



Hundreds share how they access information when they are ill

People in Somerset looking for health advice and support want to see better access to their GP to get the information they need, rather than looking online for help.

Research carried out by Healthwatch Somerset reveals 46% of people surveyed encountered difficulties in accessing information, advice and support when they needed it.

Over 230 people responded to a survey and the findings are now published in the new report ['Accessing Information about Health and Support in Somerset.'](#)

New manager set to join us

The experience of caring for a terminally ill relative has given Hannah Gray a real passion for ensuring local people have their say on health and social care services in Somerset.

Hannah, who will join Healthwatch Somerset as Manager next week, found it difficult to access the right health services when she was a carer. This led the former legal secretary to begin studies in Health and Social Care and make the career change into the health sector.



She says she is looking forward to bringing her previous skills and experience to help people in the county have a say on local health and social care services: "I am passionate about ensuring every voice is heard and believe in the power of the collective public voice to shape the health and care services they access."



Climate change and the NHS

The NHS in the South West want your suggestions to help them deliver environmentally friendly health services.

The South West Clinical Senate and Citizens' Assembly will meet in November to explore the topic of climate change and how the NHS can deliver health care in an environmentally friendly way.

They are asking members of the public: 'In light of climate change, and our need to reduce carbon emissions, what would be your top three suggestions about how the NHS could deliver environmentally friendly health care services?' Please send your answers by Monday 4 November to: rachel.perry12@nhs.net

Volunteers get their teeth into their work!

Spending a whole morning at the dentist sounds like a terrible idea but nothing could have been further from the truth for two Healthwatch Somerset volunteers!





Anne Clark and Rena Randall (pictured) asked patients to complete the NHS questionnaire at the Taunton Dental Access Centre and the pair report they were so glad they did.

They said: "The staff at the centre were unbelievably welcoming and the patients offered to complete the questionnaire with smiles on their faces even after a dental visit! It was great to talk to so many people. Never has a visit to the dentist been so enjoyable!"

The feedback will now go back to NHS England and NHS Improvement to help shape future services.

Out and about in the community

We will be representing the public views at strategic meetings this month and getting out and about to hear your views on local health and social care services. We will be at:



- Taunton Library on Thursday 31 October, 10am – 12noon. Come and meet our volunteer Anne Clark and share your views.
- South West Citizen Assembly meeting in Taunton on Thursday 7 November.

Visit our [events calendar](#) for more details.

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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