



Annual Report 2024–2025

Unlocking the power of people-driven care

Healthwatch Wiltshire

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"The impact that local Healthwatch have is vitally important. Healthwatch are empowering their communities to share their experiences. They're changing the health and care landscape and making sure that people's views are central to making care better and tackling health inequalities."

Louise Ansari, Chief Executive, Healthwatch England

A message from our CEO

It is with great pride that I present this year's Annual Report for Healthwatch Wiltshire. 2024–2025 has been a year of listening, learning, and laying strong foundations. As the provider, The Care Forum (TCF) has worked to build trusted relationships, amplify community voices, and ensure lived experiences shape local health and care.

We've enhanced our digital presence, aligning our website with national standards to improve access to information, advice, and guidance. Our outreach has included military families, the Nepalese community, and people with diabetes, while also contributing to regional projects on eating disorders and digital healthcare.

Our achievements are thanks to our dedicated staff and incredible volunteers, who gave 599 hours—equating to £10,132.07 in social value. We also welcomed student placements, adding 179 hours and £3,030.47 in value.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to deepening engagement and ensuring every voice in Wiltshire is heard.

Kevin Peltonen-Messenger
Chief Executive Officer, The Care Forum



"Our outreach has included military families, the Nepalese community, and people with diabetes, while also contributing to regional projects on eating disorders and digital healthcare."

Kevin Peltonen-Messenger, CEO, Wiltshire

About us

Healthwatch Wiltshire is your local health and social care champion.

We ensure that NHS leaders and decision-makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.



Our vision

To bring closer the day when everyone gets the care they need.



Our mission

To make sure that people's experiences help make health and care better.



Our values are:

Equity: We're compassionate and inclusive. We build strong connections and empower the communities we serve.

Collaboration: We build internal and external relationships. We communicate clearly and work with partners to amplify our influence.

Impact: We're ambitious about creating change for people and communities. We're accountable to those we serve and hold others to account.

Independence: Our agenda is driven by the public. We're a purposeful, critical friend to decision-makers.

Truth: We work with integrity and honesty, and we speak truth to power.

Our year in numbers

We've supported more than 37,496 people to have their say and get information about their care. We currently employ 5 staff and our work is supported by 15 volunteers.

Reaching out:



128 people shared their experiences of health and social care services with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.

37,359 people came to us for clear advice and information on topics such as pharmacies, referrals and your right to choose.

Championing your voice:



We published 3 reports about the improvements people would like to see in areas like eating disorder treatment and childhood vaccinations.

Our most popular report was '[The health needs and experiences of military families in Wiltshire](#)', highlighting people's struggles with issues such as mental health and loneliness.

Statutory funding:



We're funded by Wiltshire County Council. In 2024/25 we received £187,000.00, which was TCF's first year of providing Healthwatch services in Wiltshire

A year of making a difference

Over the year we've been out and about in the community listening to your stories, engaging with partners and working to improve care in Wiltshire. Here are a few highlights.

Spring

We supported workshops engaging the Nepalese community in conversations around access to health and care services.



We engaged with Women's Health Hubs to listen to women's experiences of healthcare and supported them to access appropriate services.



Summer

We attended Fresher's Fayres across the county to speak with students about their experiences of mental health support.



In partnership with other Healthwatch, we undertook a project looking at eating disorders and what support was available locally to young people.



Autumn

Along with NHS partners, we put on an event for people living with diabetes to share information on the support available to them.



We supported people to share their views, experiences and ideas as part of the government's NHS 10-Year Strategy consultation.



Winter

We heard from over 1000 people, who shared their views on pharmacy services to support the Wiltshire Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment.



Our staff attended the Health and Wellbeing Board to share insights from the Traveller community on access to childhood vaccinations.



Working together for change

We've worked with neighbouring Healthwatch to ensure people's experiences of care in Wiltshire are heard at the Integrated Care System (ICS) level, and they influence decisions made about services across B&NES, Swindon and Wiltshire.

This year, we've worked with Healthwatch across these areas to achieve the following:

A collaborative network of local Healthwatch:



Healthwatch across B&NES, Swindon and Wiltshire work collaboratively to highlight issues affecting populations across the ICS area. This year, several collaborative projects have been carried out, including:

- Eating disorders
- Vaping in adolescents
- Digital access to healthcare

The big conversation:



Increased engagement with carers, and the services supporting them has hugely increased our understanding of their needs and the importance of amplifying their voices. This had led to us carrying out a major piece of work looking at the experiences of looking after loved ones, which aims to be published later in 2025.

Building strong relationships to achieve more:



In March 2024, Healthwatch services in B&NES, Swindon and Wiltshire started discussions with the ICB to plan how to better understand two priority areas for the health system. Plans were developed to increase the public's awareness of hypertension, as well as how we can gain better understanding for the reasons people attend Accident and Emergency departments.

We've also summarised some of our other outcomes achieved this year in the Statutory Statements section at the end of this report.

Making a difference in the community

We bring people's experiences to healthcare professionals and decision-makers, using their feedback to shape services and improve care over time.

Here are some examples of our work in Wiltshire this year:

Creating empathy by bringing experiences to life



By involving local people, services help improve care for everyone.

As part of a project looking at childhood vaccinations, we were able to promote the voices of groups who otherwise go unheard. Proactive community engagement with members of the Traveller community as well as military families, allowed us to raise important feedback to be shared with those who provide services for these families.

Getting services to involve the public



Hearing personal experiences and their impact on people's lives helps services better understand the issues people face.

Healthwatch volunteers attend the Patient Experience Steering Group for Salisbury Foundation Trust. This enables individual's stories to be heard by the hospital and allow them to be involved in how services are designed and delivered.

Improving care over time



Change takes time. We work behind the scenes with services to consistently raise issues and bring about change.

In Wiltshire we have been developing connections with food banks and community fridges to increase engagement with people for whom food insecurity affects their health. Due to the work undertaken in 2024/25, a major report on this issue is planned to be published later in 2025.

Listening to your experiences

Services can't improve if they don't know what's wrong. Your experiences shine a light on issues that may otherwise go unnoticed.

This year, we've listened to feedback from all areas of our community. People's experiences of care help us know what's working and what isn't, so we can give feedback on services and help them improve.



Listening to your experiences

The experience of military families in Wiltshire

Last year, we highlighted the voices of military families around their access to healthcare services

We set out to understand the health needs and experiences of military families in Wiltshire. We developed practical recommendations that will achieve better health outcomes for this community

What did we do?

We ran a survey that was responded to by 359 members of military families. We also attended a range of events, such as Welfare Officer conferences and spouse coffee mornings, ran three focus groups, and in-depth interviews with 35 people.

Key things we heard:

22%

22% of respondents said that loneliness significantly affected their daily lives.

38%

38% of respondents reported that their anxiety significantly affected their daily life.

41%

41% of children found the move into Wiltshire to be difficult.

What difference did this make?

A summit involving military leadership, public health and other stakeholders was held in June 2025. Action planning is ongoing and there is commitment to involve family members in future service design. The military have also committed to escalating the findings from the report to a national level.



"The feedback has already been overwhelmingly positive and I'm excited to see that changes as a partnership across the widest system possible we will make to improve experience and outcomes"

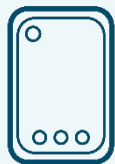
Listening to your experiences

Understanding views on childhood vaccinations

Most people in Wiltshire expressed the importance of childhood vaccines.

Wiltshire generally has high childhood vaccination coverage, exceeding the national average. However, some vaccinations fall short of World Health Organisation targets, including MMR, pre-school boosters, and vaccines given to children in secondary school.

Key things we heard:



24%

Told us they have declined at least one childhood vaccination

25%

of respondents have some level of doubt about the safety of vaccines.



"My mother had polio and my father had Tuberculosis. It's a miracle I'm even here. And that's why I'm pro vaccines."

Although in the minority, respondents with significant concerns about childhood vaccinations often express their views very strongly. Underserved groups, such as resettled families and Travellers, face barriers to accessing vaccinations.

What difference did this make?

Our report contributed to an increased understanding of the public's views of childhood vaccinations and was able to amplify specific issues affecting the Traveller community, resettled families, and military families. A summit for key stakeholders to plan next steps is to take place in July 2025.

Hearing from all communities

We're here for all residents of Wiltshire. That's why, over the past year, we've worked hard to reach out to those communities whose voices may go unheard.

Every member of the community should have the chance to share their story and play a part in shaping services to meet their needs.

This year, we have reached different communities by:

- Having conversations with refugees and asylum seekers
- Spending time talking to people accessing at food banks and community cafes
- Presented the experiences of Travellers and military families to the Wiltshire Health and Wellbeing Board



Engaging with the Nepalese community

We talked with Nepalese families about accessing health and care services

Working alongside our partners, we helped shine a light on important areas of health and care that had previously been overlooked. Together, we supported communities to be more aware of services and how to access them.

What difference did this make?

By making key health information available in Nepalese, we empowered members of the community to take greater control of their health. This included being able to register with a GP and access essential women's health services.

Understanding mental health support for Students

We attended Freshers' Fairs across Wiltshire to talk with students about what support was on offer

We spoke to over 110 students within the Fairs we attended as well as having the opportunity to engage with the colleges' Health and Social Care departments

What difference did this make?

We were able to provide resources to young people on accessing support within Wiltshire, which included how to access mental health charities as well as NHS services.

Information and signposting

Whether it's finding an NHS dentist, making a complaint, or choosing a good care home for a loved one – you can count on us. This year 37,359 people have reached out to us for advice, support or help finding services.

This year, we've helped people by:

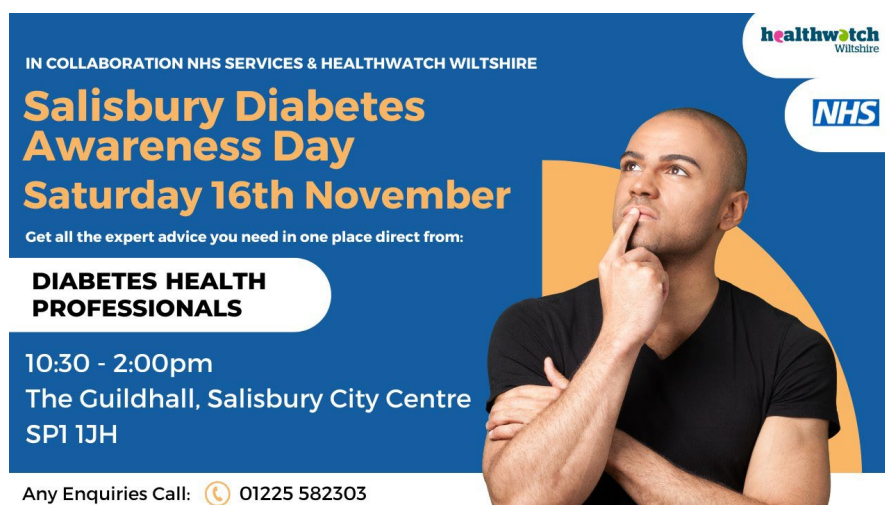
- Providing up-to-date information people can trust
- Helping people access the services they need
- Supporting people to look after their health
- Signposting people to additional support services



Diabetes awareness event

We held a diabetes awareness event at the Guildhall in Salisbury on Saturday 16th November 2024.

This collaborative effort with the NHS Diabetic Eye Screening Service brought together various healthcare professionals and community organisations to provide essential information and support to over 70 individuals living with diabetes.



Supporting a resident to escalate a dental complaint

A local resident contacted Healthwatch Wiltshire after facing ongoing dental issues and struggling to find a resolution.

The individual was unsure how to escalate their concerns about poor dental care. Healthwatch Wiltshire responded with clear, compassionate guidance—signposting them to the NHS complaints process and providing direct contact details for the South West regional complaints team and the local Integrated Care Board.

This support helped the resident feel heard and empowered to take the next steps in resolving their issue.

Showcasing volunteer impact

Our fantastic volunteers have given 599 hours to support our work. Thanks to their dedication to improving care, we can better understand what is working and what needs improving in our community.

This year, our volunteers:

- Visited communities to promote our work
- Helped us access communities whose voices often go unheard
- Attended neighbourhood meetings and shared local experiences of health and care back to the team



Showcasing volunteer impact

At the heart of what we do

From finding out what residents think to helping raise awareness, our volunteers have championed community concerns to improve care.

"I've really enjoyed my time at Healthwatch. It gave me the chance to connect with communities and gather meaningful feedback on health and care.

"I built up my research skills through a project I was genuinely interested in and felt supported every step of the way.

"Volunteering here has helped me grow and given me a better understanding of how social research can make a real difference."

Ella



"I began volunteering with Healthwatch had professional involvement with the local Healthwatch scheme. Healthwatch volunteering was a brilliant way to continue to use some of my experience and I valued the variety of opportunities.

"I really valued having the opportunity to be a bridge into the 'system' from communities around the county and having the opportunity to articulate the views of service users, knowing that those voices would be heard and counted!"

Jo



Be part of the change.

If you've felt inspired by these stories, contact us today and find out how you can be part of the change.



www.healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk



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info@healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk

Finance and future priorities

We receive funding from Wiltshire County Council under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to help us do our work.

Our income and expenditure:

Income		Expenditure	
Annual grant from Government	£177,000.00	Expenditure on pay	£137,533.00
Additional income	£10,000.00	Non-pay expenditure	£25,786.00
		Office and management fee	£13,586.00
Total income	£187,000.00	Total Expenditure	£176,905.00

Additional income is broken down into:

- £10,000 received from Wiltshire County Council to support the Military Families project

Integrated Care System (ICS) funding:

Healthwatch across BSW received no funding from our Integrated Care System (ICS) in 2024/25.

Finance and future priorities

Next steps:

Over the next year, we will keep reaching out to every part of society, especially people in the most deprived areas, so that those in power hear their views and experiences.

We will also work together with partners and our local Integrated Care System to help develop an NHS culture where, at every level, staff strive to listen and learn from patients to make care better.

Our top three priorities for the next year are:

1. Communication between staff and patients.
2. Quality of care
3. Provision of support

We are also deepening our focus on how key issues shape people's experiences of health and care—and we're taking steps to ensure those most affected by inequality are heard. By actively engaging with marginalised and excluded communities, we're working to make sure their voices drive real change in services.

We're also ramping up efforts to gather feedback from social care service users, so their lived experiences directly shape how care is designed, delivered, and improved.

Statutory statements

Healthwatch Wiltshire is hosted by The Care Forum, The Vassall Centre, Gill Avenue, Fishponds, Bristol, BS16 2QQ

Healthwatch Wiltshire uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

The way we work

Involvement of volunteers and lay people in our governance and decision-making.

Our Local Advisory Group (LAG) consists of members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our LAG ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our local community.

Our work priorities are driven by what people have told us is important to them, through our surveys and feedback forms, information and signposting enquiries, web page views, and our review of localised strategic data.

Methods and systems used across the year to obtain people's experiences

We use a broad mix of approaches to ensure people can share their experiences of health and care services. In 2024/2025, we've been accessible via phone, email, webforms, social media, and our online feedback centre. We've also joined virtual community forums and hosted our own digital engagement activities.

We're committed to reaching people from diverse backgrounds whose voices are often overlooked. This year, we've worked with Military Families, members of the Nepalese and Afghan communities, and individuals with multiple needs to gather meaningful insight.

To ensure transparency and wide reach, this annual report is published on our website, shared with our mailing list, and distributed to key partners including the Integrated Care Board, Health and Wellbeing Board, and Scrutiny Committee.

Statutory statements

Responses to recommendations

We had no providers who did not respond to requests for information or recommendations. There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to the Healthwatch England Committee, so there were no resulting reviews or investigations.

Taking people's experiences to decision-makers

We ensure that people who can make decisions about services hear about the insights and experiences shared with us.

For example, in our local authority area, we share information with the Health and Wellbeing Board and Integrated Care Board. We also share information with relevant commissioners and service providers to ensure recommendations are visible and acted upon. A new system of following up on recommendations has been introduced in 2024/25 to ensure we are able to routinely measure the impact of future work.

We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Wiltshire is represented on the Wiltshire Council Health and Wellbeing Board and the ICB Board by Kevin Peltonen-Messenger, CEO of TCF our Host organisation.

During 2024/25 our representative has effectively carried out this role by regularly attending the meetings and workshops.

Other staff also attended relevant HOSC, ICB, Inequality Committees and VCSFE Alliance Meetings throughout the year.

Statutory statements

Enter and view

Location	Reason for visit	What you did as a result
GP Practice – Willowbank	Patients raised safety concerns	Wrote a report with recommendations – the service followed up on these, and patient safety improved.

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