



New CEO announced

The community interest company which runs the Healthwatch Somerset service has announced the appointment of a new Chief Executive Officer - Mary Curran.

Evolving Communities CIC has hired Mary (pictured) to replace Emma Cooper, who revealed in October she would be leaving to take up a post with a national charity.

Mary, who will start in April, brings extensive skills and experience gained from working in a range of roles across local government as well as the charity sector.

She said: "Healthwatch is so important in making sure that local people's voices are heard. It's up to us to champion people's views on the quality of services they experience and what they want to see change in their area."

"I'm looking forward to building on the excellent foundations laid, and sharing good practice across Somerset. I am delighted to have been appointed and am really looking forward to getting started." [Read more...](#)



Farewell to Emma

Staff and volunteers got together this week to thank CEO Emma Cooper for all her work during the last four years leading Evolving Communities.

Emma left on Friday (19 January) to take up an area manager role with national charity Parkinson's UK. Emma said: "One of the highlights of my job as CEO has been working with colleagues to put in place a really good quality volunteer programme which sees local people from all walks of life get involved in the important work of Healthwatch.

"I am very grateful for having had the opportunity to play a part in the national and local development of Healthwatch and I would like to thank everyone at Evolving Communities and others I've worked with over the years for all their support and encouragement.

"I'd also like to welcome Mary Curran to the role and hope she enjoys her time with Evolving Communities as much as I have."

"Volunteering saved my life"

A former aircraft engineer who lost his leg in a car accident has said volunteering has been a lifesaver for him.



Cliff Puddy, from Burnham-on-Sea, has volunteered with Healthwatch Somerset for the last five years and is now urging others to consider joining him as a volunteer for the organisation.

73-year-old Cliff said: “If it hadn’t been for volunteering, I would be sitting in the house staring at the same four walls and with no real purpose. At one point I was so low I would have taken my own life.

“Being able to get out of the house and meet people who treat me as a human being means all the difference. Volunteering really saved my life.”

[Read](#) Cliff's full story and find out how you can join Healthwatch Somerset's volunteering programme.

Meet and greet us this month!

Staff from Healthwatch Somerset will be raising awareness about volunteering opportunities this month in the county.



There will be two volunteer events: Tuesday 23 January, 10:30am – 2:30pm at the Wellbeing Zone, Yeovil Library, King George Street, Yeovil BA20 1PY. And on Monday 29 January, from 11.30am to 2.30pm, at Minehead Library, Bancks Street, Minehead, TA24 5DJ.

Jacquie Franks, Development Officer, will be on hand to chat about current volunteering opportunities. People can also share any recent experiences of health or social care. For the most up to date events visit [the online diary](#).

Healthwatch Somerset is the county’s independent health and care champion. We exist to ensure that people are at the heart of care.

Our dedicated team of staff and volunteers listen to what people like about local health and care services, and what could be improved.

These views are then shared with the decision-making organisations in the county, so together we can make a real difference.



The Healthwatch Somerset service is run by Evolving Communities CIC, a community interest company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales with

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