



Mental health and drug/alcohol survey extended

The deadline to participate in a study into why people with mental health conditions and drug and alcohol issues are not getting enough support from health and community services in Gloucestershire has been extended until 30 November.

The research project aims to find out why current statutory and community mental health support services and support services for those with drug and alcohol issues aren't working well together to support people who have co-existing problems.

One patient told Healthwatch Gloucestershire: "I use both mental health and alcohol addiction services. I find it hard to access both services; each says I am the other person's problem, and I can't get help from one until my other illness is sorted."

Please forward a link to the online survey to anyone you think would be able to share their views and experiences:

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/GloucMHSM/>.

The survey now closes on Saturday 30 November.

Mental Health Report on Carers

Healthwatch Gloucestershire has been talking to local unpaid carers about their experiences and views of mental health services in Gloucestershire. We are preparing a report documenting what people said when we spoke to them about their experiences.



We created a survey that was available online and in hard copy. This asked for the views and experiences of local people who cared for people who had used mental health services within the last three years.

We engaged with over 60 carers through visiting groups in each district of the county. We also contacted 50 voluntary, community and online groups to share the questionnaire and to encourage their members to give feedback.

We will be sharing this report with key partners to help them to shape mental health services and support for carers in the future. We will be presenting our findings at the Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Board and Mental Health Partnership Board and anonymised data will be shared with NHS Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group.

This report will be published on our website and be sent to Healthwatch England. We will also follow up on the suggestions in February 2020.



National research launched on mental health statistics

The UK's largest independent regulator of official statistics wants to hear from patients, carers and their families about how they access and use statistics on mental health in England.

Working through research consultancy Evolving Communities, the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) is carrying out a review of the mental health statistics that it regulates and wants to find out if they are providing the right information to support patients and families.

The information gathered from the research will be used to improve and shape the OSR's future provision of statistics around mental health.

The OSR want to hear from people who may be living with a mental health condition or know someone who is affected to find out what they think about the mental health statistics that are currently available and what could be improved.

[Read more...](#)



Farewell Julia

This month we say good-bye to Healthwatch Gloucestershire manager Julia Butler-Hunt.

Julia started with Healthwatch Gloucestershire in 2015. Of her time as manager, Julia said: "I really enjoyed being able to engage with people and listen to their experiences of health and social care. I have enjoyed giving people a voice, especially those who are often not heard! I have loved working with the team in Gloucestershire and Evolving Communities."

Bob Lloyd-Smith, Chair of the Healthwatch Gloucestershire Local Board said: "In the short time I have worked with Julia it has become clear that she knows absolutely everyone in the Health and Care system in Gloucestershire. She has been a great support to me in so many ways, for which I am very thankful."

A recruitment drive for a new manager is underway and we look forward to introducing you to the new appointment.



Share your views with us

Staff and volunteers will be out and about in Gloucestershire this month to listen to the health and care experiences of local people.

Cheltenham Hospital Engagement Stand

Thursday 28 November, 10am-2pm: Outside the Glasshouse Restaurant

The Vale Hospital Engagement Stand

Tuesday 3 December, 10am-2pm: By the Main Entrance

HWG Volunteer Thank You Event

Thursday 5 December: Cheltenham

Engagement Officer - flexible contracts, home/office based

We are building up our bank of experienced engagement officers. We offer attractive daily rates of in the region of £200 per day depending on the project.



Are you a people person, experienced in engagement? Do you have an interest in making a difference in the health, social care and community sector? Then Evolving Communities would like to hear from you. If you like the flexibility of working on short term projects, then this is the ideal opportunity for you. We are a small and friendly team based in Melksham Wiltshire but work on projects across the South West and nationally. You have the option of being home or office based (dependent on the project).

You will need to demonstrate an excellent flair for public engagement, have good attention to detail and excellent interpersonal skills plus the ability to work to deadlines. Experience of working in the Health, care or voluntary and community sector would be an advantage.

Here at Evolving Communities, our vision is for everyone to have a voice in influencing positive change in their health and care.

For more information please

visit: evolvingcommunities.co.uk/expertise/vacancies/

Tel: 01225 701851 | email: research@evolvingcommunities.co.uk



What the election means for Healthwatch Gloucestershire

With the upcoming election, we have entered ‘purdah’ - the period of time before an election when public authorities are limited in what they can do. This is to ensure that they are not seen to favour one political group or interest.

Under the requirements of purdah Healthwatch Gloucestershire is obliged to act in a politically neutral manner, meaning that we can not comment on, or publish anything, that could be interpreted as politically leading or biased.

In theory, purdah should cease at 10.00pm on Thursday 12th December. However, should the election result in no overall majority, we will remain in purdah until an official government is formed.

If you would like to know more about purdah, the [Local Government Association](#) have released some guidance which you can view here at www.local.gov.uk

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.

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