

June 2019 e-bulletin

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healthwatch
Gloucestershire



Healthwatch says thanks to volunteers who help shape local health and care in Gloucestershire

We had a wonderful week 1-7 June celebrating our amazing volunteers. Our Volunteer Officer George Soars (pictured above right with volunteers Ernie and Angela) enjoyed cake with 15 volunteers across the county at our celebration events.

George said: *“It is really important that we thank our volunteers regularly, but volunteers’ week is a good excuse to celebrate. It was great to meet with the volunteers and to share their experiences and ideas, and also to talk to them about our upcoming work.”*

More than 40 volunteers currently offer their time to Healthwatch Gloucestershire, helping in various roles such as office admin, leading Enter and View inspection visits, gathering views at community events or being a member of the Local Board.

"We are always looking for more volunteers and would love to hear from people, whatever their background, to fill one of our voluntary roles. People can make a real difference to their communities and help to shape their local health and social care services.

"It's thanks to volunteers that we are able to get out and about in the communities and listen to the views and experiences of so many on local health and social care services." George said.

All volunteers with Healthwatch Gloucestershire go through a full training and personal development programme. They are given a comprehensive volunteer handbook and welcome pack, as well as having access to an online volunteer portal with up to date policies and procedures. Out of pocket expenses are also reimbursed.

To find out more about volunteering with Healthwatch Gloucestershire call George on 01452 504989 or email info@healthwatchsgloucestershire.co.uk or visit www.healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk/volunteering



Podsmead Community Family Fete promotes healthy eating

At the end of May we revisited Podsmead, where we gathered the views of residents last August on how to get more locals to eat healthy and stay active.

The Podsmead Food and Families Project, published in September 2018, highlighted the ideas residents had about ways to improve their lifestyles and access to healthy, affordable food, such as cooking classes, community food growing and more physical activity opportunities.

On 30 May we held the Podsmead Community Family Fete at Podsmead Community Centre featuring a range of activities, interactive cooking and food demonstrations at a world café.

At this second phase of the local Food & Families Project, we shared resident's improvement ideas, promoted current and upcoming initiatives in the community and explored how residents can get involved.

As well as giving us their feedback and ideas, residents were invited to share their skills with other residents, e.g. cooking, gardening. Residents were also encouraged to bring along their favourite recipes to contribute to a new Podsmead Community Recipe Book.

Julia Butler-Hunt, Manager of Healthwatch Gloucestershire said, *"This event was a really important follow-up to the community lunch we held last year. It shows the community we value their views and their ideas for improvement."*

"We wanted make this event fun to attend and involve a broader cross section of Podsmead residents, which was one of our recommendations after the first report. Residents gave us their feedback on a range of other health and social care services, especially around mental health services and being able to access all levels of support locally. Residents felt that one of the most important things for their community was support around food and activities in the school holidays."

The full *Podsmead Food & Families Project Report* can be viewed at www.healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk/reports-publications



Spotlight on: Community Ambassadors

Our Community Ambassadors usually have an interest in health and social care and help to spread the word about Healthwatch Gloucestershire and its work. This is done in their local communities, through friends, work colleagues, community/social/support groups, schools and Patient Participation Groups.

This unique role can complement voluntary/paid roles in other organisations, while assisting Healthwatch Gloucestershire to engage with a wider local

audience. As such, this role requires a smaller time commitment compared to other roles.

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Patient transport services in Gloucestershire



From 1 June, non-emergency patient transport (NEPT) in Gloucestershire will be provided by E-zec Medical Transport Services Ltd.

The NEPT service is funded by the NHS for those patients who, due to their mobility needs or medical condition, are unable to travel safely by other means. As such, the expectation remains that the majority of patients will be able to arrange and enable their own transport to and from hospital without needing to use the NHS NEPT service.

E-zec will be supported by The Patient Transport Advice Centre (PTAC) which provides a convenient booking and enquiries service for patients. PTAC also offers information and advice to those patients who do not meet the current Department of Health eligibility criteria. This includes signposting to alternative transport options, including voluntary and community providers.

E-zec is an experienced and specialist patient transport provider. They already carry out around 750,000 patient journeys a year in other areas of the country, including neighbouring areas. The contract with E-zec will be performance managed by NHS Gloucestershire CCG against a set of challenging key performance indicators designed to ensure that eligible patients are transported in a timely and safe manner. These include waiting times for pick-ups and drop-offs and time spent on the vehicle.

If you think you might be eligible to receive non-emergency patient transport, call The Patient Transport Advice Centre (PTAC) direct on 01278 726968.



Healthwatch Gloucestershire appoints new Local Board Chair

Former BBC journalist Bob Lloyd-Smith (pictured above) has been appointed Chair of the Healthwatch Gloucestershire Local Board.

Healthwatch Gloucestershire listens to what people think about local health and care services, what's working well and what could be improved. These views are then shared with the decision-making organisations in the county, to help shape local services for the better.

Bob's passion for improving mental health services led him on the path towards taking the position as Chair. He explains: "When I left the BBC, I gained a university master's degree in Psychology and for the last few years I have been a Mental Health Act Manager with the 2gether NHS Foundation Trust in Gloucestershire, The Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership and the Priory Private Hospital in Bristol.

"Healthwatch Gloucestershire representatives are invited to some of the most important and influential decision-making meetings which are discussing health and social care provision across the county. Money is tight and so clever and cost-effective new ways of working are always emerging from the commissioners and care providers, so we need to hear about what that's like in terms of patient and carer experience."

[Read more...](#)

If you would like to join the Healthwatch Gloucestershire Local Board please get in touch with our Volunteer Officer George on 01452 504989 or email info@healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk or visit www.healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk/volunteering

What you have been saying this month

Patients have been telling Healthwatch Gloucestershire what's good and what's not so good about local health and social care services this month.



"I have concerns for my husband as there is currently no Parkinson's Specialist nurse in Gloucestershire."

"I have to wait a lifetime for a GP Appointment at my surgery - sometimes up to a month."

"I think that more and more services are being put online and digital. I think people should be given more of a choice."

"I go to Cheltenham hospital once a year for diabetic check-up. I went last week, easy app, pleasant staff."

"The mental health services are terrible and it is very difficult to be seen on a 1-1 basis. It takes months to get an appointment."

Have your say by calling Healthwatch Gloucestershire on 01452 504989 or emailing info@healthwatchgloucestersire.co.uk. All feedback is collated anonymously and the most common themes are presented to the decision making organisations in the county, so that your voice is heard.



Out and About in June

Share your experiences of health and social care services with our volunteers and staff this month:

24 June

Conference on Loneliness, The Pavillion, Cheltenham

27 June

LGBTQ Partnership Meeting, Cheltenham

Healthwatch Gloucestershire is the county's independent health and social 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 4 Hampton Park West, Melksham, SN12 6LH.



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01452 504989 | 0800 652 5193

**Healthwatch Gloucestershire · 13 Wheatstone Court, Davy Way · Waterwells Business Park ·
Quedgeley, GL2 2AQ · United Kingdom**

<http://www.healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk>