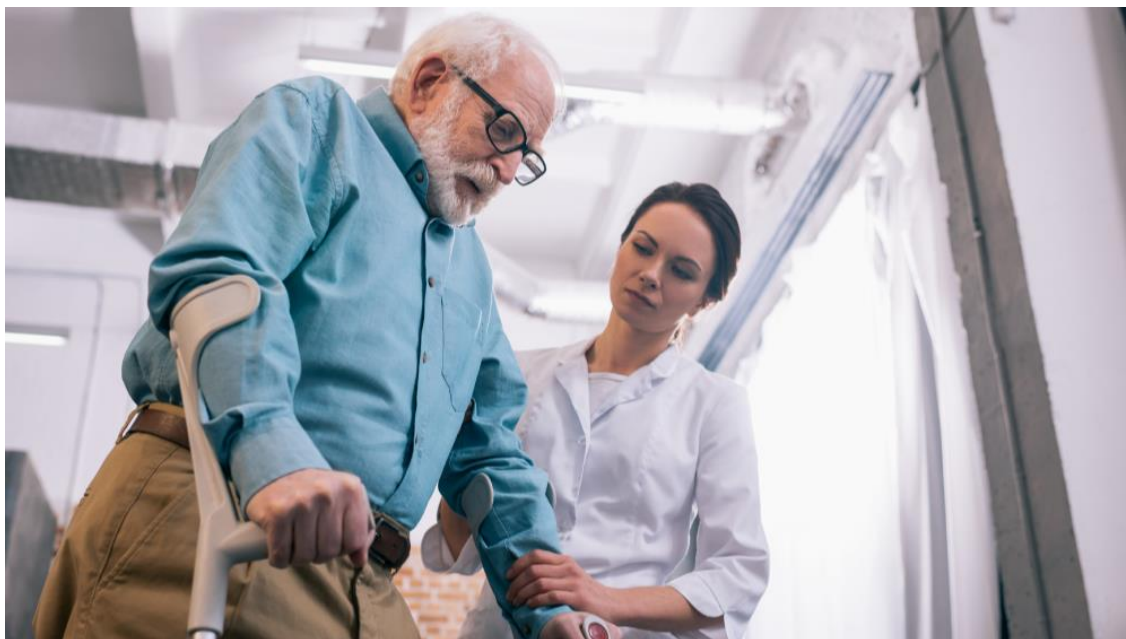


How have you been affected by waiting for surgery?



We have launched a new project to investigate how the length of time waiting for surgery impacts on people's lives, health and well-being. We will share our findings with Somerset's hospital providers and commissioners to help them understand how to improve patients' experience as they wait for treatment.



If you or someone you know is on a waiting list for surgery in Somerset, or you recently had to wait for surgery, please share your experiences by completing our [short online survey](#) by 6 September 2021, or get in touch to arrange a convenient time to feedback over the phone – call Freephone 0800 999 1286 or email: info@healthwatchsomerset.co.uk.

[Find out more about this project and NHS waiting times.](#)

New Manager joins Healthwatch Somerset

Gillian Keniston-Goble joined Healthwatch Somerset this month as our new Manager. With twenty years' experience working in the community and voluntary sector, primarily in adult education, Gillian understands the value of connecting and collaborating with local communities to deliver effective services that meet people's needs. [Find our more.](#)



Gillian said: "My work in the community and my experience of being a carer for fifteen years, has given me an insight into the issues that people can face in their day to day lives. I am excited to be part of Healthwatch in Somerset and by the opportunities this presents to give people a voice in how local health and social care services are developed and delivered."

Young Listeners focus on health and social care system in schools



Our Young Listeners met face to face for the first time this month. They made some important decisions about their project, including the areas they want to focus on as they engage with other young people to improve health and care services in Somerset.

Their research and `listenings` will be centred around improving the school system's effect on how young people interact with the health and social care services in Somerset. Subtopics for investigation will include the LGBTQ+ community and the issues they face, access to GPs, and mental health and wellbeing support, including eating disorders. [Read the latest project blog to find out more.](#)

Help improve hospital outpatient services in the South West

Do you have experience of outpatient care in the last two years? Are you interested in helping the NHS to improve outpatient services in hospitals across the South West? If so, the NHS England Improvement team would like to hear from you. They are looking for people to take part in a Patient and Public Advisory Reference Group.

For more information and to register your interest [click here](#). To learn more about how the NHS is transforming outpatient services for patients, visit: [NHS England » Outpatient Transformation Programme](#).



Updated hospital discharge guidance reflects public feedback



National guidance on hospital discharge has been updated to reflect recommendations made by Healthwatch England, based on the experiences of nearly 600 people who left hospital during the pandemic. This is a great example of what can be accomplished with your feedback. [Find out more](#).

Later in the year we will be evaluating the effectiveness of the supported discharge process (Pathway 3) in Somerset, by investigating patients' experiences of moving from hospital into care homes and care at home due to their continuing care needs. [Read more](#).

NHS in Somerset reminds people to wear face masks when using healthcare services

As most legal restrictions relating to Covid-19 were lifted this month, Somerset NHS and Public Health are reminding people that Public Health England's infection prevention and control guidelines and hospital visiting guidance will remain in place for all patients and visitors in Somerset. You must continue to wear a face mask or face covering if you are attending an appointment at your GP practice, optometrist, dentist, pharmacy, or hospital. Patients and visitors will also be expected to follow all social distancing rules in healthcare settings, as before, to help protect the most vulnerable people and support health and care staff. [Read more.](#)



Share our news

If you know someone who would be interested in keeping up to date with our news, please share this bulletin and the [sign-up link](#).



Speak up and help make health and social care better
for you and your community

Healthwatch Somerset is the county's independent health and social 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. We serve the geographical area of Somerset County Council, which includes the districts of Mendip, Sedgemoor, South Somerset and Somerset West and Taunton.



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 2 Hampton Park West, Melksham, SN12 6LH.



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