



Healthwatch Somerset

A brief introduction to our service.

Healthwatch Somerset exists to speak up for local people on health and social care, to make sure that services in the county reflect the needs of the people and communities they serve. We are independent from the NHS, Local Authority and other local health and social care services, so people can talk to us confidently and freely about their views and experiences. We are led by a Board of local volunteers. Our work, which fulfils the statutory functions of a local Healthwatch, falls into four main areas:

- Our projects
- Taking feedback and providing information and signposting
- Enter and View
- Reporting and Influencing Change





Young Listeners Project

Max Popham

Young Listener project officer





From April the 24th to July 3rd

- First Meeting – Teambuilding and get to know each other.
 - General Knowledge Quiz, Pictionary, Charades.
 - Meeting every Saturday
 - Every other Saturday, Mindfulness or Training.
- Relationship Building and Communication Skills
 - Equality, Diversity and Unconscious Bias
 - Safeguarding
 - Raising and Maintaining Self-esteem



Engagement Questions

First in-person meeting to discuss questions – 3rd July

Questions focus:

- Mental Health
- Eating Disorders
 - GP Access
- LGBTQ+ issues (with health and social care)
- Cancer Support

Engagement Phase

- In-house Listeners
- External Events
- Online Survey





Setting up at one of the events the Young Listeners attended

Key Themes

65 Responses total

- There is a lack of communication between services about young people's health and wellbeing.
- Services are not communicating effectively with young people; and they often feel left in the dark.
- There is not enough information or education about health and social care in schools, so young people find information online.
- Many services do not promote themselves in a way that is accessible or inclusive of young people.

Recommendations

1. More training should be provided for all school staff around mental health and wellbeing awareness and the support that is available locally, so that they can signpost young people to the correct services.
 - Within the next 12 months, young people would like to see school staff given training to improve their knowledge of local health and social care services.
2. Health and social care services should re-evaluate how they communicate with each other and their patients, to reduce confusion and feelings of abandonment.
 - Young people recommended that services have a centralised system where patient's notes are shared.
 - Young people also suggested services make more frequent contact with patients, particularly if patients are waiting for feedback, so as to avoid feelings of abandonment.

Recommendations

3. Services that support young people should promote themselves in ways that are appropriate and accessible for young people.
 - Young people suggested recruiting younger staff to deliver communications as it is more relatable.
 - Similarly, younger staff will have a better understanding of the platforms used by young people (e.g. TikTok, Snapchat etc.)

4. Schools and services should promote the need to ask questions and reduce stigma around health and social care issues, encouraging young people to seek information and answers from professionals.
 - Within the next 12 months, young people would like to see services make a concerted effort to reduce stigma around seeking health and social care, perhaps through targeted ads for young people or school workshops.

Recommendations

5. Health and social care services should involve young people more regularly in decision making processes, as well as in planning for projects concerning young people.
 - This project has shown that young people are willing to give their time and views, and that continued interaction with young people would provide significant value to health and social care services going forward.
 - We will work with young people going forward to set up a Young Listeners' Reading Panel to review outgoing communications, checking they are accessible and appropriate for a younger audience.



Thank You

We would like to thank the young people who took time to share their experiences and views with our Young Listeners. We would also like to thank the many organisations who helped promote the project so that our survey could reach as many young people as possible.

Finally, a huge thank you to our Young Listeners who dedicated their own free time to give other young people an opportunity to be heard.

“Young people’s voices should be at the centre of all our decision making and the findings from this project are powerful and give direction to future service planning.”

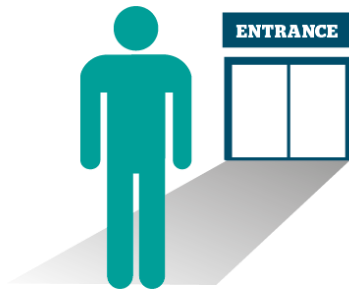
Fiona Phur, Participation and Engagement Team at
Somerset County Council

Our main areas of work



Taking feed back and
providing information and signposting

Reporting and Influencing Change



Enter and View

Our projects

Our projects and Impact in 2020/2021

Each year we publish an annual report which outlines the work we have done over the previous year and the impact we have made. Our report is available at;

[Healthwatch Somerset Annual report 2020-2021](#)

Our projects.

- Access to primary care

Between 2018 – 2020 we recorded a lot of feedback about booking GP appointments and we wanted to find out how people were accessing primary care through GP surgeries. The overwhelming message was that GP surgeries should use a variety of methods to ensure equal access for everyone.

Our projects and Impact in 2020/2021

- NHS111 service
- Community Care.
- We also did a piece of work around working in a care home during Covid-19 to enable staff to share their experiences.
- District Nursing Service.

Our current year

- Referral to treatment

Key findings

48 out of 72 of the responses have been waiting over 40 weeks for their surgery.

Many respondents indicated a lack, or absence, of communication from their specialist during their wait.

A large proportion of responses told us they had experienced one or more of the following due to waiting for surgery:

Their condition had deteriorated.

Their mobility has reduced during, and this has impacted on their ability to carry out everyday tasks.

They have experienced changes in their daily mood.

Our current year

- Emergency Department project

Due to the increased pressure on emergency departments across our local hospitals, Healthwatch Somerset, NHS Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group and local hospital trusts were asked by system partners to work together and find out from people what brought them to the emergency department and whether they accessed other services beforehand.

Our current year

- NHS111 follow up.
- In the first quarter of 2022 we will be working on supported discharge from hospital to care home or care at home and a further piece of work in primary care that we are going to tie in with face to face engagement across the county.
- Our Young Listeners project has finished

Healthwatch Somerset

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Thank you for your time

