

# Together

we're making health  
and social care better

**healthwatch**  
Wiltshire

Annual Report 2022–23



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**“In the last ten years, the health and social care landscape has changed dramatically, but the dedication of local Healthwatch hasn’t. Your local Healthwatch has worked tirelessly to make sure the views of local people are heard, and NHS and social care leaders use your feedback to make care better.”**

**Louise Ansari, Healthwatch National Director**

# Message from our Chair

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We've had another busy year here at Healthwatch Wiltshire and remain hugely proud to be your champion for health and social care services in the county.

Thank you to everyone who has shared their views and experiences with us, not just in the past year, but in the past decade! 2023 marks our 10th anniversary and it's down to you that we've been able to help make so many positive changes to services in Wiltshire.

The impact of Covid-19 is still apparent in the delivery of health and social care services in the county but it's inspiring to see the efforts of our partners who are working hard to restore services.

We've been working with those partners in the NHS, Wiltshire Council, the voluntary sector and the private sector, to help achieve better co-operation across the new Integrated Care System, which launched last summer.

Our contribution to this very much depends on the information and stories you share with us about health and care services. And it's been wonderful to talk to people face to face once more to hear these experiences. Remember, we want to know what works best for you, as well as understand the things that haven't gone well.

Sharing your feedback really does make a difference – not only have we been able to make more than 30 recommendations to services this year, but we've already seen improvements being made to the complaints process at Salisbury District Hospital, and to the application process for Continuing Healthcare.

Finally, my thanks go to our staff and our volunteers for their passion and commitment, and for shining a light on what local people want and need from their care.



**Alan Mitchell**  
Healthwatch Wiltshire Chair



**“Remember, we want to know what works best for you, as well as understand the things that haven't gone well.”**



# About us

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Healthwatch Wiltshire is your local health and social care champion.

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



## Our vision

A world where we can all get the health and care we need.



## Our mission

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

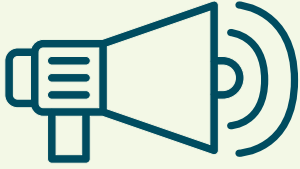


## Our values are:

- **Listening** to people and making sure their voices are heard.
- **Including** everyone in the conversation – especially those who don't always have their voice heard.
- **Analysing** different people's experiences to learn how to improve care.
- **Acting** on feedback and driving change.
- **Partnering** with care providers, Government, and the voluntary sector – serving as the public's independent advocate.

# Year in review

## Reaching out



**637 people**

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

**4,125 people**

came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as mental health and the cost of living crisis.

## Making a difference to care

We published

**7 reports**

about the changes people would like to see to health and social care services.

From these we made

**31 recommendations**

for improvement.



## Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have

**21**

outstanding volunteers who gave up **680 hours** to make care better for our community.

We received

**£179,617**

in funding from our local authority in 2022-23.

We currently employ

**3 staff**

who help us carry out our work.

# 10 years of improving care

This year marks a special milestone for Healthwatch Wiltshire. Over the last ten years, people have shared their experiences, good and bad, to help improve health and social care. A big thank you to all our Healthwatch Heroes that have stepped up and inspired change. Here are a few of our highlights:

## How have we made care better, together?

### Helping young people talk about wellbeing

We picked up our first Healthwatch England award for our Young Listeners project, where young volunteers learned how to provide mental health support to their peers.



### Launching our mental health forum

Our free forum now has more than 100 members and provides a unique opportunity for people to speak directly to those who run mental health services in Wiltshire.



### Being a trusted source of information

We gathered your feedback and kept you up to date with all the changes throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.



### Improving dementia care and support

Our work helping to improve care and support for people living with dementia earned us a second Healthwatch England award.



### You Said, We Did

We've continually shown how your feedback has been used to make changes to services, including those at Great Western Hospital.



# Listening to your experiences

Services can't make improvements without hearing your views. That's why over the last year we have made listening to feedback from all areas of the community a priority. This allows us to understand the full picture, and feed this back to services and help them improve.

# Making the application process for NHS Continuing Healthcare easier

The findings of our survey, which focused on how people apply for NHS Continuing Healthcare (CHC), has led to changes in the process and better support for applicants.

CHC is a package of care for adults with significant health needs. Applying for CHC, which is arranged and funded by the NHS, involves a person being assessed for their eligibility on factors such as their breathing, mobility, nutrition and psychological needs.

[Our survey in early 2022](#) revealed people prepare carefully for a CHC assessment but don't always receive key information, and often find the process complicated and challenging. Our findings included:



- Key information for people applying for CHC is in an NHS leaflet that many people do not receive.
- The majority of applications are made by someone other than the person whose eligibility is being assessed.
- The application process is made easier for people if a social worker assists them, ideally in the initial stage of the application.
- A clear theme was the need for better liaison between CHC teams and care providers, particularly when a change of care setting is required, such as when a person is moving to a care home.
- People thought staff were professional, empathetic and supportive.

## What difference will this make?

Our survey findings have led to improvements being made in the application process and better support for applicants.

The CHC team will start with developing an Application Process document, providing a timeline and stages of the process and a Frequently Asked Questions section to provide information on roles, responsibilities and CHC funding. This will involve listening to people who have been through the process to ensure the document is fit for purpose and answers the questions in terminology that is understood by applicants. More changes are outlined in our [You Said, We Did](#).



"I have welcomed the opportunity to work with Healthwatch to gain valuable feedback from our population's experience of the CHC process. We will continue to seek feedback from everyone who has been through the application process to facilitate ongoing learning and improvements."

**Kirstie Jackman, Head of Operations and Clinical Quality for CHC and Funded Nursing Care, BSW ICB**



# Providing best practice guides for GP practice websites and messages

**A two-part volunteer-led project has culminated in best practice guides to help GP surgeries improve the way they communicate with patients.**

Our research team of six volunteers assessed the websites and phone messages of all 49 GP practices in Wiltshire.

## Identifying what 'good' looks like

The [GP Websites Review](#) looked at how useful, accessible, up-to-date and informative the GP websites were, with our volunteer researchers putting themselves in the position of someone needing to contact their surgery.

They found that the majority of the websites were easy to find, navigate, read, and understand, but there was significant variation in the quality and quantity of information.

## Mystery shop focuses on message content

For the [GP Phone Messages Review](#), our volunteers carried out a mystery shop, listening to automated messages and assessing their content, tone and length.

The mystery shop revealed a wide variation in the information provided in recorded phone messages, and the way the messages were delivered.

Our research team identified that good messages are easy to understand, are as short as possible and have a friendly, reassuring tone. Calls that cut off, long, rambling messages and a defensive tone are confusing, and may make the patient feel they are a nuisance.

## What difference will this make?

Our volunteers made a series of recommendations for improving websites and phones messages which can be used as checklists for GP practices to follow. A template message was also created by one of our volunteers.

Both reports have been shared with Wessex Local Medical Committees Ltd (Wessex LMC), who represent GPs and practices across the region. They will be the topic of a Wessex LMC podcast, featuring Healthwatch Wiltshire, which is due to be broadcast in late spring 2023.



“Constructive feedback with examples of what ‘good’ looks like are always welcome. Your list of recommendations will provide a useful crib sheet for practices to refer to when reviewing their websites... [and] a good aspirational template on which practices can base their phone messaging.”

**Andy Purbrick, Joint Chief Executive of Wessex LMC**

# Sparking an overhaul of a hospital's complaints process

## Feedback from patients who made a complaint about their care at Salisbury District Hospital is being used to overhaul its complaints handling process.

We ran a survey which heard the views of people who had been through the hospital's complaints handling process between April and June 2022.

Patients and their families told us of feeling lost in the system, that they weren't listened to and had little confidence that changes would be made following the issues they had raised.

Our report revealed that people found it difficult to find information on how to make a complaint and didn't fully understand the role of the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) at Salisbury District Hospital. We also found:



- People didn't feel they were kept properly informed of where they were in the complaints process.
- There was a lack of signposting to additional support, such as advocacy services.
- Staff sometimes seemed reluctant to take ownership of a complaint.
- People felt disempowered and that they could not challenge decisions made by the hospital Trust.
- People thought that points or questions they raised were not properly addressed.
- Apologies did not feel meaningful or sincere.

## What difference will this make?

These experiences have led to a review of the way the hospital handles complaints by Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust, which manages it.

Our findings will form the basis of a new Complaints Handling Policy, which is due to be launched by the Trust in April 2023. [Visit our website to read our report.](#)



"We have welcomed the opportunity to work with Healthwatch Wiltshire.

"The Trust acknowledges and accepts the findings from this project and strongly supports the identified areas for improvement... with the findings shaping both our new Complaints Policy and improving the processes associated with this.

"Our aim is to provide an accessible, supportive and robust complaints process, that commits to putting the complainant at its heart."

**Victoria Aldridge, Head of Patient Experience, Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust**

# Ways we have made a difference for the community

Throughout our work we gather information about health inequalities by speaking to people whose experiences aren't often heard.



## Projects under way to hear from minority groups

**In September 2022, we began a new project with Wiltshire Council's Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS), and children's charity Spurgeons, to hear the experiences of Fijian and Nepalese military families.**

We held two workshop sessions, funded by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, with members of these communities, where we listened to their feedback on services and offered advice and guidance.

Key themes were the language barrier in making GP and healthcare appointments over the phone; being understood in an emergency; and a lack of understanding about the GP triage system. But all were registered with a GP, reported good experiences of hospital treatment and had no problems with getting the medication they needed. They were also satisfied with the dental treatment they had received.

This work continues in 2023, with a two-year project to signpost key medical services and deliver activities to support Ethnic Minority families' mental health and wellbeing. Funded by NHS Charities Together, it will involve engaging with Eastern European and Boater communities.



## Staff training to focus on autism awareness

**Our mental health forum provides a unique opportunity for people to talk directly to those who run mental health services in Wiltshire.**

Our forum members thought emergency services staff, and staff working in mental health and council-run services, needed to improve their awareness of autism and receive more specific training to better support autistic people and their carers.

Feedback was taken to Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust's (AWP) Quality and Standards meeting, and training has now been provided for all AWP staff who support autistic people, including the Primary Care Liaison and Crisis and Intensive Support teams. We're doing more to hear the views of autistic people in 2023, in a joint project with Wiltshire Service Users' Network.



## Hearing people's views on rehabilitation scheme

**In October 2022, we visited Little Manor Care Centre in Salisbury, where a new hospital discharge project is being trialled, to interview patients, care staff and therapists about the scheme.**

Questionnaires were also sent out to families and carers to invite them to give their views.

Feedback about the pilot project, known as Pathway 2, was overwhelmingly positive, except for comments on the lack of communication to patients around their discharge from hospital.

The multidisciplinary team approach, where staff are based on one site, was seen as beneficial to patients, speeding up the rehabilitation and recovery process so that most patients are ready to move on after 28 days.

The findings of our interim report were incorporated into Wiltshire Council's Better Care Fund paper for consideration of continued funding approval at the council's Cabinet meeting in December. Our full report came out in spring 2023, with our recommendations being used to develop the Pathway 2 model, which is now being provided at two care homes in the county.

A pathway is a plan for patient care that covers their treatment from beginning to end.



## We call on local people to help us set priorities

**In March 2022, we called on local people to tell us what they thought our priorities should be for 2023-24. We asked them to choose from six potential projects:**

- The wellbeing of children and young people
- Mental health and autism
- Hospital discharge and care at home
- Accessing GP services
- How the cost of living is affecting our health
- Pharmacy services

We were delighted to receive 127 responses to our short survey, and a wealth of comments and insights. Our work for the year ahead will be driven by what people told us is important to them and we will ensure they play a key role in helping to shape services. See page 19 for our new priorities.



## 2022-23 outcomes

Priority area	Projects
<p>Primary care - Accessing GP services and how they are recovering post-pandemic</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Back in 2021, we worked with other Healthwatch teams across the south of England to gather the views of patients and staff on access to GP services during the Covid-19 pandemic. Following the publication of our Wiltshire report in August 2022, an overarching report featuring the results of all the Healthwatch teams was published in October 2022.</li> <li>• Our GP website and phone message reviews, both carried out in 2022, are the subject of a podcast by Wessex LMC to be broadcast in late spring 2023.</li> </ul>
<p>Mental health - with a focus on learning disability and autism</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2022, the Care Quality Commission asked us to carry out joint project with Healthwatch BaNES and Healthwatch Swindon focusing on how people with mental ill health accessed services during the pandemic. The joint report, published in October, is on our website.</li> <li>• Our free online mental health forum continues to provide a safe space for people to share their views directly with those who run services. Members' views have been fed directly into our upcoming survey on mental health and autism, one of our priorities for 2023/4.</li> </ul>
<p>Children and young people - sexual health</p>	<p>This work has been postponed to 2023-24 and has now been broadened to focus on the wellbeing of children and young people and their ideas of how they can be better supported.</p>
<p>Hospital discharge - Exploring the links between discharge and social care</p>	<p>In October 2022, we gathered the views of patients, staff and families and carers on a pilot scheme for hospital discharge and accelerated rehabilitation, known as Pathway 2. The scheme was being trialled at a care home in Salisbury and has now been rolled out to more care settings.</p>
<p>Providing local and national information and guidance.</p>	<p>Our website is regularly updated with local and national information and seen as a trusted source for information. During 2022-23, our advice and information pages were visited 3,820 times.</p>

## Enter and View and PLACE visits

This year, we made the following Enter and View and Patient-Led Assessments of the Care Environment (PLACE) visits.

Healthwatch Wiltshire has a statutory right to carry out Enter and View visits in health and social care premises to observe the nature and quality of services, as set out in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

Enter and View visits could be to NHS organisations, GPs, dentists, opticians and community pharmacists. Visits are not inspections but aim to offer a layperson’s perspective.

PLACE assessments look at the care environment of services such as hospitals and day care centres.

[Visit our website](#) for more information.

Location	Reason for visit	What happened next
Little Manor Care Centre, Salisbury – October 2022	To survey patients, staff and families about a pilot rehabilitation scheme called Pathway 2	Feedback was shared with Wiltshire Council and the pilot scheme is currently being trialled at other care homes.
PLACE assessment at Chippenham Hospital 7.11.22	Visit carried out on the invitation of Wiltshire Health and Care	Observations shared with Nick Davey, Estates Officer
PLACE assessment at Warminster Hospital 14.11.22	Visit carried out on the invitation of Wiltshire Health and Care	Observations shared with Nick Davey, Estates Officer
PLACE assessment at Savernake Hospital 25.11.22	Visit carried out on the invitation of Wiltshire Health and Care	Observations shared with Nick Davey, Estates Officer



“Following successful tenders, two care homes in Wiltshire are now providing the Pathway 2 hub model and we are continuing to develop the hub, reflecting on all points highlighted through the Healthwatch survey.”

**Helen Mullinger, Commissioning Manager – Better Care Fund, Wiltshire Council**



# Advice and information

If you feel lost and don't know where to turn, Healthwatch is here for you. In times of worry or stress, we can provide confidential support and free information to help you understand your options and get the help you need. Whether it's finding an NHS dentist, how to make a complaint or choosing a good care home for a loved one – you can count on us.

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 during the cost of living crisis

## Signposting to complaints handling support

Susan\* called us to explain that they are housebound and have a nurse attending to administer injections. For several months she had great difficulty obtaining her prescription of needles.

She reported that she keeps being passed from her GP surgery to the pharmacist and for the last couple of months has ended up calling 111. When she has tried to speak to the practice they appear not to listen and won't acknowledge the problems this is causing for her.

Our Hub team told her that her feedback would be recorded and signposted her to the Advocacy People for further support.

 "It makes such a difference, people listening."  
Susan\*

## Finding support for an autistic person

Our Hub team received an email from an autistic person about their treatment and care in hospital and mental health services.

"I have very bad [Post Traumatic Stress Disorder] from misdiagnosis and mistreatment. I am autistic, I have a heart condition, I have had mini strokes. When overwhelmed I cannot speak properly and behaviour takes over as a means of communication... My treatment in the past has caused me to be traumatised. Better understanding of [Autism Spectrum Disorder] is needed, in hospitals and GP surgeries... I ask for more training, more educating in the signs to look for, for all the autistic people that find themselves being misunderstood and mistreated."

We suggested the person contacted the Wiltshire Autism Hub for help and to recount their experience as the Autism Hub also provides autism training. We also invited them to our Wiltshire Mental Health Open Forum and highlighted that we are planning to look at the experiences of people with autism accessing mental health services in an upcoming project.

## Helping people to find local cost of living support

**An [A-Z of organisations](#) offering help and support during the cost of living crisis has been one of the most visited page on the Healthwatch Wiltshire website.**

The page provides contact details and links to local organisations who can help, such as food banks and warm spaces, as well as information on initiatives such as the National Databank, which provides free SIM cards to people in need.

The A-Z has so far been visited 300 times and will continue to be updated.





# Volunteering

We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers who are at the heart of what we do. Thanks to their efforts in the community, we're able to understand what is working and what needs improving.

## This year our volunteers:

- Attended events to promote Healthwatch Wiltshire and what we have to offer
- Collected experiences and supported local people to share their views
- Passed on advice and information
- Carried out Enter and View and PLACE visits to local services to help them improve
- Designed and managed their own projects to review GP practices' websites and automated phone messages

## Sarah

"I have a background in nursing and I was CEO of Dorothy House Hospice Care before I retired. I wanted to use some of my experience in a voluntary role, and becoming a Healthwatch volunteer has been one way of doing that. I've done a range of activities over the years including giving talks about Healthwatch, manning information stalls, and teaching other volunteers about Enter and View visits. Come and give it a go! We're a friendly group who support each other and you can volunteer in a flexible way to suit your commitments or responsibilities."



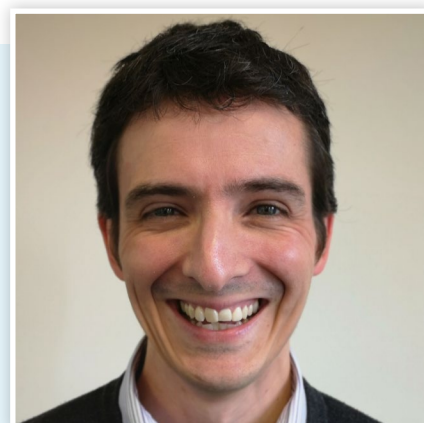
## Mary

"After being a Gamesmaker at the London Olympics in 2012, I was inspired to continue volunteering. I used to teach Health and Social Care, so volunteering with Healthwatch seemed to be a perfect opportunity to make use of my interest and background. I've now been doing it for 10 years! I've made lots of friends and there are so many ways to be involved. Recent activities I've taken part in include a Patient Led Assessment of the Care Environment (PLACE) at Warminster Hospital, and representing us at the Children and Families Voluntary Sector Forum (CFVSF). I'm sure we could find the perfect role for you too!"



## Andy

"I've worked in the NHS (General Practice) across the South Coast since 2009 and moved to Wiltshire in 2016 just before the birth of my son, Charlie. Our experiences as a family during this time – both good and bad – inspired me to take a more active role in helping support and shape services. I am a Local Leadership Board member, but I still work full time in the NHS and try to bring my professional perspective on the issues of the day. I enjoy working with other volunteers to see how the combination of our knowledge, experience and skills can benefit all Wiltshire residents."



### Do you feel inspired?

We are always on the lookout for new volunteers, so please get in touch today.

 [healthwatch.co.uk/volunteer](https://healthwatch.co.uk/volunteer)

 **01225 434218**

 [info@healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk)

# Finance and future priorities

To help us carry out our work we receive funding from our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

## Our income and expenditure

Income		Expenditure	
Funding received from local authority	£179,617	Staff costs	£79,340
Additional income	£300	Operational costs	£36,864
		Support and administration	£30,600
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£179,917</b>	<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>£146,804</b>

Additional funding:

- **£300** was received from the Armed Forces Covenant Trust to support a project with Wiltshire Council's Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service and children's charity Spurgeons.

## Top priorities for 2023-24

- Mental health and autism
- The wellbeing of children and young people
- Hospital discharge to virtual wards
- Accessing GP services

## Next steps

Over the next year we will continue our role in collecting feedback from everyone in our local community and giving them a voice to help shape improvements to services.

We will also continue our work to tackling inequalities that exist and work to reduce the barriers you face when accessing care.

New projects for 2023-24 include working with Wiltshire Service Users Network (WSUN) to review how mental health services are accessed by autistic people, and to ask children and young people for their views on how support for their wellbeing could be improved. We will also be looking at virtual wards and care at home after people have been discharged from hospital. And we'll follow up on our recommendations from our previous reports to see what impact changes to services have had for local people.





# Statutory statements

Healthwatch Wiltshire, The Independent Living Centre, St George's Place, Semington, Trowbridge BA14 6JQ.

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

Help and Care hold the contract for Healthwatch Wiltshire. Help and Care, A49, Aerodrome Studios, Airfield Way, Christchurch, Dorset, BH23 3TS. Registered Company No. 3187574. Registered Charity No. 1055056.



# The way we work

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

Our Healthwatch Board consists of 6 members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our Board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community.

Throughout 2022/23 the Board met 7 times and discussions included our partnerships with stakeholders and our contributions to their strategies. Our wider group of volunteers were involved in a priority setting workshop to decide our projects for the forthcoming year.

We are committed to taking additional steps to ensure we obtain the views of people from diverse backgrounds who are often not heard from. This year we have done this by talking to Fijian and Nepalese military families, and interviewing patients about their rehabilitation in a care home setting.

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 mental health forum. Our survey to hear Wiltshire people's views on possible projects for next year earned 127 responses.

## Methods and systems used to obtain people's experiences

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of using services. During 2022/23 we have been available by phone, email, provided a webform on our website and through social media, as well as attending meetings of community groups and forums.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. It will be published on our website and shared with our mailing list of 800 subscribers and on social media.

## Responses to recommendations

All providers responded to our requests for information and recommendations. There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to Healthwatch England Committee, so 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 insight and experiences that have been shared with us.

In our local authority area we take information to a number of committees and forums, including:

- Wiltshire Council's Health and Wellbeing Board and Health Select Committee
- BSW VCSE Alliance (Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise)
- Children and Families Voluntary Sector Forum
- Neighbourhood Collaboratives
- Health and Wellbeing Forums
- Patient experience groups (run by the hospital trusts)
- Wiltshire Integrated Care Alliance Partnership Meeting (NHS, council, VCSE, care homes)

This year we've also shared feedback to inform Wiltshire Council's new Dementia Strategy and provided evidence for the Integrated Care Board's work to improve communications for patients being discharged from hospital.

We also take insight and experiences to decision makers in Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care System, in meetings that include the BSW System Quality Group (NHS providers and local authorities).

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

### Health and Wellbeing Board

Healthwatch Wiltshire is represented on Wiltshire Council's Health and Wellbeing Board by Alan Mitchell, Chair of Healthwatch Wiltshire, where we have voting rights. During 2022/23 our representative has effectively carried out this role by regularly attending meetings and workshops and reminding partner agencies about the importance of involving local people.

### Integrated Care Board

Alan also represents Healthwatch Wiltshire on the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire (BSW) Integrated Care Alliance Partnership, and the Wiltshire Integrated Care Alliance (WICA) Partnership Committee. He has voting rights at both meetings.

We also have a place on the BSW Integrated Care Board (ICB) Public and Community Engagement Committee.





Photo: BSW ICB



Clockwise from top: At the official opening of Devizes Health Centre in February 2023; the Warm and Well event in Marlborough in January 2023; the Wiltshire Parent Carer Council event in November 2022 and Chippenham College Freshers' Fair in September 2022.





**healthwatch**  
Wiltshire

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