

Healthwatch Bath and North East Somerset

Annual Report 2019/20

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Message from our Team Manager



2019 -20 has been another action packed year in health and social care with the introduction of the NHS Long Term Plan, planning for Brexit and, just when we thought we were on the home straight - the Covid-19 pandemic. Did all of this really happen in 12 months? Closer to home we have seen continued work to integrate health and social care services, the merging of B&NES, Swindon and Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Groups into one organisation, and a change in our local administration. Despite all of these challenges and distractions, Healthwatch B&NES has continued to focus its efforts on listening to residents and working to influence local service provision. It is my pleasure to present to you the Healthwatch B&NES annual report for 2019-20.

Pat Foster, our Volunteer Support Officer, has done a fantastic job this year recruiting five new volunteers to the team. This brings our volunteer count up to 18, with several more waiting in the wings. It goes without saying that this project could not function without its dedicated team of volunteers – they promote the project to local groups, they gather feedback from their communities, they represent the voice of local people at meetings and they help us to stay focused on what matters to B&NES residents.

You can read more about the work of the volunteers in this report, but one of the areas that I'm particularly proud of is the leadership they have shown around NHS Quality Accounts. Each spring, NHS organisations across the country are asked to produce a Quality Account; a formal document outlining the work they have done to improve the quality of their services, and any further action that is required. Healthwatch has an opportunity to provide a formal response to these documents; something that the Healthwatch B&NES team takes very seriously. We provided responses to four NHS providers - including Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust and Virgin Care – asking questions about their plans, seeking assurance where required and highlighting our concerns.



Continued

Message from our Team Manager continued ■ ■ ■

Six months on Roger Tippings, Healthwatch B&NES Lead for Quality, and our provider link volunteers, Ann Harding, Diana Hall Hall and Nick Ramsey, met with the NHS providers to track progress against the targets set in the Quality Accounts and understand the impact that this is having for patients and the public. This has been a really positive process, encouraging greater dialogue between Healthwatch and NHS providers.

Last year we introduced the Healthwatch B&NES Community Pot, a small grant scheme for voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations who want to work with us to explore the views and experiences of local residents. We were delighted to fund five fantastic projects, the reports of which can now be found on our website www.healthwatchbathnes.co.uk.

In partnership with the grant recipients, we were able to hear the views of **532 people** including children, young people, older people, rural residents, carers, and people with lived experience in areas such as mental health, LGBT+, and physical and sensory disabilities. During the next 12 months we will be working with the grant recipients to elevate the findings that have been generated and use this information to influence local service provision. And of course, we will be opening the Community Pot again to fund further projects during 2020!

This is my last annual report as I am leaving The Care Forum at the end of March 2020. I joined the Healthwatch B&NES team in 2014 and am incredibly proud of the things that we have achieved. I will take away many fond memories, but most of all I will remember the commitment and passion shown by the volunteers. They are the life blood of this project and it has been an absolute pleasure to work alongside them.

Stay healthy and well!

Our staff team (Left to right): Alex Francis, Team Manager Pat Foster, Volunteer Support Officer and Vanessa Scott, Communications Officer



Our priorities

Last year 750 people – more than 500 than last year - told us about the improvements they would like to see health and social care services make in 2019-20. These are our six priorities for the year 2019/20 based on what you told us.



- Liaise with Patient Participation Groups around the development of Primary Care Networks



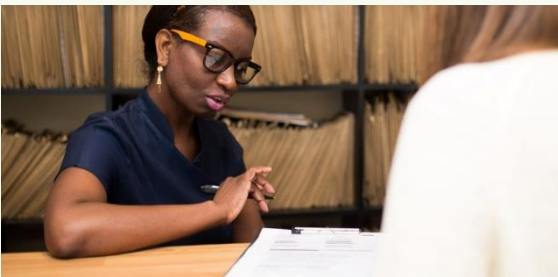
- Work with Virgin Care around their engagement for transformation



- To hear issues around Non Emergency Patient Transport in the rural areas



- To identify issues around over the counter prescriptions charges and how this is affecting local people



- Deliver Community Pot funding through the voluntary and community sector to widen the views we hear



- Continue to identify issues around the accessible information standard

Over 190 people engaged with Healthwatch Bath and North East Somerset to share their view on 'Over the Counter Prescriptions' and Non Emergency Patient Transport issues"

About us

Here to make care better

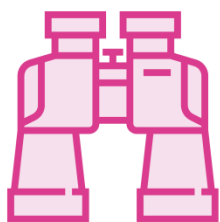
Healthwatch Bath and North East Somerset is the independent champion for people who use health and social care services. We're here to listen and find out what matters to local people, and help make sure their views shape the support they need.

We listen to what people like about services, find out what could be improved, and we share these views with those with the power to make change happen. We also help people find the information they need about services in their area.

Nationally and locally, Healthwatch has the power to make sure that those in charge of services hear people's voices. As well as seeking the public's views ourselves, we also encourage health and care services to involve people in decisions that affect them.

Our volunteers have helped us at community events to hear what local people have said about the health and care services they use.





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.



How we find out what matters to you

People are at the heart of everything we do. 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



Find out more about us and the work we do

Website: www.healthwatchbathnes.co.uk

Twitter: @hwatchbathnes

Facebook: @HealthwatchBANES

Highlights from our year

Find out about our resources and the way we have engaged and supported more people in 2019-20.



Health and care that works for you



19 volunteers

3 part time members of staff

Which does not make up a full time equivalent staff member

We received:

£40,000 in core funding

£40,000 was received from our local authority in 2019-20, plus £43,622 funding from the Local Reform and Community Voices Grant used by us to fund a Community Pot grants scheme, available to local community and voluntary groups to apply for.

Supporting people



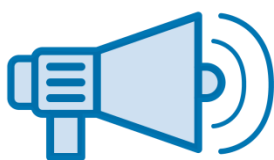
750 people

shared their health and social care story with us: 532 through our community pot projects and 190 through our focus groups on Non-Emergency Patient Transport and changes to Over-the-Counter Prescriptions.

28 people

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

Reaching out



2,245 people

Follow us on social media – 2,076 on Twitter and 169 on Facebook.

Making a difference to care



We published

4 Community Pot reports

about issues from local people and these have been shared to highlight what has been heard.

How we've made a difference





Local people enjoying a healthy lunch at the 'Wellness Wednesday' focus group in the Chew Valley

West of England Rural Network

Using Community Pot funding, West of England Rural Network (WERN) focused on engaging with rural residents who are isolated by geography or circumstance. The aim was to hear the voices of those rarely asked about their opinions but have a lot to tell about their experience of health and social care. The focus groups used five topics:

1. Rural Transport

2. Difficulties finding care providers to deliver in rural areas



It's a stressful time, they're worried about having the treatment and how they're going to get there because obviously it's important they get it done.

3. Communication between medical providers

4. The escalating cost of care in premium rate postcodes

5. Difficult appointment times that do not account for distance to travel

Read the results in the report and the videos below:

Video 1 transport

<https://youtu.be/PO5RjaYbsd8>

Video 2- Patient Transport and Appointment times <https://youtu.be/Md33Fjm588g>

Video 3 – Olive's Story – Communication and patient notes,

<https://youtu.be/PICXPajHGpo>

Combined and final video.

<https://youtu.be/oubjpKI5yzk>



Community Pot – Bath Area Play Project

'Me in mind' was a small project that listened to children and young people about their feelings and emotions in relation to their mental health. Previous consultations, as part of the mental health review, did not include children under 16 years old, so it was important to ensure their voice was heard, using focus groups and workshops.



Community Pot – Off the Record

The project explored the issues and barriers of rural isolation and the impact for young people. It examined the experience this has on their ability to engage in health services, especially for mental health, and those young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender.



Community Pot – Bath Carers

The project supported the Carers Voice Project to take part in 'Learn to lead' sessions to empower the group to assert a direct influence on relevant services and strategy in Bath and North East Somerset. The sessions covered key skills to enable the group to lead discussion to gain insight into the carers experience.



Contact Healthwatch to get the information you need

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.

www.healthwatch.bathnes.co.uk

Tel: 01225 232401

Email: info@healthwatchbathnes.co.uk



Patient Transport:

This year we chose to undertake more engagement to hear the views of local people, rather than carrying out enter and view visits.

It is clear that transportation to medical appointments is a complex area. This is exacerbated for people living in rural parts of B&NES where barriers to accessing services already exist, such as limited bus services and bus routes.

Community transport schemes run by community, voluntary and social enterprise sector organisations are funded primarily to provide support for people to access social activities or shopping. There

are only a small number of providers in B&NES who are able to help people with access to medical appointments. Delivery of these relies heavily on support from volunteers and charitable donations.

We have asked for a coordinated strategic approach to be taken for the provision of transportation across B&NES. This includes interactions between non-emergency patient transport, community transport and public transport providers, in order to ensure maximum accessibility for residents to get to where they need to go.

[Read our report on Non-Emergency Patient Transport.](#)



Healthwatch England and NHS England are now reviewing patient transport at a national level



Share your views with us

If you have a story about your experience of non emergency patient transport we would like to hear from you. Get in contact with Healthwatch Bath and North East Somerset

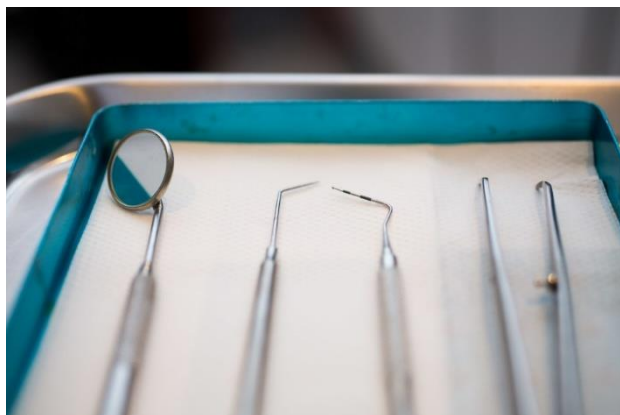
Tel:: 01225 232401

Email: info@healthwatchbathnes.co.uk

Facebook: @HealthwatchBANES

Twitter @Hwatchbathnes

Other projects we have worked on this year:



Reviewing Specialist Dental Care across the South West of England

In September 2019 the [South, Central and West Commissioning Support Unit \(SCW CSU\)](#) carried out a review of specialist dental care in the South West, with the help of local Healthwatch across the region, asking people who use the service to take part in a survey

[Read more about this piece of work and the eligibility criteria about who can use this service on our website.](#)



Quality Accounts

Local Healthwatch are given the opportunity each year to comment on Quality Accounts from organisations providing NHS services.

Quality Accounts are an important way for services to report on quality and show improvements in the services they deliver to local communities.

The Quality Accounts process is an opportunity for us to provide an evidence-based challenge to providers based on our own engagement with people who use NHS healthcare services.

[Read more.](#)



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Long Term Plan

#WhatWouldYouDo

Highlights from Healthwatch England



More than 40,000 people shared their views nationally with Healthwatch.



Our networks held over 500 focus groups reaching different communities across England.



Healthwatch attended almost 1,000 community events, including festivals, carers cafes, shopping centres and NHS services to speak to the public about their experiences.

Hearing the views from local people on the NHS Long Term Plan

With help from our volunteers and through online engagement, we heard from 156 people in B&NES. What we heard was then collated and put into a [final report, sharing people's views from across B&NES, Swindon and Wiltshire](#).

Key findings:

- Prevention and knowledge to lead a healthier lifestyle was important to people
- Issues around misdiagnoses for long term health conditions
- Using technology to make healthcare more efficient

Our recommendations:

- Provide more public health information on healthy eating and exercise
- A review of service provision for long-term conditions such as autism should be carried out to ensure patients are able to access services and interventions as quickly as possible
- Prioritising the use of technology without excluding those that are not online

Our findings were used to help inform [B&NES, Swindon & Wiltshire Strategic Transformation Partnership's five year plan](#).

Helping you find the answers

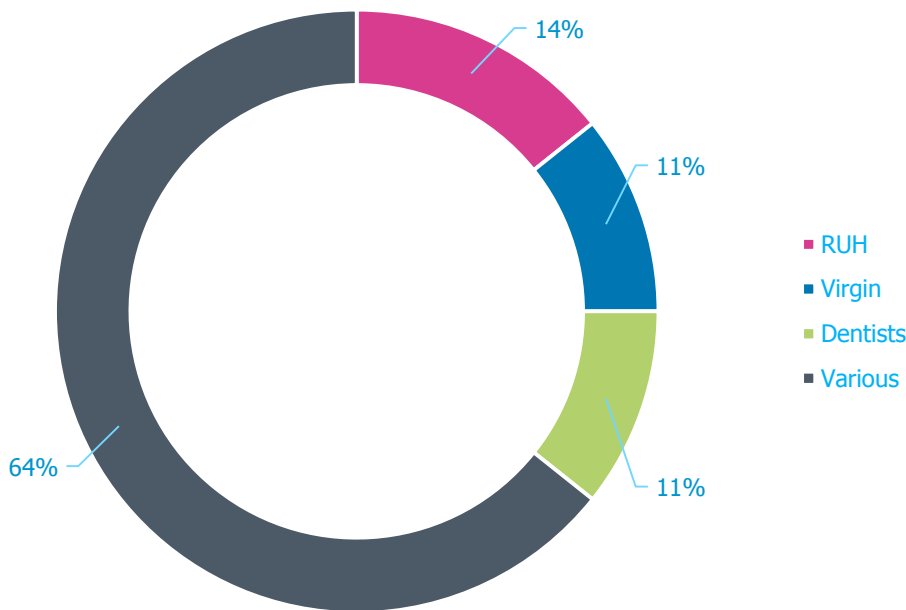


Finding the right service can be worrying and stressful. Healthwatch plays an important role in helping people to get the information they need to take control of their health and care and find services that will provide them with the right support.

This year we helped 28 people get the advice and information they needed by:

- providing advice and information articles on our website,
- answering people’s queries about services over the phone, by email, or online,
- talking to people at community events, and
- promoting services and information that can help people on our social media channels.

Here are some of the services that people asked or told us about.



Key themes:

- People raised concerns about getting through to Virgin Care, staff morale and long wait times. This has lead on to us working with a lead nurse at Virgin Care via quarterly meetings to ensure that patient feedback is heard and acted upon
- We heard mixed feedback about RUH and signposted commentators on to SEAP where necessary
- We heard about difficulties in finding NHS dental appointments
- The remaining feedback was a mixture of feedback about GP appointments, Non-Emergency Patient Transport, issues accessing support for an autistic child and issues in continuity of care and treatment.

We heard from the deaf community about issues they have been experiencing when visiting a particular high street optician.

It appears that the optician was not providing an interpreter for deaf people making an appointment for an eye test, for which they receive NHS funding, despite the Accessible Information Standard legislation.

We spoke to the head office and was informed that the optician believed they had complied with the Accessible Information Standard. They stated that if an interpreter is required for the NHS eye test appointment that this should be arranged in advance through the patient's GP. This is not the case in other opticians, so we asked NHS England to confirm if this is correct. We are currently awaiting an answer.

We held 'What Matters To You' open meetings at venues across the area, listening to what local people had to say about their health and social care services. During the course of the year the public told us about several issues including:

- Over the counter prescription costs
- Rural issues around patient transport
- Issues from the deaf community about getting access to an interpreter to support attendance at an optician for eye testing.
- Children's transition to adult services, particularly children with autism
- Opportunities to self-refer to the advocacy service



The meetings have been held in local venues across the area in church halls, community centres and in the meeting rooms of third sector partners.

Although not always well attended, the open meetings have helped us understand the feelings local people have about different aspects of health and care services – whether good or bad.

Often at the open meetings representatives from third sector groups have attended bringing the views of their clients to share with us.

Volunteers



We are supported by 19 volunteers who help us find out what people think is working, and what people would like to improve in health and social care services in their communities. This year our volunteers:

- raised awareness of the work we do at events, in the community and with health and care services,
- visited services to make sure they are providing people with the right support,
- helped support our day-to-day running, and
- listened to people's experiences to help us know which areas we need to focus on.

Our Executive Board volunteers decide on our work priorities for the year and have been both assessing and agreeing applications for our Community Pot.

Volunteers provided a link for each successful Community Pot project, keeping in touch during the delivery of the project and offering support when needed.

There were four successful projects that have been funded through the Community Pot funding:

Bath Carers Centre

Off the Record

Bath Area Play Project

West of England Rural Network

(See pages 12 and 13 for more on these)



- Volunteers also visited activities funded through the Community Pot, to assess how the funding was being used to hear the views of both young people and older people across the city and in the more rural communities in North East Somerset.
- Each project has produced a final report and presented to our Executive Board and the Children and Young People's Network.



Volunteer with us

Join the volunteers who are helping us to hear what children, young people and adults have to say about their health and care services.

Our volunteers are also trained to 'enter and view' health and care services to observe services being delivered and to hear the views of those receiving the service, their family and friends and the staff delivering services. We make recommendations following on from these visits, which in turn help improve services.

Our volunteers

We could not do what we do without the support of our amazing volunteers. Meet some of the team and hear what they get up to.



Roger

Roger is the our Executive Board lead for Quality. Roger has been instrumental in preparing our comments on the 2018/19 NHS Trusts Quality Accounts. This year Roger met with the NHS Trusts half way through the year to identify where each Trust is in implementing the Quality Account priorities for 2019/20. These meetings have been welcomed by the Trusts and have helped us build better relationships.




Diana

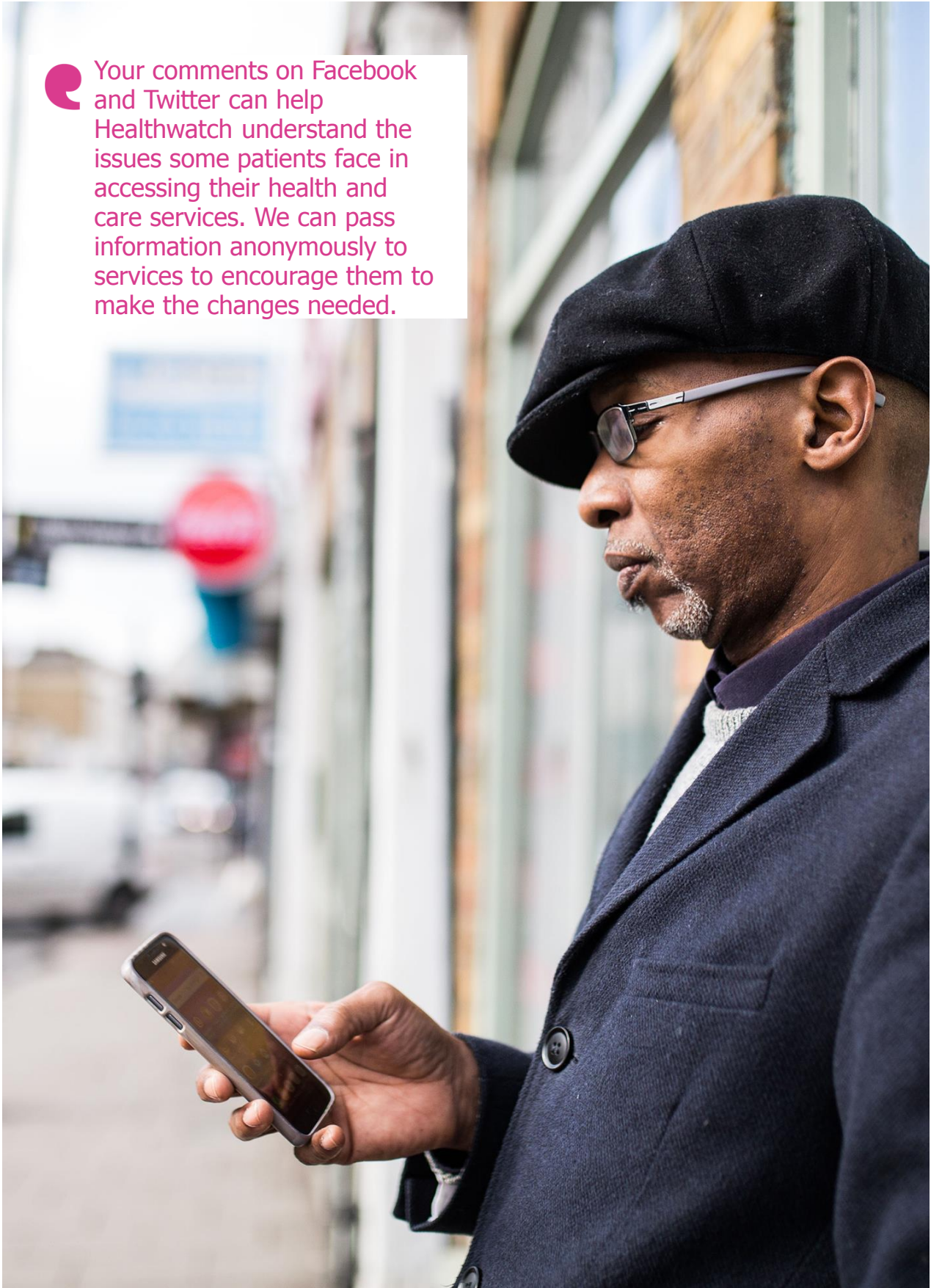
Diana is our Executive Board link with the Royal United Hospital and meets quarterly with the trust chairperson. This year Diana has shared the issues we have heard from the public with the Patient Experience Group and at the Dignity and Respect meetings ensuring we have a continuous dialogue with the hospital. Diana has also taken part in the PLACE visits.



Melanie

Melanie joined us as a volunteer this year and is passionate about healthcare. Melanie has recently joined our Executive Board as the lead for Children and Young People. As a former senior nurse in community mental health she has an interest in CAMHS (children and mental health services) and is keen to assess standards and promote good care, with particular reference to patient experience.

 Your comments on Facebook and Twitter can help Healthwatch understand the issues some patients face in accessing their health and care services. We can pass information anonymously to services to encourage them to make the changes needed.



Our plans for next year



Looking back

2019/20 has been a busy year, our volunteers have been linked to each of the successful Community Pot applicants. Each Community pot project has been hearing what their members have had to say about health and care issues. The need to hear the public views on the NHS Long Term Plan came at a time when we were already talking to the community so this gave us the opportunity to extend our focus groups to hear a wider public view of the NHS. Volunteers helped Healthwatch reply to the NHS Quality Accounts and this year we met with each Trust half way through the year to hear how the Trust is progressing with the annual priorities agreed in the Quality Account.

Looking forward

The Executive Board plan a change of emphasis this coming year. Changing from holding open public events to a more focused engagement programme using volunteers to engage with voluntary and community groups. Healthwatch will follow the review of mental health services as part of the new combined Bath, Swindon and Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group Transformation Programme. There is a need to continue to hear and follow up on rural transport and access issues. The Executive Board will work to ensure Healthwatch is hearing more about the introduction of the Independent Care Record and care issues more widely and will utilise funding to provide a further round of Community Pot grant funding for 2020/21.

Thank you

Morgan Daly CEO of The Care Forum wishes to thank both volunteers working for Healthwatch Bath and North East Somerset for all the time and commitment given to making it a vibrant and active project. Thanks also to the staff who hear the stories from local people and communities about the delivery of health and care services and have ensured these are shared with services, commissioners, regulators and Healthwatch England. They have been able to share the impact to ensure that changes can be made to make services fit for purpose.



Morgan Daly – CEO, The Care Forum

The Healthwatch Bath and North East Somerset Executive Board staff and volunteers have excelled in hearing views on care from the community.



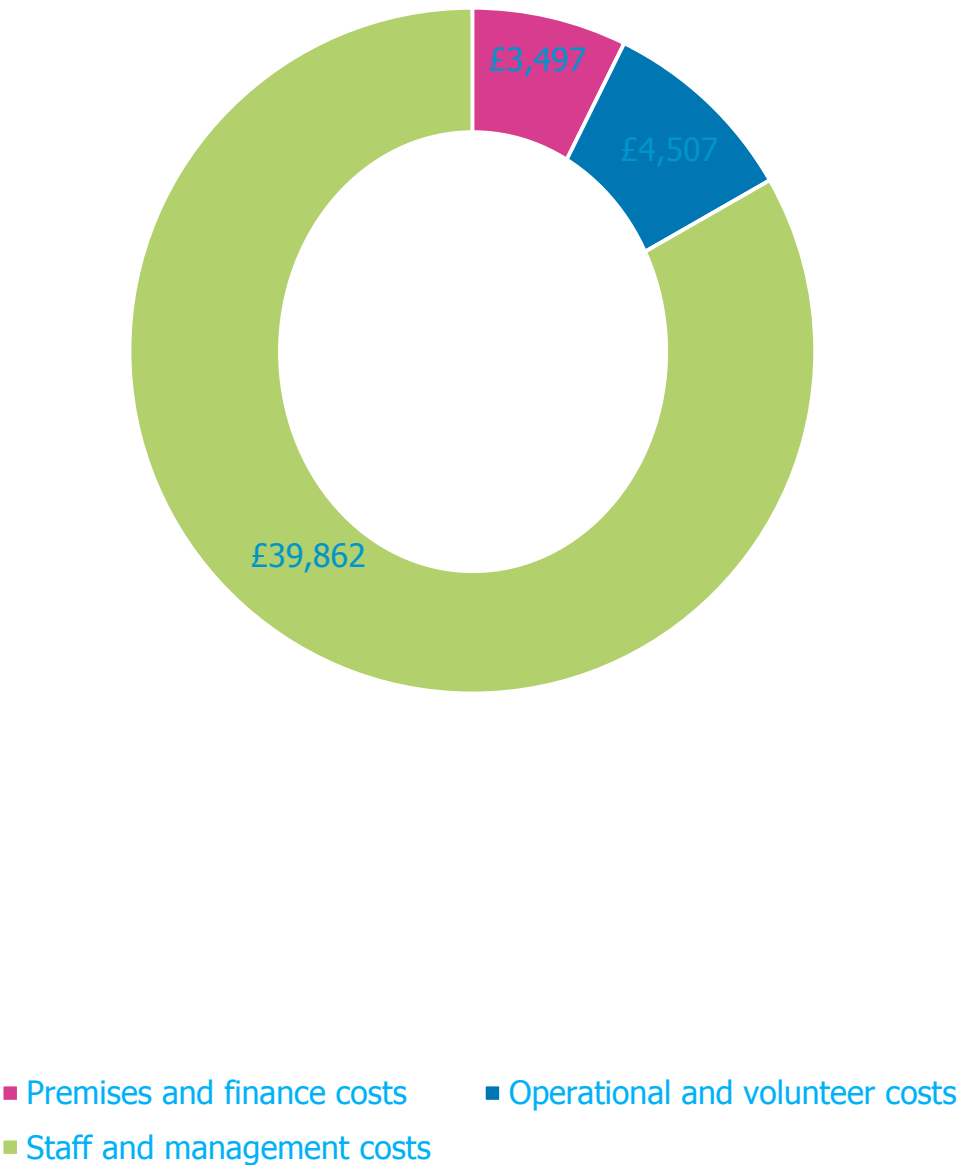
Finances



Healthwatch Bath and North East Somerset are funded by the local authority under the Health and Social Care Act (2012).

In 2019-20 we received £40,000 from the Local Authority and £43,622 from the Local Reform and Community Voices Grant.

We spent £47,866. The £35,757 balance carried forward will be used to help fund next years Healthwatch Community Pot grants.



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 volunteers.
- The voluntary organisations that have contributed to our work including Age UK Bath, SWAN, Community Transport organisations and Curo.
- The Advocacy People who have a seat on the Healthwatch Executive Board



Contact us

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