

March 2019 e-bulletin

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healthwatch
Somerset



Roadshow aims to put Somerset people in the driving seat on health and social care issues

Staff and volunteers from the county's independent health and care champion will be taking to the roads of Somerset in March to find out what people think about their local health and care services.

Healthwatch Somerset aims to speak to at least 500 people from all corners of the county as part of its 'Campervan and Comments Tour'.

The roadshow will travel almost 260 miles zig-zagging around Somerset in a classic 1969 VW campervan and park up at key locations around the county to gather the views of people of all ages.

[More details...](#)

Former ambulanceman urges people to have their say about changes to the NHS



Healthcare in Somerset will only work if people get to have their say - urges former ambulanceman Bob Champion.

82-year-old Bob, from Shepton Mallet, is encouraging others to speak out as part of 'What Would You do?', led by independent health and social care champion Healthwatch Somerset.

Launched today, the What would you do? aims to encourage people in Somerset to share their views about how extra money from the Government should be spent on local NHS services.

The Government is investing £20 billion a year in the NHS as part of the NHS Long Term Plan. Local organisations are now being asked to explore how services should change locally to make the NHS work better for people. [More details...](#)

You can talk to Healthwatch Somerset Staff and volunteers during the [Campervan and Comments Tour - 15-22 March](#) or take an online survey, at www.healthwatch.co.uk/what-would-you-do

what
would you do?
It's your NHS. Have your say.



Volunteer training day

We recently held a training day in Bridgwater for our fantastic team of volunteers. Guest speaker Nick Hubbard from the Citizen's Advice Bureau gave an insight on Social Prescribing, and Jo Smith from Somerset County Council's Public Health Team gave a very informative talk on the 'Family Support Service'.

Healthwatch Somerset's manager Emily Taylor gave an update on our priorities for 2019/2020 and volunteers were then given the opportunity to feedback.

The day concluded with an update by Julie Draper, volunteer officer for Healthwatch Somerset. Julie spoke about our forthcoming '[Campervan and Comments Tour](#)' and the importance of getting out and about in the community talking to the general public; she also thanked the volunteers for the 301.5 hours that they have contributed over the last three months.

Julie is always looking for new volunteers to join the team – If you would like to know more about our volunteering opportunities please contact Julie on julie.draper@healthwatchsomerset.co.uk or 01278 264405.

Photo by Stephen Sharples.



Young carers share their views

On 30 January, Healthwatch Somerset Manager, Emily Taylor, and Board member, Virginia Roberts were invited by Young Carers to hear their views on the services they receive from the Somerset Young Carers Service.

They told us how important the service was to their health and wellbeing and we had the opportunity to record their feedback. We are currently writing a report that we will share with key stakeholders and on our website very soon.



Fit for my future - an update

From October to December last year the Fit for my Future team held 18 drop-in sessions across Somerset (many of which staff and volunteers from Healthwatch Somerset attended), four Facebook video chats and received 659 responses to their questionnaire.

Here are a few of the things they heard from the public:

- 49% of respondents agreed they should concentrate more specialist care services (like stroke) in fewer places, even if it means some patients and their visitors have to travel further. 33% didn't agree, with 18% unsure.
- Decisions shouldn't be made on the basis of funds alone - "This should not be based on a cost-cutting exercise but promoted as a way of ensuring that a patient receives the very best care."
- Several people said that if mental health issues were 'self-inflicted' i.e. through drug abuse and lifestyle choice, it shouldn't receive the same priority as physical health.
- Many thought that staffing levels must be adequate enough to support a community approach - it's important not to 'dilute' expertise.
- 94% of respondents agreed that the same high quality support from urgent and emergency care services should be provided to everyone in Somerset 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Some thought this was already the case: "Not sure it's that difficult just now. Call your GP during weekday, and 111 out of hours."

You can read more about Somerset's ideas for health and care, as well as what you think they missed by downloading their engagement report:

<https://bit.ly/2GJgkLY>.



Out and about in March

Campervan Tour 15 to 22 March

[Find out more here...](#)

Langport

Every Monday 10am – 12pm

Our volunteer Ann will be at the Talking Café, The Angel, Bow Street

Glastonbury

6 March from 10am – 12pm

Our volunteer Jill will be at Glastonbury Library

We will be out talking to families of young children about their experiences of the

Health Visiting service:

- **Yeovil**

1 March from 10am – 11:30am

Parent and Toddlers Group, Preston Road Methodist Church,

- **Wincanton**

5 March 10:30am – 11am

Rhyme Time, Wincanton Library

- **Chard**

11 March 10:30am – 11am

Toddler Time, Chard Library

- **Crewkerne**

25 March 10:30am – 11am

Toddler Time, Crewkerne Library

- **Street**

March 09:30am – 11:30am

Parents and Toddler Group, Salvation Army, Street

- **Bridgwater**

March 09:30am – 11:30am

Parents and Toddlers Group, Salvation Army, Bridgwater

- **Minehead**

March 14:30pm – 15:00pm

Rhyme Time, Minehead Library

- **Iminster**

March, 10:00am – 10:45am

Baby Boogie, Iminster Library

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.



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 4 Hampton Park West, Melksham, SN12 6LH.



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01278 264405

Woodlands House, Woodlands Business Park, Bristol Road, Bridgwater TA16 4FJ