



Five ways to give feedback

Share your experiences of local health and care services and make it better for everyone - that's the message from Healthwatch Somerset as it celebrated its fifth birthday this month.

Over the last few months, staff (pictured above) and volunteers have been out and about in Somerset visiting community hubs to encourage more local people to volunteer with the Bridgwater-based organisation to help shape health and care in the county.

Emily Taylor, Healthwatch Somerset Manager, said: "As we celebrate our fifth birthday, our real focus is now on talking to more people than ever before through a strong network of volunteers." [Find out five ways to leave feedback.](#)

New CEO joins Healthwatch Somerset

Mary Curran (pictured) joined Healthwatch Somerset this month as its new Chief Executive Officer and plans to spend the first 100 days meeting staff, volunteers and stakeholders to understand local issues and concerns.

Mary, a former CEO of the North-East based learning disability charity Journey Enterprises, said: "The first 100 days in a new role are a really valuable time for a CEO. You don't yet know the detail of the organisation, so you can use the time to ask 'Why?' which really has its advantages. I'll be taking every opportunity to get to know the business, the people involved and how it functions.



"I'll also be focused on understanding the health and social care issues that local people really care about, because that's why we are here." [Read more...](#)

Views wanted over changes to GP surgeries

Healthwatch Somerset wants to hear people's views on any planned amalgamation of surgeries to ensure patients have a say in the future of their local healthcare.



Milverton Surgery in Taunton closed in February this year and others may have to merge with other surgeries.

Emily Taylor, Healthwatch Somerset Manager, said: "Any closure of a GP surgery could have the potential to effect the local community - whether this is through access, transport issues or longer waiting times.

"Healthwatch Somerset is here to listen to the voices of local people on health and social care services, therefore, we would welcome feedback from local

people about this issue. We will then share this anonymised information with the organisations which plan and pay for local health services.”

People can get in touch by calling 01278 264405 or emailing info@healthwatchesomerset.co.uk.



New Volunteer Officer

The new Volunteer Officer for Healthwatch Somerset aims to recruit more people to join the organisation to help shape local health and care services.

Julie Draper, from Bridgwater, (pictured) has joined Healthwatch Somerset and her main role will be focusing on recruiting new volunteers and supporting existing ones.

Julie said: "I'm looking forward to bringing all of my skills and knowledge of working with volunteers in the community to this role and would like Healthwatch Somerset to be known to everyone." [Read more...](#)

Out and about this month

Staff and volunteers from Healthwatch Somerset want to meet you and hear your views on local health and care.

Volunteer Officer Julie Draper and volunteers will be at a community drop-in event in Bridgwater Town Hall on Thursday, 10 May from 10am until 2pm.



The event, organised by Compass Disability Services in partnership with Sedgemoor District Council, is for anyone living with a long-term health condition, disability or caring for someone living in Sedgemoor. They will be asking people for their feedback about the 111 Service, and also encouraging new volunteers to join Healthwatch Somerset.

Jacque Franks, Healthwatch Somerset Development Officer, will be at the Carers Voice Roadshow with a stand to encourage new volunteers and get feedback from the public on local health and care services on Wednesday, 23 May from 9.30am to 12.30pm at The Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard, TA20 1PP. Visit our [events calendar](#) for more details.

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 company number 08464602. The registered office is at Unit 5 Hampton Park West, Melksham, SN12 6LH.

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