



## Five ways to give feedback

Share your experiences of local health and care services and make it better for everyone - that's the message from Healthwatch Gloucestershire as it celebrated its fifth birthday this month.

Over the last few months, staff (pictured above) and volunteers have been out and about in Gloucestershire visiting community hubs to encourage more local people to volunteer with the organisation to help shape health and care in the county.

Julia Butler-Hunt, Healthwatch Gloucestershire Manager, said: "As we celebrate our fifth birthday, our real focus is now on talking to more people than ever before through a strong network of volunteers." [Find out five ways to give feedback.](#)

## New CEO joins Healthwatch Gloucestershire

Mary Curran (pictured) joined Healthwatch Gloucestershire this month as its new Chief Executive Officer and plans to spend the first 100 days meeting staff, volunteers and stakeholders to understand local issues and concerns.

Mary, a former CEO of the North-East based learning disability charity Journey Enterprises, said: "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'll be taking every opportunity to get to know the business, the people involved and how it functions.



"I'll also be focused on understanding the health and social care issues that local people really care about, because that's why we are here." [Read more...](#)



## Volunteer urges others to help shape health and care

A Cheltenham man who suffered four cardiac arrests and stopped breathing 22 times on the operating table says his experiences of using local healthcare spurred him on to help improve NHS services in Gloucestershire.

Former IT project manager John (pictured) is a volunteer with Healthwatch Gloucestershire. He joined to help improve local health and care services after suffering from a series of health conditions including diabetes, ME and heart disease.

He said: "I enjoy volunteering with Healthwatch Gloucestershire as it gets me out and about meeting people who share my belief that we should all contribute to building a better society." [Read more...](#)



## Your views this month on local health services

Your views and experiences on local health and care services are important to us. We collate all feedback and present the common themes to those with the power to make change happen. Here's some of the things you have been sharing with Healthwatch Gloucestershire this month:

*"I fell and broke my jaw in two places last year and due to my osteoporosis they were unable to do anything for me, so I had to be on a liquid diet for 8 weeks whilst it healed. I was treated very well in a local hospital, but when I left, no one spoke to me to find out if there was anyone at home to help me. I was not given any information or leaflets on rehabilitation and as I am nearly 90, I was not very impressed at the lack of aftercare."*

*"My husband has diabetes and he used to receive regular check ups from the GP and we could go to him if there were any issues. Now, he no longer carries out these checks and we have to ring someone at the local hospital, but when you do this you get an answerphone and no one ever gets back to you."*

*"My husband has dementia and the dental practice we attend are absolutely brilliant with him. They always ensure he sees the same dentist, I am able to go in with him and everything is fully explained to both of us."*

Healthwatch Gloucestershire is interested in finding out more about people's experiences of using 111, ambulance, emergency departments and out of hours services in Gloucestershire. Share your feedback by calling 01452 504989 or email [info@healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk).

## Tackling mental health stigma in the workplace

Staff at Healthwatch Gloucestershire have been learning about some of the issues that people living with mental illness or poor health can face and the best ways to signpost people to the right services.



The staff team took part in mental health first aid training. Engagement Officer Suzie Compton said: "The course takes away the confusion around mental health issues, breaking it down so that we now feel more confident in spotting the signs and guiding someone towards the right support, such as the *Time to Change* website, or *Your Circle*.

"We also came away understanding the importance of listening and to not feel uncomfortable with the conversation, which in turn will help us enormously in our day to day work."

If anyone has any experiences of Mental Health services, then get in touch with Healthwatch Gloucestershire on 01452 504989 or for help and support, visit: [www.yourcircle.org.uk](http://www.yourcircle.org.uk).



## Views wanted over changes to GP surgeries

Healthwatch Gloucestershire wants to hear people's views on any planned amalgamation of surgeries to ensure patients have a say in the future of their surgeries.

Julia Butler-Hunt, Healthwatch Gloucestershire Manager, said: "We're aware of a number of surgeries merging or closing in the county. Any closure of a GP surgery could have the potential to affect the local community - whether this is through access, transport issues or longer waiting times.

"Healthwatch Gloucestershire is here to listen to the voices of local people on health and social care services, therefore, we would welcome feedback from local people about this issue. We will then share this anonymised information with the organisations which plan and pay for local health services."

People can get in touch by calling 01452 504989 or emailing [info@healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk).

## Meet us this month in your community

Staff and volunteers from Healthwatch Gloucestershire want to meet you and hear your views on local health and care. They will be at:



- Matson Library, Gloucester, Wed 2 May, 10am - 12 noon
- Leisure @ Cheltenham, Thurs 3 May, 9am - 12 noon
- Tewksbury Garden Centre, Wed 9 May, 10.30am - 2pm
- Tewksbury Leisure Centre, Mon 14 May, 4pm - 7.30pm
- FestivALL, Gloucester Cathedral, Thurs 17 May, 4pm - 7.30pm
- Coffee morning at Matson Surgery, Gloucester, Thurs 24 May, 10am - 11.30am.

For an up to date list of what's going on visit the [events calendar](#).

**Healthwatch Gloucestershire** is the county's independent health and care champion. We exist to ensure that people are at the heart of care. Our dedicated team of staff and volunteers listen to what people like about local health and care services, and what could be improved. These views are then shared with the decision-making organisations in the county, so together we can make a real difference.



The Healthwatch Gloucestershire service is run by Evolving Communities CIC, a community interest company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales with company number 08464602. The registered office is at Unit 5 Hamptor Park West, Melksham, SN12 6LH

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