GP services (this work eventually fed into our major survey work in 2016/17).

Each quarter, the feedback received from the public is collated into a report which is used to inform decision-making and work during the year.

Enter and view volunteers

our Healthwatch Somerset Enter and View authorised representatives:

- Janet Bond (Enter and View Executive Group lead)
- Rwth Hunt
- Jo Walsh-Quantick
- Cliff Puddy
- Martha Hodgson
- David Boyland
- Fiona Pierce
- Judith Goodchild
- Kathleen Richardson





Our finances

Income	£
Funding received from local authority to deliver local Healthwatch statutory activities	£199,047
Additional income	£2,500
Total income	£201,547
Expenditure	£
Operational costs	£39,475
Staffing costs	£143,765
Office costs	£18,927
Total expenditure	£202,167
Balance brought forward	



Contact us

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We will be making this annual report publicly available on 30 June 2017 by publishing it on our website and sharing it with Healthwatch England, CQC, NHS England, Clinical Commissioning Group/s, Overview and Scrutiny Committee/s, and our local authority.

We confirm that we are using the Healthwatch Trademark (which covers the logo and Healthwatch brand) when undertaking work on our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

If you require this report in an alternative format please contact us at the address above.

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