



Together

we're making health
and social care better

Annual Report 2022–23

healthwatch
Somerset

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Message from our Chair

This has been an exceptional year for Healthwatch Somerset with the formalisation of the Integrated Care Board (ICB). There is a commitment from the ICB to ensure that the voices of the public are heard and taken into consideration when commissioning decisions are being made.

Healthwatch Somerset is well represented in the Integrated Care System, attending meetings at all levels. We are increasingly being asked to undertake surveys and consultations by our strategic partners to inform significant change and improvement plans. This year, for example, we engaged with local people to inform NHS Somerset's consultation on hyper-acute stroke services, and we have been gathering feedback to inform their ongoing review of same day urgent care services.

Alongside this, our project work has carried on and reports have been published to highlight some of the key issues that matter to local people, including improving GP websites to access information and digital healthcare services, support for people as they leave hospital to be cared for at home or in the community, and access to NHS dental care.

We have increased the size of our Board this year, with new members bringing skills, knowledge, and expertise in the health service and from wider afield. Each Board member has specific areas of responsibility and they link with staff leading on projects as well as attending relevant meetings.

I am always amazed about how much has been achieved by our team of staff and volunteers. It is a privilege to be Chair of Healthwatch Somerset and to have witnessed its growth and effectiveness over the past few years.



Judith Goodchild
Healthwatch Somerset Chair



We have been working in close partnership with our strategic partners resulting in high quality engagement and consultation work, putting the public voice at the heart of health and care development work in Somerset.

About us

Healthwatch Somerset is your local health and social care champion.

We are part of a network of over 150 local Healthwatch across England. 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.

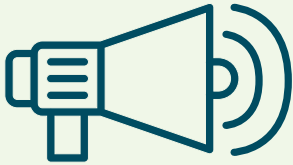


Our values are:

- **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



2,412 people

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

1,960 people

came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as mental health and the cost of living crisis.

Making a difference to care

We published

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

Our most popular report was

People's experiences of using GP websites to access information

which highlighted the struggles people face when trying to access healthcare and support online.



Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have

37 outstanding volunteers who gave up

125 days to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our local authority. In 2022-23 we received

£191,912

We currently employ

1 full-time and 3 part-time staff

who help us carry out our work.

How we've made a difference this year

Spring



We toured Somerset with our roadshow, gathering feedback on health and care from our diverse communities and helping people find out about local services.



We published a report on same day urgent care in West Somerset, and continued to gather feedback from across the county to inform NHS Somerset's review of urgent care.

Summer



We carried out our first Enter and View visit since the pandemic, to a large nursing care home in Bridgwater. After speaking to residents, relatives, and staff, we published a report which will inform the care home's improvement plan.



As Somerset's two NHS Foundation Trusts prepared to merge, we supported their engagement with local communities by asking people what they thought the future focus should be for the NHS in Somerset.

Autumn



We reported on people's experiences of using GP websites to access information, to guide improvements in NHS Somerset's digital services and support for local people.



We reported about public feedback on dentistry from across the South West to the NHS Local Dental Network, making sure patient voice informs improvements in dental care.

Winter



We were out and about in the community again, this time gathering people's views to help shape Somerset Integrated Care System's forward plan for joined up health and care in the county.



We evaluated people's experiences of being discharged from hospital and transferred to be cared for at home or in the community, and we highlighted Somerset's current and future plans to improve patient care.

Connecting with communities across the county



“

My wife is dyslexic so is unable to use the GP website, but when she phones she is told to use the website.

“

The district nurses were angels.



“

Frequently no appointments available. I don't actually know how to see a doctor.

“

I feel as though I was discharged early because they needed my bed.



10 years of improving care

This year marks a special milestone for Healthwatch. Over the last ten years, people have shared their experiences, good and bad, to help improve health and social care. A big thank you to all our Healthwatch Heroes who have stepped up and inspired change. Here are a few of our highlights:

How have we made care better, together?

Making care better for young people

We supported young people to speak up and influence change and improvement in the health and social care services they use, including better communication and more joined up services.



Improving support for patients waiting for surgery

We alerted the NHS in Somerset about the impact on people's lives of long waits for surgery, informing their improvement planning around patient support.



Monitoring the quality of care homes

We have conducted Enter and View visits to care homes identified by Somerset Council and the CQC and made recommendations around quality of service and the environment.



Using public feedback to improve NHS 111

We evaluated Somerset's NHS 111 service three times between 2018 and 2022, sharing people's feedback with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Somerset NHS to help improve the service over time.



Support for children and families with special needs

In 2019, the Health Visiting Service moved from Somerset NHS to Somerset Council and cuts were announced to support for young children and families with additional needs. We provided the Council with community insight to help them develop the service effectively to ensure positive outcomes for young families.



Healthwatch Hero



Celebrating a hero in our local community

We launched a new project with our parent company, Evolving Communities, to improve the health and wellbeing of people living with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) in Bridgwater. We're building understanding of people's health and care needs and improving community support to help people access services and take positive action to live well.

Nigel is our Healthwatch Hero, because he came forward and shared his experience of undergoing a diagnosis around his lung health and the subsequent treatment. He now volunteers with us to help other people in the same situation. He has benefited from a Lung Health programme and is working with the project officer to set up a similar self-health programme within Bridgwater.

Thanks to Nigel and everyone who shares their views and experiences with us to help make care better and to support our community to stay healthy and well.



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 to help them improve.

Advocating for fairer NHS dentistry

NHS dentistry is in desperate need of reform. In May 2022 we worked with Healthwatch England to move NHS dentistry up the political agenda, and throughout the year we reported on the situation in Somerset and the South West to the NHS Local Dental Network.

With living costs on the rise, concerns over accessibility and affordability have heightened. Healthwatch England's new findings show widening health inequalities as people in every part of the country struggle to pay for dental care.

Local stories informing national change

We shared stories from Somerset to highlight the lack of NHS dental care and the impact on people's health and wellbeing. This helped the Healthwatch England campaign achieve widespread national and regional media coverage and greater awareness among decision makers.

“Sitting in the dentist's office, listening to the cost of treatments brought me to tears. Whenever I eat and feel a twinge my heart drops. I panic that something terrible is happening. There's no version of private dentistry that's affordable.

Lydia, from Somerset

Raising awareness in the region

We arranged for one of our Board members to attend South West Local Dental Network meetings, representing all Healthwatch organisations in the South West. Funding for dental services for each area has now been passed to the relevant ICB. However, NHS England retains some responsibilities and continues to work with each ICB. In particular they remain involved in the letting of dental contracts.

“I just wanted to convey our gratitude and appreciation for the report.

Dr Lou Farbus, Head of Stakeholder Engagement, Direct Commissioning, NHS England South West

What difference will this make?

Decision makers have listened and acted on people's feedback. Nationally NHS England announced changes to the NHS dental contract, including:

- Increasing the payments for dentists when treating patients with complex needs.
- Requiring dental practices to regularly update the national directory to show if they are taking new NHS patients.
- Moving resources from dental practices that are underperforming.

With these changes in place it should be easier for people to find an NHS dentist, alleviating the stress and worry so many suffer when they cannot afford to go private.

Accessible and useful GP websites

Part of Somerset's 'Digital Vision' is for people to have high quality, affordable and sustainable care, supported by digital systems that help people to maintain and manage their health and wellbeing.

Since COVID-19, GP surgeries have increased digital access to services and information, including booking appointments online and virtual consultations. However, we continue to hear about the difficulties people face when trying to access GP services, which also puts pressure on other parts of the health care system.

We asked people to tell us more about their experiences, touring the county so we could talk to people in person, and we ran an online survey. Our volunteers also reviewed every GP website in Somerset to assess how easy it is for people to find the information they need, as being able to get the right information and advice online can help free up face-to-face appointments for those who are unable to access support in this way.

Our recommendations for improving GP websites:

1. Use simple and uncluttered content and design, ensuring a user-friendly experience.
2. Avoid frequent changes to the look of the website to increase familiarity and user confidence.
3. Provide clear instructions on how to use the website, especially for people who may be unsure or unfamiliar with using websites.
4. Offer more support for people with limited digital knowledge, helping them to use websites/digital services.
5. Respect the needs and preferences of all patients, ensuring that those who do not use digital services are not criticised or excluded.
6. Seek patient input to help develop websites, for example, by working with Patient Participation Groups, NHS Somerset Digital Champions, or by creating a digital participation group.

What difference will this make?

NHS Somerset, who offer support for GP surgeries with their digital outreach, welcomed our report and they are using our findings to help GPs in Somerset improve their websites.



We welcome the report created by Healthwatch around GP websites in Somerset. This provides a great baseline on where to focus first and informs an engagement plan. The Primary Care Access Recovery Plan and national guidance show that websites are important for patients to access services so we are planning to support and engage with practices with their websites during 2023/2024.

Julie Hill, Digital Operations Lead Officer, NHS Somerset

Three ways we have made a difference for the community

Throughout our work we gather information about health inequalities by speaking to people whose experiences aren't often heard.

Creating empathy by bringing experiences to life



It's important for services to see the bigger picture. Hearing personal experiences and the impact on people's lives provides them with a better understanding of the problems.

We support the Carer Aware programme, a partnership between Somerset Council Adult Social Care and local carers services. Three of our volunteers, who have personal caring responsibilities, shared their experiences with social workers and care staff to support their professional development. They discussed navigating the health and care system and what can be done to help carers.

Getting services to involve the public



Services need to understand the benefits of involving local people to help improve care for everyone.

NHS Somerset has introduced a new, same-day, community pharmacy consultation service to help people get quality care and support for minor health conditions more quickly. Community pharmacists are highly qualified clinicians and can offer medical advice for minor injuries and illnesses.

We invited NHS Somerset to join us on our roadshow in May to talk to people about the service and gather feedback to inform future service development.

Improving care over time



Change takes time. We often work behind the scenes with services to consistently raise issues and bring about change.

In Somerset, population health management aims to improve physical and mental health outcomes, promote wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. We worked on a pilot project with South Somerset West Primary Care Network in the autumn, as part of NHS England's action learning programme to promote healthy living and wellbeing. Our staff used their expertise to advise the group on engaging effectively.



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:

- Creating materials in languages other than English.
- Running focus groups for people with sensory loss.
- Working with BSL interpreters to communicate with Deaf and hearing impaired people.
- Engaging with people who are not often heard and who can be isolated, including care home residents, older people, and people with young families.
- Providing face-to-face sessions to gather feedback in the evenings and at weekends to enable people who are working to attend.
- Travelling across our rural county to talk to people from our diverse communities.

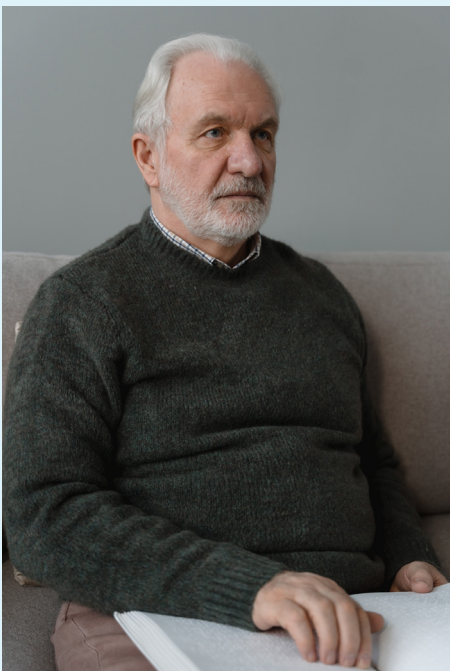
Reducing barriers to care for the Deaf community

We met with the Taunton and Bridgwater Deaf Club to gather feedback on the health and care experiences of the deaf community. With the help of two British Sign Language interpreters we gained valuable insight on the challenges they face when trying to access and interact with health and social care services. The absence of interpreters during medical appointments was a common issue raised; we heard that healthcare professionals often try to communicate in writing, which is inadequate and unsatisfactory.

To address the issues raised and help inform positive change to create a more inclusive system for everyone, regardless of their hearing abilities, we recommended a second, longer meeting, this time accompanied by staff from NHS Somerset and Somerset Council.



Thank you so much for coming to our Deaf club to present and allow us time to give feedback on health services.



Improving access to healthcare information for visually impaired people

As part of our project to improve people's experiences of using GP websites, we engaged with the Macular Society, an organisation dedicated to ending macular disease. Recognising that vision problems can make it challenging to access information through websites, we conducted two focus groups with society members.

They told us they prefer face-to-face appointments or receiving information in writing/accessible formats. Some participants rely on assistance from family members or partners to use online services and information. It became evident that providing accessible formats, such as clear and large print, is crucial to make information more accessible for people with visual impairments.

Through collaboration with the Macular Society, we were able to develop recommendations to support the creation of user-friendly and accessible GP websites, including for those with visual impairments, to empower people to make informed healthcare decisions.



Advice and information

If you feel lost and don't know where to turn, Healthwatch Somerset 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. Whether it's finding an NHS dentist, how to make a complaint or choosing a good care home for a loved one – you can count on us.

This year we've helped people by:

- Providing up to date information people can trust.
- Helping people access the services they need.
- Listening to people's concerns and sharing their feedback with system partners and decision makers.
- Supporting people to look after their health during the cost of living crisis.

Finding out about waiting times for cancer referral

Lucy suspected she had skin cancer on her face. She had previously been treated for cancer so was concerned it had returned. She made an appointment with her GP, who promptly referred her and sent a photo to Dermatology.

Lucy was classified as a one-month referral and given the option to book an appointment at hospital in Bristol or Bath, but there were no appointments available. She felt desperate for an urgent diagnosis because the sore on her face was getting bigger and she wanted to start treatment quickly if necessary.

Lucy asked us what she could do. We contacted the Complaints Manager at NHS Somerset and, with Lucy's permission, they contacted the referral service on her behalf to clarify waiting times. Lucy felt better for speaking to us and relieved that NHS Somerset would clarify the waiting time for her to see a consultant.

We were able to help Lucy navigate the complexities of the healthcare system to get the information she needed.

Support to keep warm at home after leaving hospital

Paula is in her sixties and she has multiple health conditions including COPD. She contacted us to share feedback about her experience of being discharged from hospital.

She explained that she lives alone, receives Universal Credit, and had no hot water or heating as her boiler had been broken for several years. She had been keeping warm with hot water bottles and blankets and washing with hot water from her kettle.

We advised Paula that she might qualify for a government grant to get a new boiler and we put her in touch with the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE), a charity that provides energy saving advice and support. She was delighted to discover that she did qualify for a grant to pay for double glazing and a new boiler.

We were able to connect Paula with the information and support she needed, to bring about positive change that will make a huge difference to her health and wellbeing.



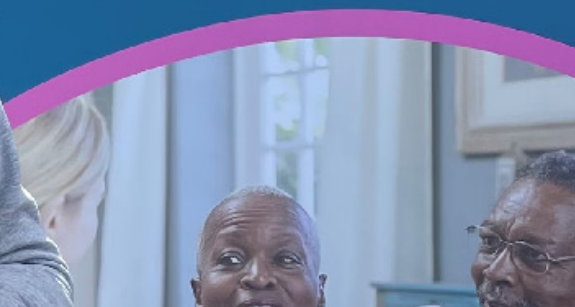
Healthwatch is your health and social care champion.

We make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care.

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0800 999 1286

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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:

- Supported local people to share their views and experiences.
- Conducted Enter and View visits to local services to help them improve.
- Reviewed literature from NHS Somerset to make sure it is easy to read and understand.
- Represented Healthwatch Somerset at meetings with health and social care professionals and decision makers.
- Evaluated GP websites to improve accessibility and user experience.

Sue

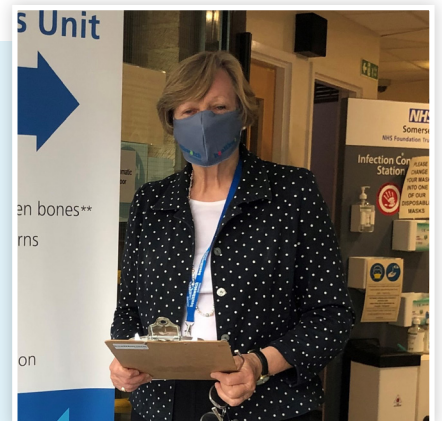
"I joined Healthwatch Somerset as a Board member when I retired after 50 years working in the NHS as a district nurse and then commissioner. I've supported several discussions and surveys with the public about hospital mergers and acute stroke service plans. I've also been part of two working groups with the Somerset Integrated Care Board to help improve the management of falls and urine infections in Somerset, where I think my clinical experience has been put to good use. I feel I have enabled these working groups to think more about our vulnerable patient groups within Somerset."



Wendy

Wendy fits volunteering around her caring role. She was invited to talk to social workers and social care staff about her caring responsibilities, how she has navigated the health and social care system for her mum and the things that could help in her role as a carer.

"I hope telling my experience may help shape services in the future."



Richard

"Helping people to share their experience is important. I spoke to care leavers about if and how they accessed health and care services. It seemed to me the most important thing for them to do was to register with a GP – we gave out leaflets and advised them how to do this.

"I've also been part of the project talking to people discharged from hospital into care homes or community hospitals for rehab before returning home. We hope by telling the stories of the people affected it will make a difference."



Do you feel inspired?

We are always on the lookout for new volunteers, so please get in touch today.

 healthwatchsomerset.co.uk

 **0800 999 1286**

 info@healthwatchsomerset.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

Income		Expenditure	
Annual grant from local authority	£191,912	Expenditure on pay	£93,888
Additional income	£2,140	Non-pay expenditure	£33,646
		Office and management fee	£61,411
Total income	£194,052	Total expenditure	£188,945

Additional funding is broken down by:

- **£1,000** from Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group to support partnership working on the Healthwatch Somerset Roadshow.
- **£540** from Somerset NHS Foundation Trust for public engagement work on the Trust merger
- **£600** from Somerset ICB for engagement work to support people's experiences of neurological rehabilitation.

Next steps

In the ten years since Healthwatch was launched, we've demonstrated the power of public feedback in helping the health and care system understand what is working, spot issues and think about how things can be better in the future.

Services are currently facing unprecedented challenges and supporting access to Primary Care in Somerset needs to be a key priority for the NHS to ensure everyone gets the care they need. Over the next year we will continue our role in collecting feedback from everyone in our local community and giving them a voice to help shape improvements to services. We will also continue our work to tackle inequalities and work to reduce the barriers you face when accessing care, regardless of whether that is because of where you live, your income, your ethnic background or your gender.

Top four priorities for 2023-24

1. Improving access to mental health support for young people.
2. Reducing barriers people experience when accessing services: GP appointments.
3. Tackling health inequalities: access to NHS dental care and support for oral health.
4. Intermediate care: short-term care to help people recover after illness or hospital.



Statutory statements

Healthwatch Somerset, Woodlands House, Woodlands Business Park, Bristol Road, Bridgwater, TA6 4FJ.

Healthwatch Somerset is hosted by Evolving Communities CIC, a community interest company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales with company number 08464602. The registered office is at Unit 2, Hampton Park West, Melksham, SN12 6LH.

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

The way we work

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

Our Healthwatch Board consists of seven members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our Board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Throughout 2022/23 the Board met seven times and made decisions on matters such as the Healthwatch England Quality Assurance Framework and our priority projects and workplan.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities.

Methods and systems used across the year to obtain people's experiences

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of using services. During 2022/23 we have been available by phone, email, through social media and via our website contact form. We have also attended meetings of community groups and forums.

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, announce it in the press, on social media and in our monthly news bulletin. We will share it with our stakeholders and present it at an online and face-to-face launch in summer 2023.

Responses to recommendations

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

Taking people's experiences to decision makers

We ensure that people who can make decisions about services hear about the insights and experiences that have been shared with us. In our local authority area, for example, we take information to the Health and Wellbeing Board, Integrated Care Partnership, Safeguarding Adults Board and our contacts within adult social care, public health and children's services.

We also take insight and experiences to decision makers in NHS Somerset ICB. For example, we sit on the ICB, we attend the Integrated Care System Engagement Leaders Group, we chair the Carers Strategic Partnership Board, and we sit on the System Quality Group Meetings. We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Somerset is represented on the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board and Integrated Care Partnership Board by Judith Goodchild, Local Board Chair. During 2022/23 Judith has effectively carried out this role by attending meetings and workshops, making sure that the public, patient and service user voice is included in the thinking and decisions of the board. Other Board members also attend meetings to represent us at a strategic level.

Healthwatch Somerset is represented on the Somerset Integrated Care Board by Judith Goodchild.

Enter and View

This year, we made three Enter and View visits. One was a standard Enter and View visit, while the other two were part of our work around transfer of care.

Location	Reason for visit	What we did as a result
The Rosary Nursing Home, Bridgwater Read our report: healthwatchsomerset.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/EV-The-Rosary-Bridgwater-Aug-2022-final-report.pdf	Part of our ongoing partnership working with Somerset Council and CQC to support quality monitoring of residential care homes in the county.	We wrote a report with five recommendations to inform the improvement plan for the care home.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Glastonbury Care Home• Oake Meadows Care Home, Taunton Read our report: healthwatchsomerset.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Transfer-to-care-report-final-April-2023.r.pdf	As part of our Transfer to Care/Discharge to Assess project we used Enter & View principles to undertake these visits.	Findings were shared with Intermediate Care Services to take forward to their discharge improvement meetings and to action any learning from the visit.

2022–2023 Outcomes

Project/activity	Changes made to services
<p>People’s experiences of using GP websites to access information</p> <p>Read our report: healthwatchsomerset.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/GP-websites-report-final.r-Oct2022.pdf</p>	<p>NHS Somerset are using our findings and recommendations to help improve digital services. Their current work includes helping GP practices to provide and promote a range of excellent digital services, such as websites that make it easier for patients and carers to find information, online consultations as a helpful way to speak to GPs and other health professionals, and use of the NHS App to help people manage their health and wellbeing. They are also working with community and health and care partners to provide training via digital champions in the community to support the use of digital technology.</p>
<p>Supported transfer of care from hospitals: Evaluating people’s experiences to help shape improvements in care</p> <p>Read our report: healthwatchsomerset.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Transfer-to-care-report-final-April-2023.r.pdf</p>	<p>While we worked on this project, hospitals in Somerset were making changes to their discharge and transfer processes, so we shared our findings with them and highlighted some of their improvements in our report. This includes the introduction of a new discharge lounge at Musgrove Park Hospital in Taunton, to free up beds for new patients and make it easier for patients who no longer need hospital care to return to their home. Also, Somerset NHS Foundation Trust which manages our hospitals introduced Ready to Go Units. These focus on rehabilitation to help patients get the best care for their needs, and to support them to regain independence so that they can go back to their normal lives.</p>
<p>Same Day Urgent Care in Somerset</p> <p>Read our initial report: healthwatchsomerset.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/West-Somerset-SDUC-report-June22r-final.pdf</p>	<p>Throughout the year we have been working with our parent company, Evolving Communities, to gather the views of people from across Somerset about same day urgent care. We are carrying out this work independently for NHS Somerset to inform their ongoing review into how urgent care is provided in Somerset. We reported back regularly to them during the year, and all our reports will be published.</p>

Project/activity	Changes made to services
Somerset Dementia Wellbeing Service	We were involved in the development of this new service in Somerset. We provided feedback on the website (somersestdementia.org), contributed to the carers education programme, and promoted the new service during our countywide tour.
Hyper-acute stroke work with NHS Somerset	We contributed to the working group, making sure public and patients views were represented during the consultation on hyper-acute stroke services in Somerset.
Dentistry in the South West: Quarterly feedback reports from local Healthwatch	We collated quarterly feedback data for local Healthwatch in the South West and reported on this to the NHS Local Dental Network. They are using this data to make sure patient voice informs their decisions about development of NHS dental care.



In the last ten years, the health and social care landscape has changed dramatically, but the dedication of local Healthwatch hasn't. Your local Healthwatch has worked tirelessly to make sure the views of local people are heard, and NHS and social care leaders use your feedback to make care better.

Louise Ansari, Healthwatch National Director



Thank you

We want to thank everyone who has shared stories and feedback with us. Health and social care services need to know about your experiences to understand what works well and what doesn't, and to see how things can be done differently. Your feedback really does make a difference, to services in Somerset and nationally, so please continue to work with us to make health and social care better.

We also want to thank those who work in health and social care, for providing such vital services, for valuing the voice of local people, and for contributing your insight and experience to help make care better.

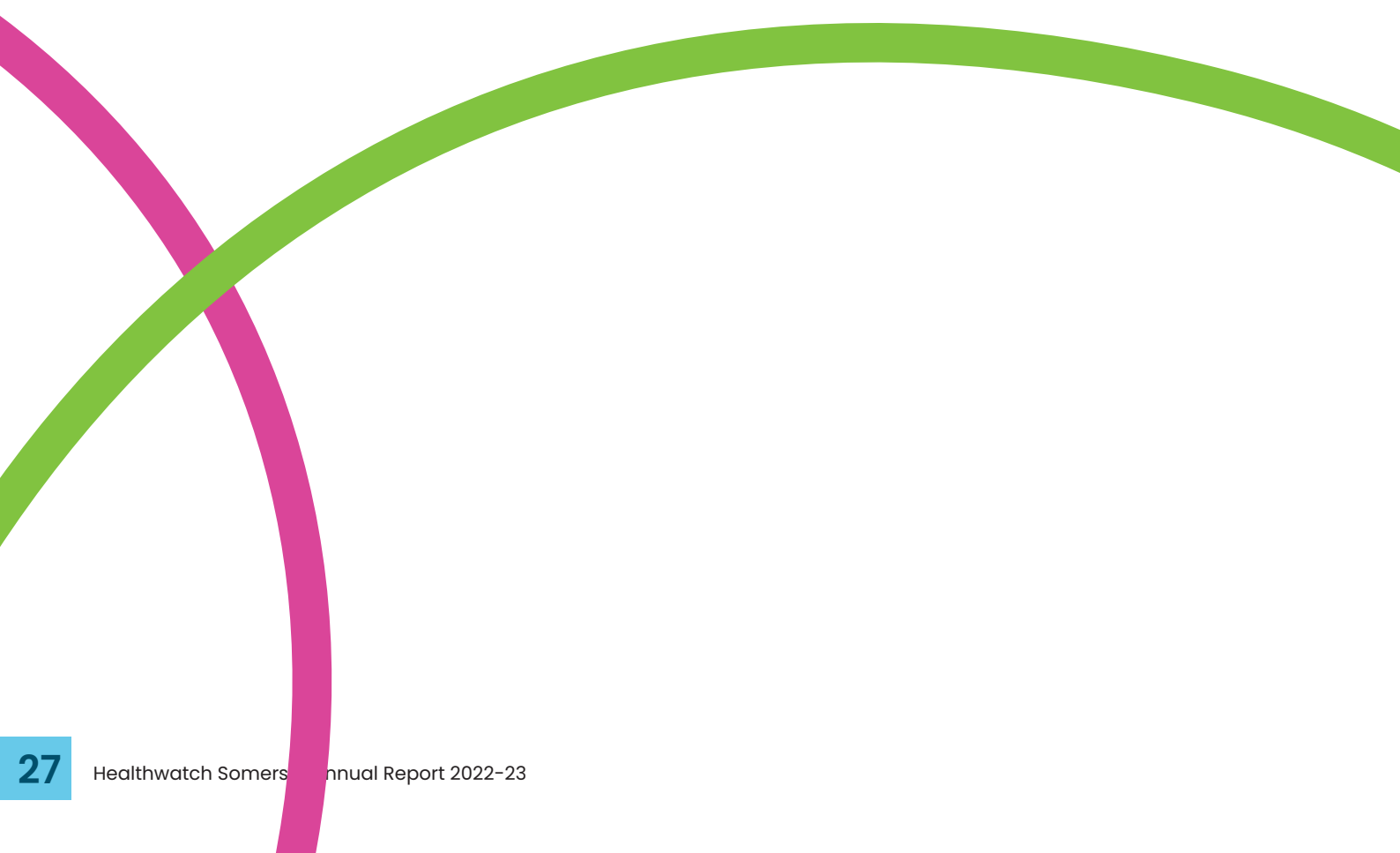
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Healthwatch Somerset have had a successful 12 months demonstrating a continued improvement in embedding its service in Somerset. They have gathered comments and feedback from the public on health and social care matters and represented people's voices at multiple forums, professional meetings and boards across the system. The service has progressed positively with the development of their social media activities and engagement which has seen noticeable growth in followers across all platforms.

They have successfully worked through the 2022/2023 Priority Work Plan. Some of the highlights this year have been the completion of projects such as understanding people's experiences of using GP websites to access information; the merger engagement relating to Yeovil Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and Somerset Foundation Trust; carrying out Enter and Views visits to support the review of hospital discharges and include people's experience of moving through pathways.

In doing so, Healthwatch Somerset has continued to support and influence decisions of current and future commissioning activities.

Céline Antier, Senior Commissioning Officer, Somerset Council





healthwatch

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