



# Healthwatch Somerset

Impact Report 2018-19





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# Message from our Chair

It has been an extremely busy and successful year for Healthwatch Somerset.

We have been establishing positive working relationships with decision making bodies such as the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Clinical Commissioning group where we can raise the concerns expressed by the public.

We have been active in responding to public concerns such as the transfer of Health Visitors to Somerset County Council and also changes to the GetSet service offered to families in need of additional support.

Over the year the number of volunteers we have recruited has risen, and without them we would not be able to be a proactive force in Somerset that surveys the public's views about a range of topics such as the NHS 10-year plan.

Our camper van tour was well received and it is planned to hold this again next year.

We aim to cover as much of Somerset as possible with volunteers in public libraries and various other community events to offer the public the opportunity to express their views.

Members of the Board bring with them a range of skills and expertise and links with the community and are instrumental in deciding the direction of future activities.



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Judith Goodchild'.

**Judith Goodchild**  
Healthwatch Somerset Chair

## Changes you want to see

Last year we heard from 1,816 people who told us about their experience of a number of different areas of health and social care. The top services receiving comments were:

- + Primary Care
- + Mental Health
- + Cancer
- + Musculoskeletal Health
- + Childrens Health
- + Older people's Health



Based on this information, and the information that Healthwatch Somerset has obtained from attending 26 strategic meetings across the county, we have selected the following priorities for the year ahead:

- Access to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
- Access to primary care appointments
- The availability of community support



# About us

## Healthwatch is here to make care better

We are the independent champion for people using local health and social care services. We listen to what people like about services and what could be improved. We share their views with those with the power to make change happen. People can also speak to us to find information about health and social care services available locally.

Our sole purpose is to help make care better for people.

As Chair of Healthwatch England, it's my role to make sure your Healthwatch gets effective support and that national decisions are informed by what people are saying all over England.

If you were one of the 400,000 people who shared their experiences with us last year, I want to say a personal thank you. Without your views, Healthwatch wouldn't be able to make a difference to health and social care services, both in your area and at a national level. One example of this is how we shared 85,000 views with the NHS, to highlight what matters most, and help shape its plans for the next decade.

If you're part of an organisation that's worked with, supported or responded to Healthwatch Somerset, thank you too. You've helped to make an even bigger difference.

None of this could have been possible without our dedicated staff and volunteers, who work in the community every day to understand what is working and what could be better when it comes to people's health and care.

If you've shared your views with us then please keep doing what you're doing. If you haven't, then this is your chance to step forward and help us make care better for your community. We all have a stake in our NHS and social care services: we can all really make a difference in this way.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Robert Francis'.

**Sir Robert Francis QC**  
Healthwatch England Chair



## Our vision is simple

Health and care that works for you. People want health and social care support that works – helping them to stay well, get the best out of services and manage any conditions they face.



## Our purpose

To find out what matters to you and to help make sure your views shape the support you need.



## Our approach

People's views come first – especially those that find it hardest to be heard. We champion what matters to you and work with others to find solutions. We are independent and committed to making the biggest difference to you.



## People at the heart of everything we do

We play an important role bringing communities and services together. Everything we do is shaped by what people tell us. Our staff and volunteers identify what matters most to people by:

- + Visiting services to see how they work
- + Running surveys and focus groups
- + Going out in the community and working with other organisations

Our main job is to raise people's concerns with health and social care decision-makers so that they can improve support across the country. The evidence we gather also helps us recommend how policy and practice can change for the better.





# Highlights from our year



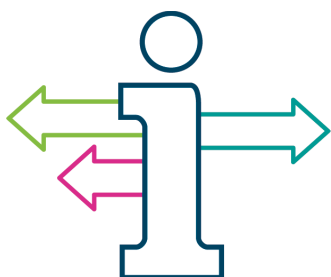
## Find out about our resources and the way we have engaged and supported more people in 2018-19. **Our resources:**



1,816 people shared their health and social care story with us.



We have 42 volunteers helping to carry out our work. In total, they gave up 1,280 hours (equivalent to 170 days).



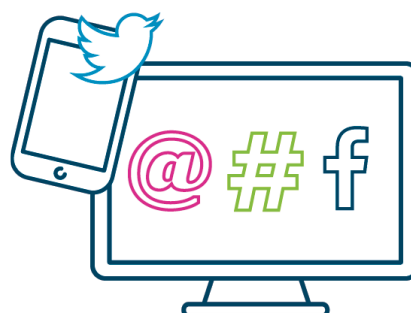
152 people accessed Healthwatch advice and information online or contacted us with questions about local support.



We visited 9 services and 98 community events to understand people's experience of care. From these visits, we made 19 recommendations for improvement and 13 were adopted by services.



Our ebulletin was sent to over 220 members of the public each month to share feedback and our news. A 16% increase on last year.



We reached over 281,000 people through our social media, and 24,000+ viewed our website. An increase which exceeds 100%.



**How we've made  
a difference**

## Helping more people to have their say

Find out how sharing your views with your local Healthwatch has led to positive changes to health and social care services in Somerset. We show when people speak up about what's important, and services listen, care is improved for all.

Take a look at an example of how Healthwatch Somerset has made a difference in the community.

### Campervan & Comments Tour

Healthwatch Somerset's Campervan & Comments Tour put local people in the driving seat on health and social care issues. Staff and volunteers took to the roads of Somerset in March to hear people's views on health and social care.

The team travelled 260 miles, visiting 18 places and spoke to over 400 people. 16 Healthwatch Somerset volunteers joined 3 staff members on the tour, ensuring that there was always someone to listen and talk to the public about their experiences.

A small, portable space to talk to people was an ideal way to reach many people living rurally across Somerset. Healthwatch Somerset worked with partners on the Health and Wellbeing Board to secure prime town centre locations, used

colleagues in the NHS to access health services, and volunteers to reach local communities. The tour visited 12 community settings, 5 services and one education venue.

This new approach to engagement allowed Healthwatch Somerset to speak to a broad range of people from across the county and identify clear trends. Access to GP appointments was raised regularly and as a result has been made a priority for Healthwatch Somerset in 2019/20.

*"I found it rewarding to hear all the stories from Somerset residents on the tour with an overwhelming positive view of the NHS. The views collected varied from good GP services and good hospital care, through to frustration with the administration and the time from diagnosis to treatment."*

Healthwatch Somerset volunteer Dermot.

*Emily with volunteers Mary and Ann gathering feedback on the road in Somerton*





## NHS 111 non-emergency phone service

Healthwatch Somerset called for the area's NHS non-emergency phone line to provide better communication with the public.

Long waiting times, repetitive assessment questions and 'robotic' phone operatives were just some of the issues raised by members of the public when asked about Somerset's 111 non-emergency phone service in survey, carried out by Healthwatch Somerset last summer.

Despite two thirds of respondents saying they felt the 111 service did not meet their needs, 90 per cent said they felt they were treated with compassion, dignity and respect and a high proportion rated their experience as very good or good.

More than 650 people took part in the survey, which was carried out to ensure the public voice is used to help shape a new Integrated Urgent Care Service, being introduced by Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group in February 2019.

Staff and volunteers from Healthwatch Somerset visited 39 events and community venues over the summer to capture people's views on the 111 service. The staff team created an enticing event stand that included a lucky dip games to keep

children entertained whilst adults completed the survey.

In addition, the survey was promoted through our network by 46 community groups. Seven volunteers supported the events, giving 60 hours of their time.

The results showed that some people said they liked the 111 service, as it provided reassurance and help in a time of need, commenting on how polite the advisors were. While other people reported being frustrated about the assessment questions, finding them irrelevant, lengthy and repetitive.

662 people shared their views on the service and these are being used by Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group in the procurement of the new Integrated Urgent Care service. The press release following the publishing of the report led to Healthwatch Somerset featuring on BBC Points West regional news and BBC Radio Somerset.

***"Somerset CCG welcomes the publication of the Healthwatch Somerset's NHS 111 public experience report. We will be incorporating its insights and recommendations into local urgent care planning and the county's forthcoming health and care strategy."***

Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group spokesman.

***Hundreds of people reveal their experiences of Somerset's 111 non-emergency phone line service***





### Somerset's adult safeguarding service to be improved based on new feedback

## Somerset Adult Safeguarding Service

New feedback gathered by Healthwatch Somerset on the county's Adult Safeguarding service will be used to improve it for the future.

Better communication through the safeguarding process and clearer information on staying safe in the future were just some of the recommendations made by families, carers and those who have been using the Somerset Adult Safeguarding service.

The Somerset Adult Safeguarding service, which protects an adult's right to live free from abuse and neglect, dealt with 1,830 concerns in 2017/18 but only received feedback from six people.

Somerset County Council, who run the service, approached Healthwatch Somerset to help develop a new way of improving the service using the voice of the people who use it.

*"As a service we thank Healthwatch Somerset for their support and enthusiasm in their undertaking of this pilot, the findings have far exceeded our original expectations. We will actively work towards enhancing service user engagement into the safeguarding process to ensure their voice is heard."*

Somerset Adult Safeguarding Service spokesman.



## Have your say

Share your ideas and experiences and help services hear what works, what doesn't, and what you want from care in the future.

w: [www.healthwatchsomerset.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchsomerset.co.uk)

t: 01278 264 405

e: [info@healthwatchsomerset.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchsomerset.co.uk)





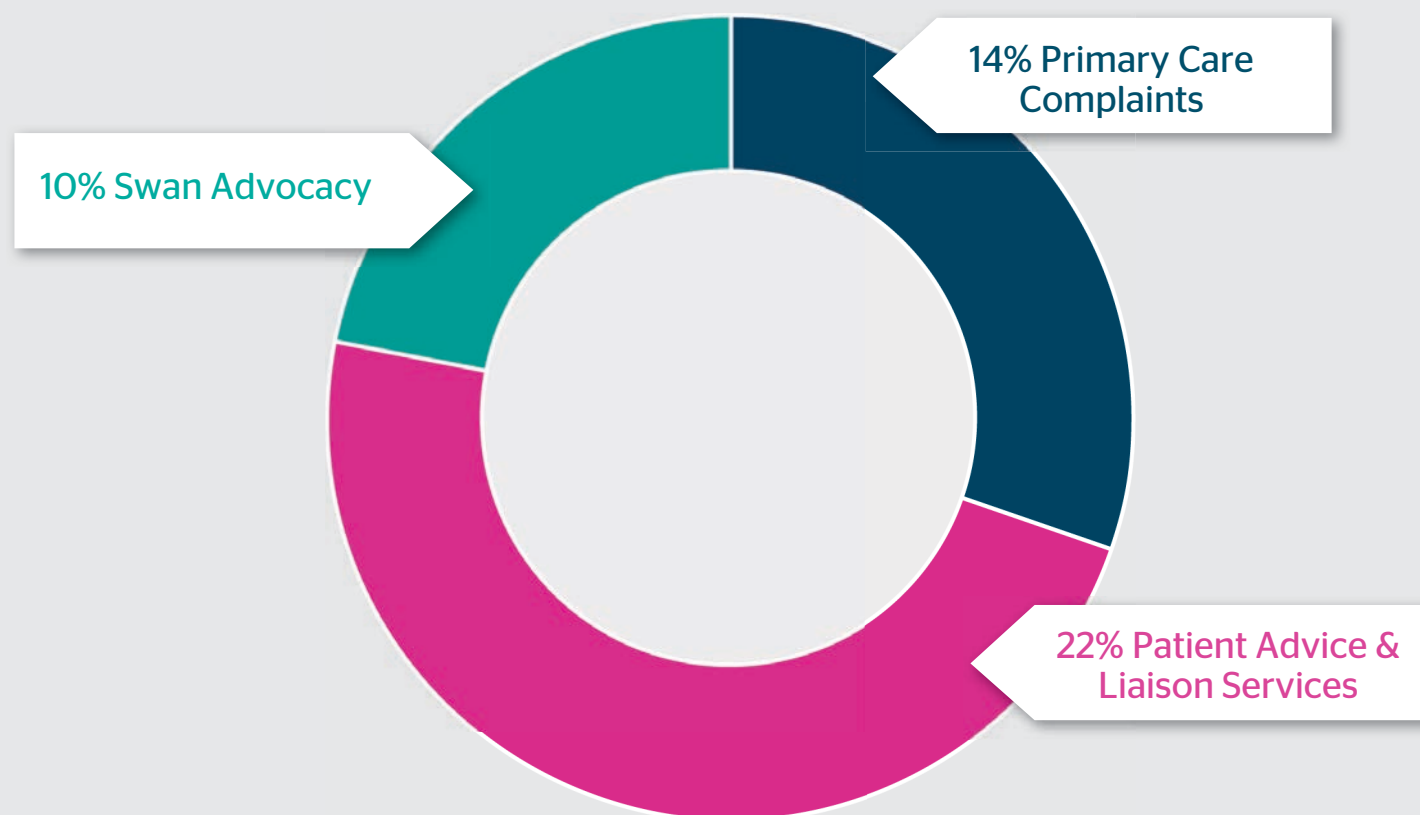
**Helping you find  
the answers**



## What services do people want to know about?

People don't always know how to get the information they need to make decisions about their own health and care. Healthwatch plays an important role in providing advice and pointing people in the right direction for the support they need.

Here are the most common things that people ask us about:



*Healthwatch Somerset staff*



## How we provide people with advice and information

Finding the right care or support can be worrying and stressful. There are a number of organisations that can provide help, but people don't know where to look. Last year we helped 57 people access the advice and information they need.

You can come to us for advice and information in a number of ways including:

- + Specific advice and information online
- + Our contact us form
- + At community events
- + Promoting helpful services across our social media channels
- + Over the phone



### Case study: Continuing Healthcare

Angela telephoned the office regarding a Continuing Healthcare (CHC) funding application she had put in for the care of her father. Angela's father had dementia and was receiving palliative care in a nursing home, as he required care for all of his needs, he was bed bound and couldn't speak.

Angela said that undertaking the application for this funding was complex and took ages to complete for both the family and the nursing home, and her father should by now have had the CHC funding agreed. We signposted Angela to Somerset CCG's Patient Advice and Liaison service so that she could complain about the length of time the decision was taking to decide on the CHC funding.

### Case study: Carers

In May last year, Brenda met a Healthwatch Somerset staff member at an event and mentioned how distressed and upset she was feeling. She was a carer for two family members and felt that she didn't have any support and wanted to know if there were any organisations that could help her. Brenda was signposted to the Somerset Carers Service, run by the Community Council for Somerset, who would give her some advice and guidance.







*Emily and Bob out and about with the Healthwatch Stand*

## Case study: **Hospital tests**

Charles had prostate cancer and was getting a pain in his leg so he went to A&E to get this checked out, as he was worried that the cancer may have travelled to his leg.

At the hospital's A&E department, Charles had an x-ray of his leg and the doctor said that he couldn't see anything in the x-ray, but that it

wasn't a definitive test, a different type of scan would indicate if the cancer had spread into his leg. Charles asked the doctor if he could have this scan but was declined.

Charles shared his experience with Healthwatch Somerset. We contacted the Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group's Patient, Advice and Liaison Service Complaints Manager on his behalf. Later Charles was given an appointment with a consultant at the hospital, with a view to getting the scan he needed.



## **Are you looking for help?**

If you have a query about a health and social care service, or need help with where you can go to access further support, get in touch. Don't struggle alone. Healthwatch is here for you.

w: [www.healthwatchsomerset.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchsomerset.co.uk)  
t: 01278 264 405  
e: [info@healthwatchsomerset.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchsomerset.co.uk)





## Our volunteers



## How do our volunteers help us?

At Healthwatch Somerset we couldn't make all of these improvements without the support of our volunteers that work with us to help make care better for their communities.

Our volunteers help us by:

- + Raising awareness of the work we do in the community - in the last year they have been at 107 local events and meetings
- + Visiting services to make sure they are meeting people's needs
- + Supporting our day to day running e.g. governance
- + Collecting people's views and experiences which we use in our reports

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 Board. They play a vital role in delivering our work programme as well as helping the organisation to set its priorities. We hold training sessions for all volunteers, as well as annual celebrations to thank them for their time and enthusiasm that they have given us to help shape local health and care services.



*Hilary is one of our amazing volunteers*

## Case study: Supporting projects

Volunteer Hilary Bartrum supported the Adult Safeguarding project by making telephone interviews. The views she captured have been used to help recruit adult social workers into Somerset.

When reflecting on the experience she said: "As a Healthwatch Somerset volunteer, it was a privilege to be given the opportunity to assist in the telephone interviews of the Adult Social Care Safeguarding Service users, in order to obtain feedback on behalf of the Service.

*"The interviewees provided honest and meaningful responses for the Service to evaluate."*



## Meet our volunteers

We caught up with some of our fantastic volunteers to show you how their work truly makes a difference to the lives of people in our area.



**Rachel Mason,** Healthwatch Somerset Board member

"I volunteer to encourage the local authority and health bodies to see the value and benefit of working together to shape local health and care services."

**Tadhg Hearn,** Healthwatch Somerset young volunteer

"I am really interested in what Healthwatch does and I understand the vital impact it has on public services. I want the opportunity to be able to understand all the essential background work for the various health and care services and how they can make a difference."



**Stephen Sharples,** Healthwatch Somerset volunteer

"Healthwatch is a brilliant idea, it's there to help you share your experiences with those who make the decisions. I would urge people to share their views and also volunteer, it's not just about your own health matters - it's for the people of Somerset!"





**“The views and stories you share with us are helping to make care better for our local community.”**

## **Volunteer with us**

Are you feeling inspired? We are always on the lookout for more volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering get in touch at Healthwatch Somerset

w: [www.healthwatchsomerset.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchsomerset.co.uk)

t: 01278 264 405

e: [info@healthwatchsomerset.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchsomerset.co.uk)



**healthwatch**  
Somerset

local health and care shaped by you



Working  
together  
to make health  
care better



## Our finances

Financially



The NHS in Somerset  
is changing, and it  
needs your help

[healthwatchsomerset.co.uk](http://healthwatchsomerset.co.uk)

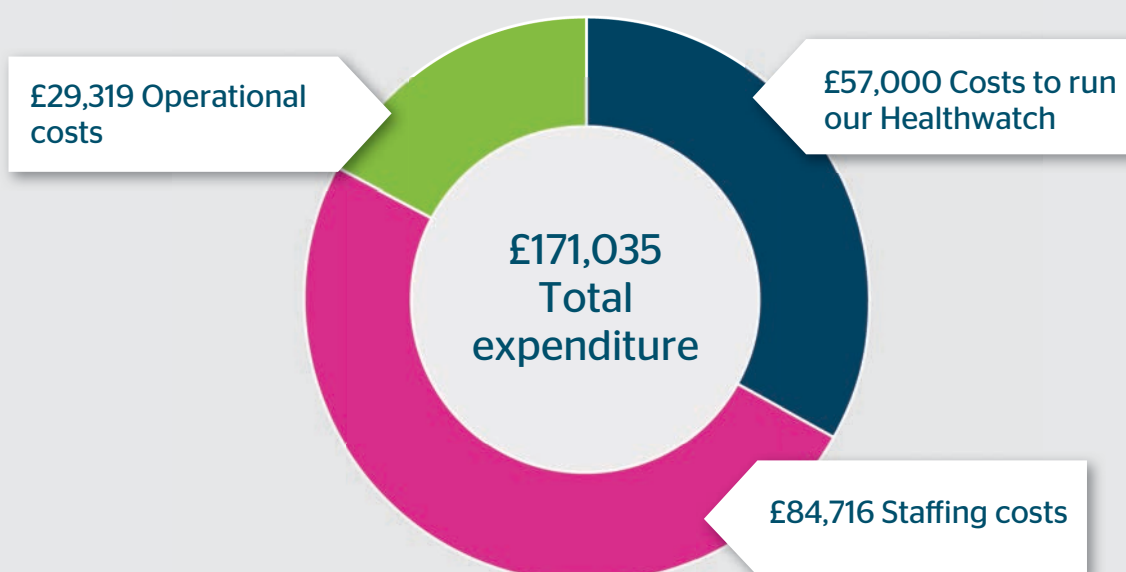
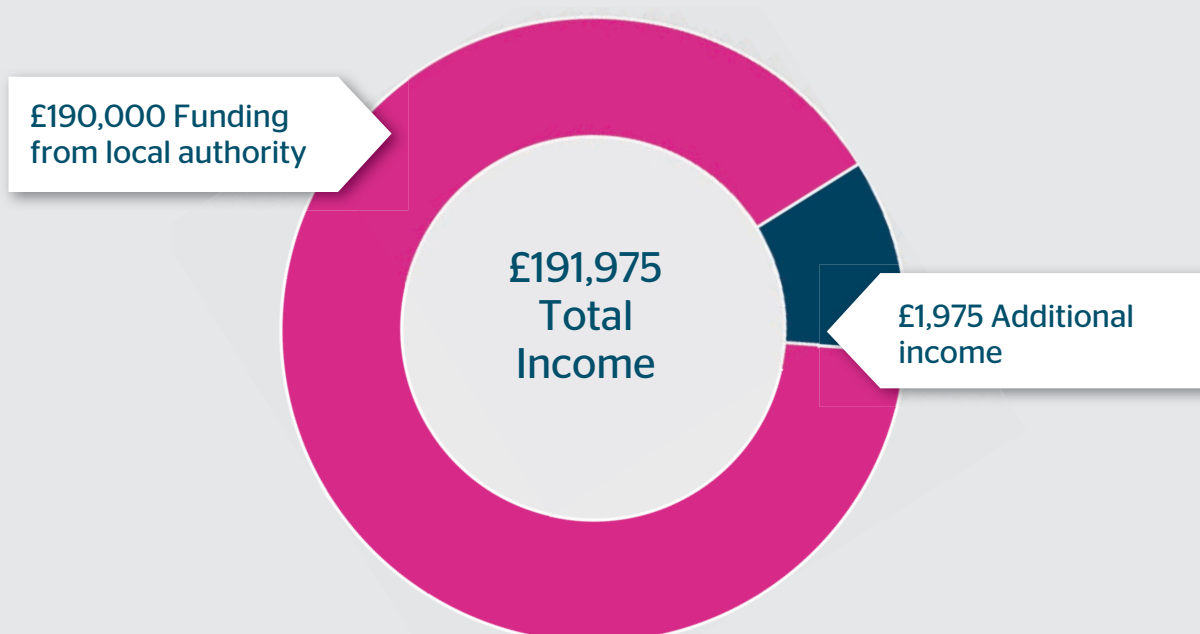




## How we use our money

To help us carry out our work, we are funded by our local authority. In 2018-19 we received £190,000.

We also received £1,975 of additional income from Healthwatch England for the NHS Long Term Plan engagement work.





**Our plans for  
next year**



# Message from our Manager

In our last Impact Report, I stated that I hoped we would listen to more views on health and social care than ever before. We have certainly made significant progress in speaking to nearly 2,000 people about their experiences. We have provided useful insight to both commissioners and deliverers of the NHS 111 service, Adult Safeguarding service and Health Visitor service. We will work hard over the coming year to ensure that service user views are used to make improvements.

The Campervan and Comments tour was a highlight for us. We were able to use our independence to creatively reach people that had never heard about us before and listen to their views. Many of our conversations were about access to primary care, and it was clear that whilst there is disparity across Somerset, more could be done to help people access these services.

You have also talked to us about the challenges many young people have accessing Child and Adolescent Mental Health services. For those young people that do not meet the level 3 criteria, support in Somerset is not meeting their needs.

Through our engagement on the NHS Long Term Plan we have heard that people want to be supported to live in their home for as long as they can.

Therefore our three priorities for the coming year will be:

1. Access to Primary Care
2. Access to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
3. Availability of Community Support



***"Your stories our vital to the work we do."***

We are currently arranging to meet key stakeholders involved with these services to better understand the challenges and identify how the public voice can help to shape services in Somerset.

Our volunteers are a huge asset to us, and I want to say a personal thank you for all the time and dedication they give to ensure that the public voice is heard. With their support, we are represented at 26 strategic meetings ensuring your voice is heard at the highest level.

I also want to say thank you to everyone who has shared your views with us. Your stories our vital to the work we do.

**Emily Taylor**  
Healthwatch Somerset Manager

# Thank you

Thank you to everyone that is helping us put people at the heart of health and social care, including:

- + Members of the public who shared their views and experience with us
- + All of our amazing staff and volunteers
- + The voluntary organisations that have contributed to our work

*"Patients are the experts, each and every one of them has a story to share - whether that's good or bad. I would encourage people to share their views with Healthwatch Somerset and make sure their voice is heard."*

**Bob Champion, former ambulanceman from Shepton Mallet**

*Emily speaking at the Mendip Disability Forum in March 2019*





# 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.

- + t: 01278 264 405
- + e: [info@healthwatchsomerset.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchsomerset.co.uk)
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- + ig: @healthwatchsomerset

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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 licence agreement.

If you need this in an alternative format please contact us.



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