

Hearing from minority groups

We're working with Wiltshire Council's Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS), and children's charity Spurgeons to offer support and advice to minority groups.

Our work so far

In September 2022, we began our project with EMTAS and Spurgeons, funded by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, to hear the experiences of Fijian and Nepalese military families.

Healthwatch Wiltshire held two workshop sessions, at Tidworth and Bulford, 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.

Our work this year

Our work with EMTAS and Spurgeons has continued in 2023, where we've been engaging with Eastern European and Boater communities in a series of sessions.

This project, which is funded by NHS Charities Together, aims to signpost key medical services and deliver activities to support families' mental health and wellbeing.

Support for the Eastern European community

Sessions were held on Thursday mornings during June and July 2023 at the Polish

Community Centre, Trowbridge, with interpretation provided in Polish, Romanian, and Ukrainian. We were there to provide information and signposting, while Spurgeons ran activities for children and offered practical advice for families.

Common themes included finding support for children with additional needs, finding mental health support and dealing with loneliness.

Support for the Boater community

Sessions were held at the Canal Tavern, Bradford on Avon and the Barge Inn, at Honeystreet, near Pewsey, in late July 2023.

Both sessions were planned more as listening and engagement exercises rather than structured sessions on particular topics. This was in recognition of the fact that this community is less used to being engaged and less likely to attend topic specific sessions.

Common themes included the difficulties boaters face in accessing GP and dental services, issues getting to appointments due to a lack of public transport, and collecting prescriptions as they have no fixed address.

[Read our blog](#) to find out more about what we heard.

