healthwatch
Somerset

local health and care shaped by you

Impact Report

2018

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Our vision

is for better health and care in **Somerset** which is shaped by the voices of **local people.**

Photo by Siobhan Boyle.

Welcome

This has been a year of change with the contract for managing Healthwatch Somerset moving to another organisation, Evolving Communities.

The focus of work prior to the transition were two patient surveys. One about public perception of the services offered by their general practice which was reported to the Health and Wellbeing Board. The other, more in depth, about isolation and loneliness which is known to be a cause underpinning both physical and mental wellbeing.

Since Evolving Communities has taken over there has been a clear focus on issues that are causing concern to members of the public and, on their behalf, questions have been asked to the relevant authorities. Relationships with the Clinical Commissioning Group are much stronger now and Healthwatch Somerset is committed to being part of more decision-making bodies representing the public's point of view.

We aim to increase the number of volunteers which will enable Healthwatch Somerset to have a presence in the wider community and also publicise our work to a wider audience.

These are early days and the Interim Board, together with staff, are working hard to set up the new organisation so that in future it can go from strength to strength benefitting the people of Somerset.

M Curran

Mary Curran
CEO of parent company Evolving Communities

J Goodchild

Judith Goodchild
Chair of Healthwatch Somerset

Photo by Siobhan Boyle.

The last year at a glance*

A new local office with

3

staff members was set up in Bridgwater.

We have visited

37

local venues to meet the public and find out their views. Places like libraries, carers groups, memory cafes and local support groups.

Over

8,700

people have looked for information on our website, the most popular topics looked at – vacancies, our team and news.

Our new ebulletin reaches

190

members of the public each month to share feedback and our news.

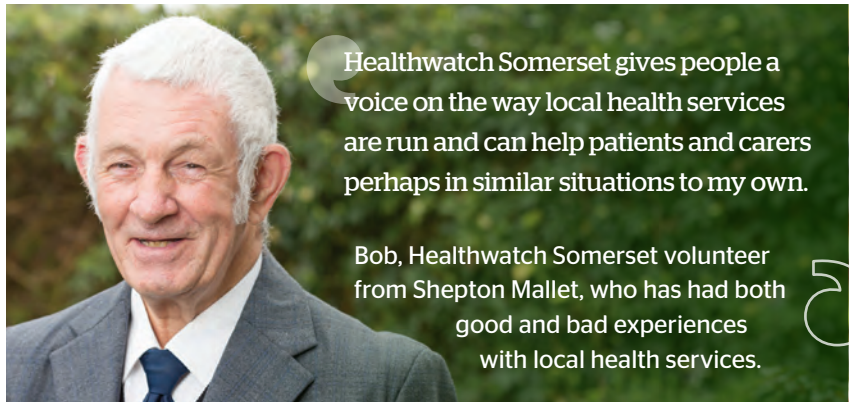
125

hours have been given by our new volunteers.

15

new volunteers joined to give up their time to support our work.

*Evolving Communities began running the contract for Healthwatch Somerset from 1 October 2017. These figures are from 1 October 2017 to April 2018.



Photos by Tim Gander.

We have listened to over

80

views from local people on health and care in Somerset.

We are connecting with local health services and have visited

+5

settings including Yeovil Hospital, Musgrove Park Hospital and Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

Your views and the stories you share with us are helping to make care better for our local community.

Who we are

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.

People can also speak to us to find information about health and social care services available locally.

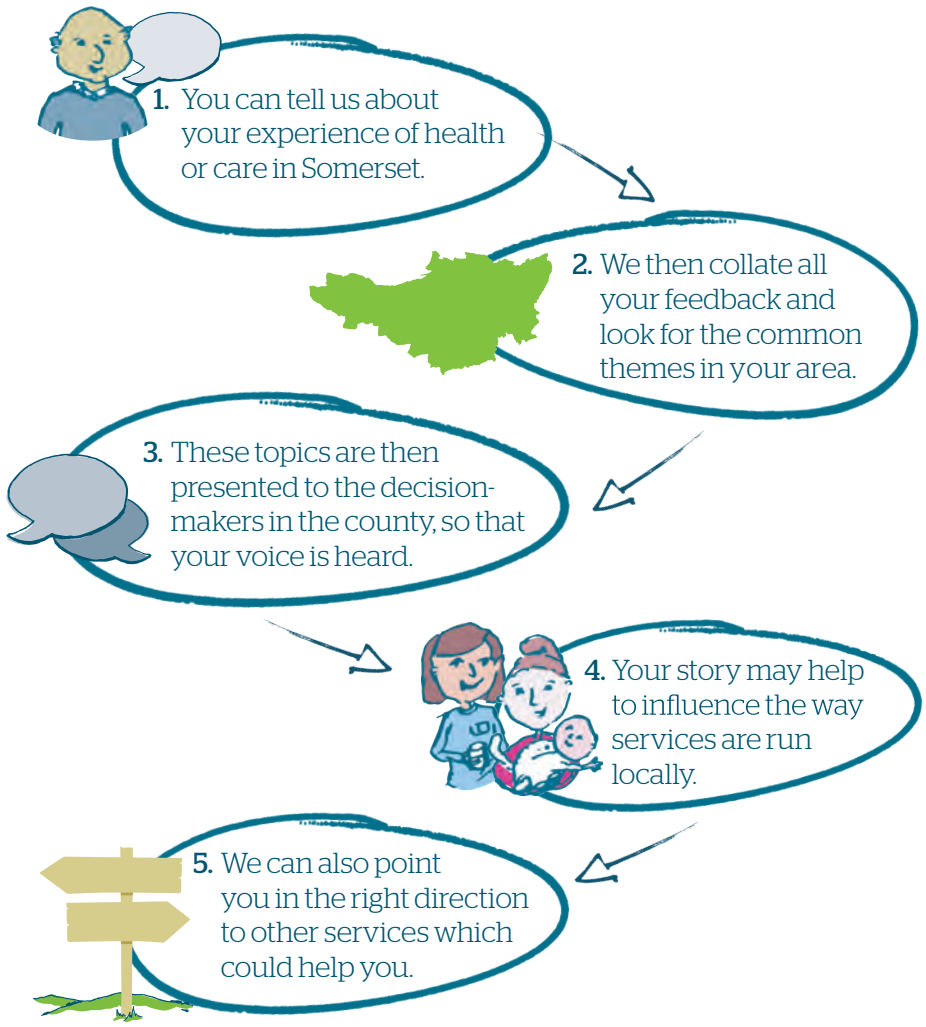
What you tell us

> The triage system at my GP practice is needed, but it was impossible to get an appointment to see my GP. I needed to see my GP to discuss my cancer diagnosis, but was only offered a telephone appointment. I feel that a telephone appointment with my GP wasn't appropriate for the seriousness of my medical condition.

> I am unhappy about the closing of community hospitals in Somerset, as people don't always have transport available to travel further afield, and I feel that patients get better quicker if they have their family around them.

> My partner received treatment in hospital for a digestive condition. The medical treatment was good, and we felt that the staff were extremely diligent.

What we do



Your views help to shape health and care

Healthwatch Somerset helps local people have a say on the way health and care services are run.

We do this in a variety of ways:

- We have a seat on Somerset's Health & Wellbeing Board – a top-level decision-making body which plans and oversees health and care in the county. We bring to the table the views of the public and present findings from reports we have carried out.
- We provide advice about good practice in patient and public involvement to health and care providers.

- We have a place on Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group Governing Body where we represent the public voice and are able to ask questions to the comissioners.
- Our volunteers play a vital role in our work and are trained to deliver 'enter and view' visits to local health and care settings to talk to patients and their families.
- We are out and about every month in libraries, coffee shops, community centres and carer's groups across Somerset listening to the views and experiences of local people.

Reaching diverse groups and communities

A report from Healthwatch Somerset* about loneliness and isolation in the county has been offered to community groups to support them in their work around this topic.

Healthwatch Somerset carried out various surveys and focus groups to find out from local people how connected they felt to friends, family and the wider community and how this affected their feelings of loneliness and isolation.

The survey revealed:

- Both those who live in rural and urban areas experience loneliness and isolation, and a significant number of people have little contact with family and friends on a regular basis.
- Volunteering is key to helping many people feel connected to their community, and physical activities are identified as being a popular choice.
- Many people find out about local activities from community resources such as GPs and libraries.
- Meeting other people is key to improving and maintaining physical and mental health, but it is clear there is a need for many people to be supported with this due to physical health, anxiety issues, and caring responsibilities.

Healthwatch Somerset recommended increasing awareness around the website Somerset Choices; paid-for support for people who have physical disabilities to access groups and activities, extra support for carers and to carry out research into the opportunities provided by social media to help housebound people feel better connected to their community.

*This work was carried out by Healthwatch Somerset under parent company The Care Forum in 2017.

Making a difference together

Enter and View: how your experiences are helping influence change

Our vision is for better health and care in Somerset which is shaped by the voices of local people.

Healthwatch Somerset has statutory powers under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, to 'Enter and View' publicly funded health and social care premises to speak to people about their experiences of using the service.

This last year, we* have delivered Enter and View within mental health inpatient wards which has particularly empowered services users to influence the services they receive personally.

Over the last five years Healthwatch Somerset has visited 12 residential homes, 3 Headway centres for people

who have an acquired brain injury, all 9 mental health inpatient wards in Somerset and 4 visits to services for people who have a learning disability. Enter and view volunteers have also been supported to engage with 13 community hospitals and Musgrove Park Acute Hospital.

We have launched and shared 6 good practice guides and produced over 30 public reports for commissioners and providers.

Photos from Healthwatch England.

> The work that has been achieved with young people this last year is fantastic and we plan to build on this and reach out to even more young people over the next year.
> Emily Taylor,
> Healthwatch Somerset Manager.

Young people have their say on health and care

Young people in Somerset are helping to shape local health and care services – thanks to the Young Healthwatch project.

Launched in 2013 by Healthwatch Somerset*, the scheme gave young people a voice through surveys, one-off events, focus groups and college visits.

The most common issues reported were:

- The challenge of accessing mental and emotional health services.
- Problems with accessing stop-smoking services, as they only operate during school hours.
- Having multiple social workers, leading to a lack of trust and stability.

The Young Healthwatch also focused on a range of issues such as diabetes, the process of leaving care, the writing of Education Health and Care plans, mental health, loneliness, smoking and the visiting of services to ensure that they were 'young people friendly.'

Highlights included:

- Working with Yeovil College students who were supported to conduct their own research into different health issues.
- Young people organising intergenerational 'danceathons' to tackle loneliness.
- Running fetes to raise awareness of issues faced by the LGBTQ community
- Fundraising for local charities.

*This work was carried out by Healthwatch Somerset under parent company The Care Forum in 2017.

Our plans for next year

Our priorities are informed by what people tell us. By having working relationships with local health and social care leaders, this enables us to hear what concerns and issues there are, but also how services are provided for our community.

Over the next year we aim to be independent but well connected. We will form positive relationships with other organisations, grow our sphere of influence and ensure that the public voice is heard across Somerset.

Being a partner at the table means we are able to have a direct influence. Our work plan priorities are monitored by our Interim Board and also by the board of our parent company Evolving Communities.

Our priorities for the next year will be:

- The temporary closure of inpatient wards at Chard, Dene Barton and Shepton Mallet Community Hospitals by Somerset Partnership NHS Trust. Our focus will be on ensuring that the wards re-open and that public consultation takes place ahead of any planned closures in winter 2018.
- Vocare - the 111 service was rated as 'requiring improvement.' We would like to hear from the public about their views of this service.
- Devon Doctors will take over the running of the Out of Hours services from May 2018 after it was previously rated as inadequate by the Care Quality Commission. We will be monitoring the service over the coming year.
- Out of County Placements for those with Learning Difficulties (LD). Somerset is known to be a 'net importer' of those with LD into residential facilities in the county. Concerns have been raised by Somerset County Council about the lack of oversight by placing authorities and we will work with key stakeholders to ensure that this improves.

"The public's voice can make a difference, but strength comes in numbers. We need to engage with enough people to ensure we understand the issues and the impact. My priority is to ensure that more people know about Healthwatch Somerset and what it is we do. I hope we can listen to more views on local health and care than ever before."

Healthwatch Somerset manager Emily Taylor, who joined in February 2018.

Photo by Siobhan Boyle.

Our people

The strategic decisions about Healthwatch Somerset are taken by the Interim Board, which meets every month and the Evolving Communities board, which meets four times a year.

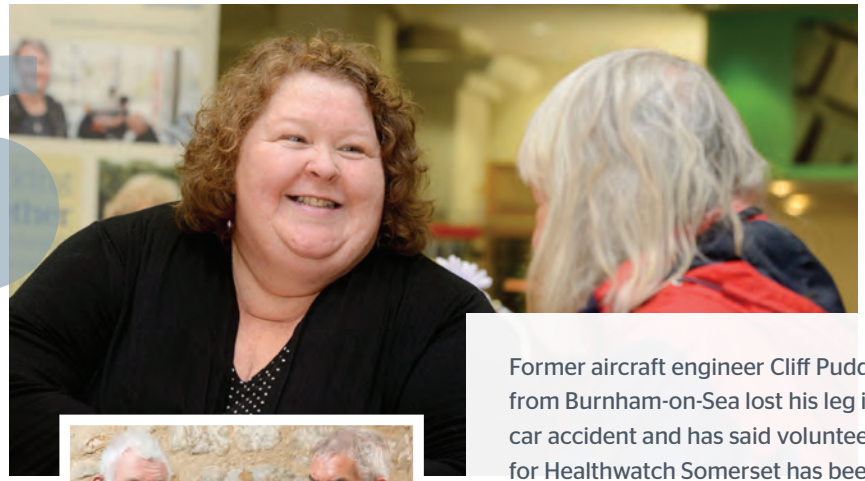
The current Healthwatch Somerset staff team.

Our directors and Interim Board members bring a wealth of experience and skills to the organisation, as well as their passion for the work of Healthwatch Somerset.

The staff team, based in Bridgwater, is led by the Chief Executive Officer Mary Curran, with support from a central team at Evolving Communities and is broadly split into two main areas: engagement and volunteering and information and communications.

Our experienced team include: Emily Taylor (Manager) Karen Ball (Information and Signposting Officer) and Jacquie Franks (Development Officer).

The Interim Board includes: Judith Goodchild, Chair, Bob Champion, Cliff Puddy, David Boyland, Mike Hodson and Rachel Mason.



Volunteers

Volunteers are at the heart of everything we do, from talking to people about their experiences of local health and care services, to sitting on our Interim Board.

They play an important part in delivering our work programme as well as helping the organisation to set its priorities. We hold regular training sessions for volunteers, as well as annual celebrations to thank our volunteers for the time they have given us to help shape local health and care services.

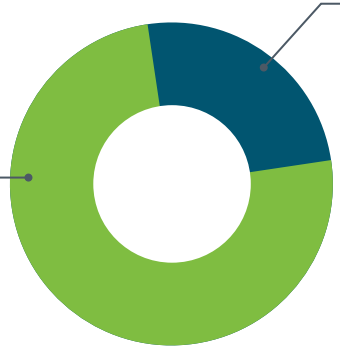
Former aircraft engineer Cliff Puddy from Burnham-on-Sea lost his leg in a car accident and has said volunteering for Healthwatch Somerset has been a lifesaver for him.

He said: “If it hadn’t been for volunteering, I would be sitting in the house staring at the same four walls and with no real purpose. At one point I was so low I would have taken my own life. Being able to get out of the house and meet people who treat me as a human being means all the difference. Volunteering really saved my life.”

Photos by Siobhan Boyle and Tim Gander.

Finances at a glance

Income*

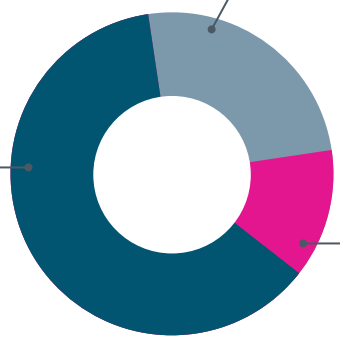


£0
Additional income

£95,000
Funding received from local authority to deliver local Healthwatch activities

Total income
£95,000

Expenditure



£21,498
Operational costs

£1,419
Office costs

£48,007
Staffing costs

Total expenditure
£70,924

*Figures produced prior to preparation of the financial statements for year ended 31 March 2018.

Contact us

Tell us what you think of health and care services in Somerset and help make health and care better for everyone in our community.

Call us on **01278 264405**

Email **info@healthwatchsomerset.co.uk**

Visit **www.healthwatchsomerset.co.uk**

Get social

Facebook: **@HealthwatchSomerset**

Twitter: **@HWatchSomerset**

Healthwatch Somerset is part of Evolving Communities CIC, Unit 5, Hampton Park West, Melksham, Wiltshire, SN12 6LH. Evolving Communities CIC is 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.

We confirm that we are using the Healthwatch Trademark (which covers the logo and Healthwatch brand) when undertaking work on our statutory activities as covered by the license agreement.

Together we are helping to make health and care services better for the people of Somerset.

Thank you.

healthwatch Somerset