

May 2019 e-bulletin

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**healthwatch**  
Gloucestershire



## Introducing our new Volunteer Officer George Soars

George Soars recently joined the team at Healthwatch Gloucestershire as the Volunteer Officer. George is passionate about making a difference in health and social care and will be working closely to support all our volunteers.

George said, "I hope to meet all of the volunteers as soon as possible and find out what they want to get out of volunteering with Healthwatch Gloucestershire. I want to ensure their skills and abilities are utilised in the best way but also encourage volunteers to challenge themselves."

Before joining Healthwatch Gloucestershire, George worked in the NHS as a Systems Trainer and Auditor in the Emergency Department where he managed a team of staff through inductions, training and ongoing management. His role also included reporting to the local Clinical Commissioning Group.

George has plenty of experience being a volunteer at many levels and understands the challenges volunteering presents. He wanted to bring his

experience to an organisation where he could support Volunteers to make a real impact while having fun and gaining new experiences.

“I am a volunteer Regional Youth Development Officer for a large charity, which takes up a lot of my free time. Aside from this, I enjoy spending time with my family, taking mini-breaks and visiting zoos and wildlife parks,” George said.

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## Can you spare a few hours a month?

If you would like to find out more about how you can get involved with Healthwatch Gloucestershire, please get in touch with our new Volunteer Officer George Soars.



There is something for everyone, from helping in the office to visiting groups to gather feedback about health and social care services.

We really need your help to make sure the views and experiences of people in Gloucestershire are being heard by the groups making decisions about our health and social care.

Email [George.Soars@healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk](mailto:George.Soars@healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk)

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Gloucestershire  
Self Harm Helpline



## Review of the Gloucestershire Self Harm Helpline

Gloucestershire County Council currently commissions a helpline service to provide support to people who self-harm, and those who are concerned about them.

This service is called the Gloucestershire Self Harm Helpline and is provided by Rethink Mental Illness.

The service consists of a:

- telephone helpline 0808 801 0606
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- texting helpline 07537410022
- A webchat support function
- A website [gloucestershireselfharm.org](http://gloucestershireselfharm.org) (includes information and advice)

As part of a review of this service, the Gloucestershire County Council are re-running the survey to find out your views (and also if views have changed since we previously surveyed in 2015) about the service. We would like to hear from you whether you are someone who might use such a service, either for yourself or to discuss someone you are concerned about.

The responses to this survey are anonymous and feedback provided as part of this process will be useful in informing our decision making.

[You can participate here...](#)

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## Spotlight: The Health and Wellbeing Board

Have you ever wondered what Healthwatch Gloucestershire does with the feedback it gathers from the public?

As part of a new monthly focus, we will share some key facts about the strategic meetings we attend each month - starting with the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Healthwatch Gloucestershire has a seat on the Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Board, which leads on improving the co-ordination of commissioning across Health, Social Care and Public Health services.

The board brings together elected members, leaders from the NHS, social care, police and the voluntary and community sector to work together and support one another to improve the health and wellbeing of the local population and reduce health inequalities. Members of the board must look at the evidence of what works best to help target plans and resources.

Healthwatch Gloucestershire's role on the board is to act as an independent voice, representing the views of the public and the users of services. Healthwatch Gloucestershire is represented by our Chair, Bob Lloyd-Smith.

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More details about the Gloucestershire board can be found [here](#)

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**Thank you**

**healthwatch**

## Thank you: Over 240 people tell Healthwatch Gloucestershire what they think would help make the NHS better

We want to say a huge thank you to everyone who has shared their feedback with us about the local implementation of the NHS Long Term Plan.

We've been speaking to people throughout Gloucestershire about how they would like to see the changes set out in the NHS Long Term Plan implemented. The plan sets out a number of ways in which NHS care needs to improve, so local communities took the opportunity to have their say about what those changes should look like – both in person and via an online survey.

We've been to supermarkets, car boots, hospitals, town centres and we will now share this feedback with local services to inform how the Long Term Plan is implemented in Gloucestershire.

[Read more...](#)

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## What's next for the mental health survey?

There were over 300 responses to the mental health survey and information was gathered from over 30 focus groups, including carers groups, service user groups and others.



This will be written up and a report produced by the end of May and will then be shared with commissioners and providers and the health and wellbeing boards.

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## What you've 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 had the same midwife for both my children and this has ensured I now feel 100% comfortable with her and can be myself and express how I am feeling. My health visitor is also fantastic and very supportive around my mental health problems."

"I recently rang the 111 service as I thought my baby had meningitis and they were really good and got back to me within an hour. Thankfully it was not meningitis, but I was impressed with the swift way I was dealt with and the care they showed."

"I have recently spoken to the pharmacist about various issues I have and I think this service should be given lots of publicity as it saves a lot of time and is a great resource to tap into."

Have your say by calling Healthwatch Gloucestershire on 01452 504989 or emailing [info@healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchgloucestershire.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.

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## Out and about in May

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



**22 May 10am - 3pm**

Learning Disability Big Health Check and Social Care open day  
Oxstalls Sports Park, Tewkesbury Park, Gloucester

**30 May 11.30am - 2pm**

Podsmead Food and Families Fun Day  
Podsmead Community Centre

[Find out more...](#)

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**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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