



Season's Greetings

As 2019 draws to a close we'd like to thank all our volunteers and the people who have shared their views about health and care in Somerset over the past year - it is your enthusiasm and support that will help improve services in our county.

We started the year with the publication of Healthwatch England's priorities list. After engaging with over 400,000 people across the country, the top three issues were primary care (including access to GPs), children and young people and mental health.

Here's a quick recap of some of the highlights from our year at Healthwatch Somerset:

- In February we asked parents of young children in Somerset to share their views and experiences about the health visiting services they have received in the County.
 - We took to the roads in March on our Campervan and comments tour where we spoke to over 400 people and covered 260 miles in a classic 1969 VW campervan.
 - We asked people in Somerset to share their views about how they want local health services to improve in the NHS Long Term Plan. Over 260 people participated and we collated your feedback into a report which we shared with Healthwatch England and other partners in early Summer.
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- People spoke to us about the Somerset County Council Adult Safeguarding Service; end of life care and the wishes of patients; special care dental services; and how they access information, support and advice when they are ill, looking after someone or finding it difficult to manage living at home.

All in all, it's been a busy year. We celebrated our sixth birthday in June and said goodbye to Healthwatch Somerset Manager Emily Taylor and Volunteer Officer Julie Draper. We have welcomed three new staff members including our new manager Hannah Gray. It has been a great privilege to support the people of Somerset and make sure you have the opportunity to share your experiences of health and care.

We wish you the all the best for the Christmas season and the coming year.

The Healthwatch Somerset team



Office opening hours at Christmas

The Healthwatch Somerset office will be closed from 5pm on Friday 20 December for a Christmas break and staff will be back in the office on Wednesday 2 January.

Local Board members wanted to help shape Somerset health and care

People with a passion for seeing local health and social care services changed for the better are being sought by the county's independent health and social care champion.



Healthwatch Somerset, which has an important role in assessing the quality of local health and social care services and influencing the design of future services, is looking for local people to join their Board, a group of volunteers who help the team shape their workplan.

Hannah Gray, Healthwatch Somerset Manager, explained: "We welcome interest from all parts of the local community. We're looking for local people with a passionate interest in helping the local community shape the way their health and social care services are run."

“Although not essential, if people have knowledge or experience in social care, children and young people, mental health, equalities and diversity this would be beneficial.”

Healthwatch Somerset Local Board members will oversee and contribute to the work programme and play a crucial role in monitoring its delivery. The Board will also play a part in supporting the organisation to adhere to its principles, purpose and vision, ensuring that it operates in a moral and ethical way.

Judith Goodchild (pictured), Chair of the Healthwatch Somerset Local Board feels volunteering at Healthwatch is a great way to champion the voices of people in the local community. She said: “All of us hear concerns expressed by people we work with, from neighbours and from people we meet socially about the current state of the NHS and Social Care. By volunteering for Healthwatch you are in a position to raise these concerns and as an organisation we can bring them to the attention of the decision makers. [Read more...](#)



Dorothy House Hospice Care seeks to improve services for people with life-limiting illness

Dorothy House Hospice Care wants to hear from those with a life-limiting illness, their carers and families about what Day Services they think would improve their wellbeing.

Working through research consultancy Evolving Communities, Dorothy House is carrying out research about their current Day Services and wants to find out if they are providing the right information and activities to support patients and families.

The information gathered from the research will be used to develop and shape Dorothy House’s future provision of Day Services.

Dorothy House want to hear from people who are living with a life-limiting illness, carers/family members/close friends and people working closely with people who have a life-limiting illness. Dorothy House supports people from Bath and North East Somerset and parts of Wiltshire and Somerset. [Read more...](#)



Share your views with us

We are always happy to hear your views on health and care in Somerset. You can email us at info@healthwatchesomerset.co.uk, phone us on

01278 264405 or contact us on one of our social media platforms using the icons at the bottom of this e-bulletin.

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.

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