

## **New CEO of Wiltshire's independent health and care champion announced**

The community interest company which runs the Healthwatch Wiltshire service has announced the appointment of a new Chief Executive Officer.

Evolving Communities CIC has hired Mary Curran to replace Emma Cooper, who announced in October she would be leaving to take up a post with a national charity. Emma left on 19 January to begin her new role after being in the CEO post for the last four years.

Mary, who will start in April, brings extensive skills and experience gained from working in a range of roles across local government as well as the charity sector. She has previously worked at Wiltshire Council, managing professional teams and supporting vulnerable young people, before becoming the Lead Commissioner for Disabilities for the council's children's services.

For the last four years, Mary has been the CEO of the North-East based learning disability charity Journey Enterprises, working across six local authority areas in the North East. The charity and social care provider works with around 200 adults with learning disabilities to help them become independent through supported employment and enterprise opportunities.



Mary Curran

Now Mary, a mother of three grown-up children, is looking forward to relocating back to the South West with her partner Andrew to take up the CEO position at Evolving Communities, the parent company which runs the Healthwatch Wiltshire service.

Mary said: "Healthwatch is so important in making sure that local people's voices are heard. It's up to us to champion people's views on the quality of services they experience and what they want to see change in their area. I'm looking forward to building on the excellent foundations laid, and sharing good practice across Wiltshire. I am delighted to have been appointed and am really looking forward to getting started."

During her first 100 days as CEO, Mary plans to meet staff, volunteers and stakeholders to understand local issues and concerns. She continued: "The first 100 days in a new role are a really valuable time for a CEO. You don't yet know the detail of the organisation, so you can use the time to ask 'Why?' which really has its advantages.

"I will be meeting with all our staff, volunteers and stakeholders, asking many questions and developing a shared understanding of the 'as is' across the county. I'll be taking every opportunity to get to know the business, the people involved and how it functions. I'll also be focussed on understanding the health and social care issues that local people really care about, because that's why we are here.

"Strategy and plans will take shape, focussing the work of Healthwatch on the right issues, to deliver a first-class service for local people. I suspect concerns in the three areas will reflect those we hear so much about in the national news, such as; our hospitals struggling to cope with demand, cuts in budgets affecting social care provision, young people's access to mental health provision

**Continued >**

### **Contact us:**

Tel 01225 434218

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

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

**Healthwatch Wiltshire is a local independent organisation which exists to speak up for people on health and care. If you have used a service recently then we would like to hear from you. We use what people tell us when we meet with the commissioners and providers of services to make sure that they take account of your views and experiences.**

and the needs of our growing elderly population.

“However, as far as local issues are concerned, I don’t know, and I don’t intend to jump to any conclusions. I look forward to listening to local people and reflecting their concerns in the work that we do.”

Chris Graves, chair of the board at Evolving Communities, said: “We are of course very sad to see Emma leave us but we wish her well in her future endeavours. She has made a fundamental contribution to developing and establishing our organisation.

“While we will miss her, the foundations she has laid will make it possible for us to move forward to the next stages of developing Evolving Communities with confidence. We are thrilled to welcome Mary who has an excellent background in leading similar organisations, and I am confident we will build on our past success.”



Emma Cooper

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