

# Voices

Listening to  
your story

Spring 2020



# Welcome!

We are delighted to bring you the first edition of Voices, our new magazine!

Healthwatch Wiltshire is the independent champion for people who use health and social care services. We're here to make sure that those running services put people at the heart of care.



In this issue, we reveal our priorities for the year ahead based on what you've told us, and show you how you can get involved in your community by giving people a voice.

Find out how we've helped make a difference to dementia services in Wiltshire, and how our Community Cash Fund scheme has benefited health and wellbeing projects across the county.

We hope you enjoy reading Voices! If you'd like to receive regular updates from us, then please sign up to our monthly ebulletin to get all our news straight to your inbox. Just visit [www.healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk) for details.

*Stacey*

**Stacey Sims**  
Healthwatch Wiltshire Manager

## Stay in touch



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# Your priorities for 2020

We have marked our seventh birthday (1 April) by setting out our health and social care priorities for the year ahead, based on the feedback of local people.

We were set up in 2013 as part of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to understand the needs, experiences and concerns of people who use health and social care services and to speak out on their behalf.

For 2020/21, we will focus on:

- Mental health
- Learning disabilities and autism
- Primary Care



public plays a key role in helping to shape them.

"Mental health remains high on everyone's agenda, and we'll be looking to local people for their views on how services can be redesigned.

"We'll also be focusing on services for people with learning disabilities and autism and ensuring that service users and their families have a say in how these services develop.

"And as GP surgeries establish themselves as Primary Care Networks, we'll be looking at how well they work together,

and with other services such as hospitals and pharmacies.

"But while these will be our priorities, we're keen to hear about any health or care issue that matters to you. Please get in touch to have your say."

Healthwatch Wiltshire Manager, Stacey Sims said: "Our work for the year ahead is driven by what people have told us is important to them. There are lots of changes expected within the health and care system over the next few years and we want to make sure that the

## Your views

People who suffer from mental health problems are not given enough help from NHS services. The NHS needs severe rationalisation and equal funding of care.

For an issue that was not long term and I didn't need to see a specific doctor then I'd be happy to travel to anywhere locally.

Son with autism - services I get now for him are very good but things had to get bad before I got support. Health and education services don't work together and education takes the lead.

## Share your story

People want health and care that works for them. Our job is to help make this happen, but we need to hear from you to understand what matters. Share your story with us at [www.healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk/have-your-say](http://www.healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk/have-your-say)

## Join our army of volunteers



By volunteering with us, you can:

- Help make a difference to your community by giving people the chance to speak up about health and social care.
- Make new friends and get out and about across Wiltshire as part of the Healthwatch team.
- Develop new skills and confidence.
- Do as much or as little as you like, choosing from a range of roles to fit around you.

## What can I do as a volunteer?

Our volunteers help us in a number of ways. As a Healthwatch Ambassador your roles could include promoting us and our role within the community and encouraging people to share their views, representing us at meetings,

being a 'mystery shopper', carrying out research, reviewing documents and helping us with office admin and data entry. You could also become one of our Enter and View Representatives, who visit services to see first hand how they are run.

## Be the voice of young people!

We're calling on the young people of Wiltshire to join our team to help make sure the views of children and young people are listened to.

We want to hear from children and young people aged 14-25 who have something to say about the health and social care services they use - and who want to help others get their voices heard.

Young Healthwatch Wiltshire is open to anyone who wants to make a difference to their community.



➔ Find out more at [www.healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk/young-healthwatch-wiltshire](http://www.healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk/young-healthwatch-wiltshire)

## What are young people saying?

We've been speaking to Health, Care and Early Years students, and visited youth clubs and the Prince's Trust, to gather feedback on a range of topics from GPs and dentists to mental health and hospitals.

For most, the attitude of staff and professionals made it a good experience, but some felt they were not being listened to or taken seriously by the professional they were talking to. They also said they were unhappy with waiting times,

either for a routine appointment, or to get an initial consultation with specialist services, such as CAMHS.

Ideas for improvements included mental health talks in schools and colleges, free clubs and exercise classes, and support workers to help keep young people in education.

We are continuing to visit schools and clubs, and will be sharing feedback with those who provide services.



## Focus on dementia

Community groups designed to support people living with dementia include memory cafés and Music for the Mind sessions

### Two thirds say county is dementia friendly

**I am more confident and happy to talk to people. My memory loss seems to have slowed down.**  
— community group participant

Wiltshire is a dementia friendly community which is greatly valued by those living with the condition and their carers.

That's the key finding of our **How Dementia Friendly is Wiltshire?** report, which gathered the views and experiences of more than 100 people in the county who are affected by dementia.

People also told us they valued greater dementia awareness, understanding from others, and community groups that they could get involved with.

## How your feedback has helped

We have listened to the experiences of more than 1,600 local people and used this feedback to work with a host of organisations to make improvements to services and introduce more support groups across the county.

People told us that training care home staff to a high standard was very important in order to provide good quality care for people with dementia and complex needs.

People also said that they thought specialist services for people living

with dementia were high quality but that they weren't always able to access them.

This feedback has led to the implementation of specialist dementia training for more than 100 care home staff and the introduction of more than 40 new community groups across Wiltshire.

Our report, **Working Together to Improve Dementia Services in Wiltshire**, details the work that has gone in to making these improvements.

➔ **Find out more at**  
[www.healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk/focus-dementia](http://www.healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk/focus-dementia)

## Watch our video!



**Our Making life better for people with dementia video** shows how we have used your feedback to work with other organisations, such as Alzheimer's Support and Wiltshire Care Partnership, to improve dementia services. [Watch now on our website.](#)



Alzheimer's Support



Deborah, one of our research team, helps a military spouse complete the survey

## Survey asks how military families access services

Last autumn, our research team of volunteers launched a survey to ask military families how they access GP surgeries, dental care, mental health, social care and other services.

It follows an army rebasing programme, which saw 4,000 personnel and their families relocate to Wiltshire in 2019. We were also keen to know how services in Wiltshire compare to where they lived before. We received 107 responses to our survey.

The team's initial findings include:

- Registering with a new GP is easy but nearly 40% could not find an NHS dentist.
- There appear to be problems with communication and the transfer of records, and a lack of continuity in transitioning between specialist services.
- Mental health support is not always accessible and consistent, either for adults or children and young people.

Look out for our report coming soon.

# What you told us about new GP access scheme

Being able to see a GP in the evening or at the weekend is greatly valued by patients, but getting an appointment is not always easy.

These are the key findings of our survey which asked how the GP Improved Access Service, launched in October 2018, is running. The scheme involves GP practices working together to offer more routine appointments at evenings and weekends. These could be at another surgery and with someone other than a GP, such as a nurse.

We also carried out a mystery shop, calling surgeries to ask about evening and weekend appointments, and asked staff to give their own views.

While patients valued the service and spoke highly of the care they received, our survey revealed that there is still some work to be done on how the service is implemented, and making sure that both public and staff are getting clear information about what appointments are available, when and where.

Read our [What you told us about the GP Improved Access Scheme](#) report on our website.

We visited GP surgeries across Wiltshire and spoke to more than 170 people to get their views.





Music Therapist Esther Rose Heinrichs with some of the choir members

# Projects prove popular

Our Community Cash Fund scheme saw five amazing health and wellbeing projects get off the ground in 2019.

They include the Singing for Lung Health Choir, for people with respiratory conditions; SPARK, a health and wellbeing event ran by Pound Arts and Rewired Counselling July; and Wiltshire People 1st's Happy Hearts Dance Project, to help adults with learning disabilities and/or

autism lead a healthier lifestyle.

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust introduced Wellbeing at the Orchard, outdoor activities to promote and improve mental wellbeing, while Any Body Can Cook has run cookery sessions for families on a limited income.

The Singing for Lung Health Choir and Wellbeing at the Orchard projects have both since secured funding to continue their work. Find out more on our website.



Clockwise from top: Happy Hearts, SPARK, Any Body Can Cook and Wellbeing at the Orchard.



# 60 Seconds With...



**Healthwatch Wiltshire Board Member  
Richard Austin**



## What do you do as a Healthwatch Board member?

As the newest board member I'm still very much learning the ropes but I've recently taken on specific responsibilities for people with learning difficulties, and aged care. I've got social work experience in both these areas so I hope I can be of benefit to both groups, and our work in those areas.

## What is your favourite part of the role?

I aim to be both 'hands on', and practical. I've attended a number of sessions including the Any Body Can Cook programme, and a client survey at a GP practice. I always enjoy getting out to meet people.

**What sort of health and social care issues are local people most concerned about? How do you think Healthwatch can make a difference?**

I hope that the coronavirus pandemic will bring all members of the wider community together to demand appropriate funding and resources for the NHS, and, if that is the case, we can play an important role in ensuring the public's voice is heard by health and social care providers.

## What did you do before joining the Board?

I'd been living and working in Tasmania for 12 years, the final five years or so in oncology social work, palliative care, and hospital social work. I moved back to the UK to be closer to family.

## What do you like to do in your spare time?

I spend time with family and friends, especially my granddaughters, in Bristol and London. Otherwise I enjoy walking to keep fit (ish!), cooking, and reading.



# Finding the right support

Most of us will need to access health and social care services at some point in our lives. Finding the right support can be confusing and often people don't know what options are available.

Part of our role at Healthwatch Wiltshire is to provide information and advice to help you make the right decisions. If we don't know the answer to your question, we will be able to guide you to someone who does.

Don't struggle alone, get in touch with us today.

## We are here for you...



**Call us Monday-Friday on 01225 434218**



**Write to Healthwatch Wiltshire, Freepost RTZK-ZZG-CCBX, Independent Living Centre, St George's Road, Semington, Trowbridge, BA14 6JQ**



**Email us at [info@healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk)**



**Contact us via our online form. Visit [www.healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk/contact-us](http://www.healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk/contact-us)**

**You'll also find a wide range of advice and information on our website.**



# What do you think of health and care services in Wiltshire?



We listen to your experiences and share them with those with the power to make change happen.

Together we can help make health and care better for everyone.

 01225 434218

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