



# Healthwatch Swindon

Annual Report 2018-19



# Contents

Message from Healthwatch Manager	3
About us	5
Highlights of the year	7
How we've made a difference	9
Helping you find the answers	16
Our volunteers	19
NHS Complaints Advocacy	24
Our finances	26
Our plans for next year	28
Message from our CEO	30



*Learning Disability Partnership Board Forum on 'Feeling Confident' - March 2019*

# Message from our Manager

**2018/19 has been a busy year for Healthwatch Swindon. We have gathered 980 pieces of feedback which is a 10% increase on the previous year and we have used this feedback to influence improvement locally.**

- + This year we have worked closely with the Clinical Commissioning Group, Swindon Borough Council and voluntary organisations to carry out surveys that inform strategies and improvement plans.
- + Working to improve access to doctors following IMH implementation of a telephone 'hub' at one of their surgeries.
- + Age UK commissioned us to carry out a survey on Ageing Well.
- + Volunteers supported Threshold Housing to carry out a homeless audit, both on the streets and in local hostels to find out how homeless people are accessing services. This will help influence the homeless strategy for Swindon. Threshold were impressed with the quality of work our volunteers provided.
- + The reduction in funding will be challenging for the next year. We plan to increase our cohort of volunteers and ambassadors to gather feedback and have representation at meetings whenever possible.
- + Having now been in post for a full year, and having slightly re-organised the team, we are

working effectively together. We have also increased the number of volunteers and established an enthusiastic Advisory Group.

I am proud of the work the team have carried out this year and would like to build on this in 2019/20 using the research we have just carried out for the NHS Long Term Plan. None of the work could have been carried out without a committed team, especially the volunteers. Thanks to everyone!




*Carol Willis, Manager, Healthwatch Swindon*

## Changes you want to see

Last year we heard from 666 people, providing 980 pieces of feedback who told us about their experience of a number of different areas of health and social care. Here are some examples of the changes that you want to see.



- + Easier and quicker access for appointments to see a doctor. Especially for those registered under Integrated Medical Holdings (IMH)



- + Better service from the Prescription Ordering Direct (POD)



- + Clarity from community transport on how eligibility is applied



- + Improvement in access to mental health services

# About us

## Healthwatch is here to make care better

We are the independent champion for people using local health and social care services. We listen to what people like about services and what could be improved. We share their views with those with the power to make change happen. People can also speak to us to find information about health and social care services available locally.

Our sole purpose is to help make care better for people.



### Healthwatch Swindon Team 2018/19 (left to right)

Sam Baker - Volunteer Support

Vanessa Scott - Communication and Marketing

Carol Willis - Team Manager

Jo Osorio - Business Development and Engagement

Jim Hogg - Advocate - not present

## 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.



## People are at the heart of everything we do

We play an important role bringing communities and services together. Everything we do is shaped by what people tell us. 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

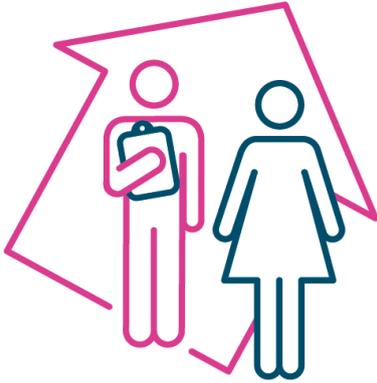
Our main job is to raise people's concerns with health and care decision-makers so that they can improve support across the country. The evidence we gather also helps us recommend how policy and practice can change for the better.



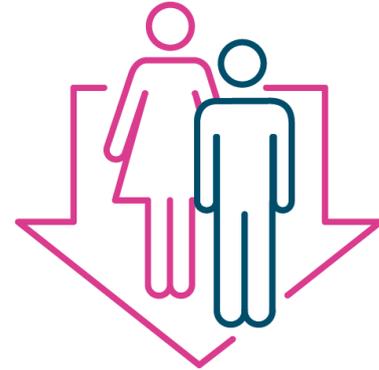


**Highlights from  
our year**

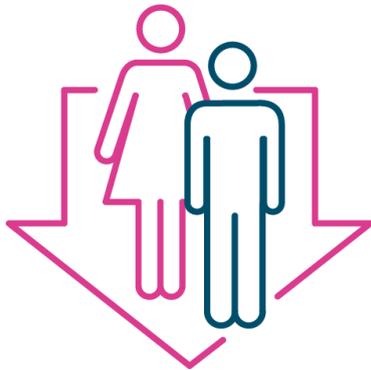
Find out about our resources and the way we have engaged and supported more people in 2018-19. **Our resources:**



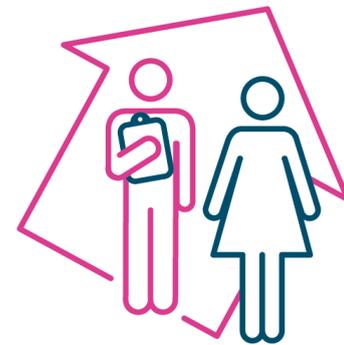
666 people shared their health and social care story with us, 10% more than last year.



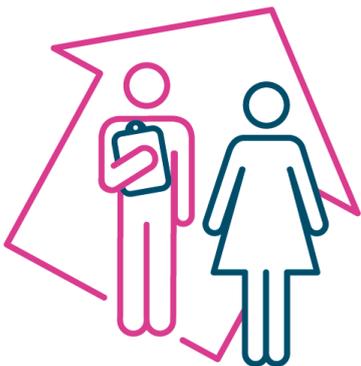
We have 19 volunteers helping to carry out our work. In total they gave up 352 number of hours.



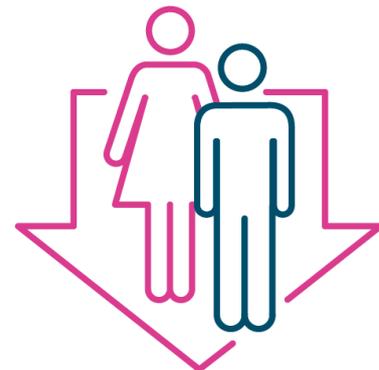
14201 people accessed Healthwatch advice and information online through our website.



9 Enter and View visits were carried out during 2018/19. A report with recommendations was published for each visit. 5 more than 2017/18.



Worked with NHS Properties and Swindon Access and Equality Group (SEAG) to improve access to Swindon Medical Centre.



3361 followers on Twitter and Facebook.



**How we've made**

**a difference**

## OUR PRIORITIES FOR 2018/19:

- Supporting people to have their say
- Ensure views help improve health and wellbeing
- Prevention (self-care and wellbeing)
- Mental health
- Services working better together

Projects and surveys that we have carried out are available to view on our website

[www.healthwatchswindon.org.uk](http://www.healthwatchswindon.org.uk):

- + Age UK - a survey aimed at older people to better understand people's experiences in later life. The report can be read in full [here](#).
- + First City - a survey for those receiving care in their own homes
- + Swindon Advocacy Movement (SAM), carrying out Enter and Views to look at service provision from the perspective of somebody with a Learning Disability. The report can be read in full [here](#).
- + Working with various stakeholders to improve the access to doctors surgeries through the IMH group of practices
- + Worked with NHS Properties and Swindon Equalities and Access Group to improve the entrance to Swindon Health Centre - work is about to commence!
- + Health Based Place of Safety - a survey aimed at gathering feedback from service users who had been taken to the Health Based Place of Safety in Devizes following the temporary closure of the facility in Swindon and Wiltshire. The report can be read in full [here](#).
- + Homeless health audit - in conjunction with Threshold Housing and CCG we are surveying the hostels and rough sleepers of Swindon to find out how they are accessing services
- + Polish Catholic Mission - a survey with Polish people to find out their experiences of accessing health and social care. The report can be read in full [here](#).

## Changes made to your community

Find out how sharing your views with your local Healthwatch has led to positive changes to health and social care services in Swindon. We show when people speak up about what's important, and services listen, care is improved for all.

Take a look at an example of a local Healthwatch demonstrating how they have made a difference in their community.

### Tackling barriers to healthcare in the homeless community

Many people told us that services don't truly understand the challenges for people who do not have a home. People found it difficult to access support because they lacked a permanent address, phone number or identification.

NHS guidelines say that GP services cannot refuse to register someone because they don't have proof of address or know where to go to access services. To raise awareness of this issue, Healthwatch Swindon volunteers carried out a survey for Threshold Housing and the local CCG to talk to people on the streets and in local hostels. These surveys will inform the Homeless Strategy for Swindon.

Healthwatch Swindon are continuing to work with Threshold and other stakeholders to improve outcomes for those without permanent homes.

Healthwatch have also produced a credit card sized card to hand out with information on your rights to register even if you do not have a permanent home or fixed address.

“Some excellent progress has been made across the sector with the Homeless Link Health survey.

Naz and Moya have been outstanding representatives of Healthwatch.

Moya has helped facilitate the completion of 23 surveys to date! Absolutely stunning!

This has been a sterling effort!”

**Michael Keenan, Threshold Housing.**



## Changes made to your community



### Access to doctor's appointments

Over the past year Healthwatch Swindon received a notable increase in complaints and concerns from people trying to access doctor's appointments from a newly formed telephone 'hub'. This was due to the partnering of five surgeries with the back-office support being provided by Integrated Medical Holdings (IMH).

This has not worked well for the patients at these surgeries. With one of the primary concerns being access to appointments through the newly formed call centre. Patients were waiting for unacceptable periods of time before anyone answered.

Healthwatch took the following action:

- + Gathered patient feedback on services provided by IMH, this information was fed back to the CCG and CQC.
- + Carried out an Enter and View at the telephone hub, finding that the call centre was understaffed and reporting findings to CQC. We also challenged the CEO of IMH on these issues.

"Intelligence provided by Swindon Healthwatch - for example the Enter and View reports and personal patient accounts contributed to creating an accurate picture of the health care situation experienced by patients who used IMH practices"

**Patrick Ismond, CQC Inspector**

- + Attended various meetings with stakeholders to monitor and escalate the serious issues raised by the patients.
- + Worked with CQC to provide witnesses and feedback for their on-going inspections and actions.
- + Took our findings to the NHS England South West North Quality Surveillance Group for escalation.

IMH have now withdrawn from this contract. Healthwatch are continuing to speak to patients and will work with the practices to set up effective Patient Participation Groups in all five practices to ensure that the new provider, when in place, provides a quality service and hears the views of the patients.



## Changes made to your community

### Highlighting barriers that those with learning disabilities face when accessing services

Healthwatch Swindon partnered with Swindon Advocacy Movement (SAM) to carry out Enter and View visits to services in Swindon. We did this to ensure:

- mainstream and specialist services serve people with learning disabilities and/or autism well
- To ensure that strategic learning disability commissioners work with those that commission and manage mainstream activities / services to find ways to make them accessible and in line with the Equality Act.

### Visits took place at six GP surgeries and two dental practices

The recommendations were made by quality checkers with 'lived' experience of having a learning disability or autism were produced in 'Easy Read.'

See next page for the common theme recommendations that were picked up by our quality checkers.

#### *Quality checkers discuss their findings*



The Healthwatch Swindon volunteers (quality checkers) were supported by Swindon Advocacy Movement (SAM). The volunteers found some of the same improvements were needed at many places they visited. These recommendations are shown below.



### Getting into the building

It should be made as easy as possible to get into the doctors

This includes

- Car parking spaces
- Doors that open with a push button
- Ramps not steps

### Easy read notices

All important signs should be put into easy read. This means

- Using pictures or symbols when possible
- Using large print
- Using plain English

### Notice boards to be kept up to date

Make sure that notices

- Are up-to-date
- Have the right information on them



## Making it easier for people to get the support they need

Thanks to our Healthwatch volunteer quality checkers, six GP practices and two dental practices in Swindon have taken steps to become more accessible.

By law, NHS and adult social care organisations must communicate in a way that people with a disability, impairment or sensory loss can understand.

We looked at different services to see whether people with learning disabilities needs were met.

“I enjoyed doing the work. It will make a lot of difference to those with learning disabilities”  
Tammy Peapell, Healthwatch Volunteer

Following our assessments, the quality checkers made recommendations.

- + The recommendations that were generic across the surgeries were put into Easy Read format (see previous page).
- + Full Enter and View reports are available on our website [www.healthwatchswindon.org.uk](http://www.healthwatchswindon.org.uk)

“In response to the report, we would like to thank you very much for the very comprehensive content and raising awareness of the issues highlighted which we will be looking into next year as part of an overall review of the building.”  
Practice Manager

Healthwatch volunteer quality checkers preparing to carry out an Enter and View from a learning disability perspective





**Helping you find**

**the answers**

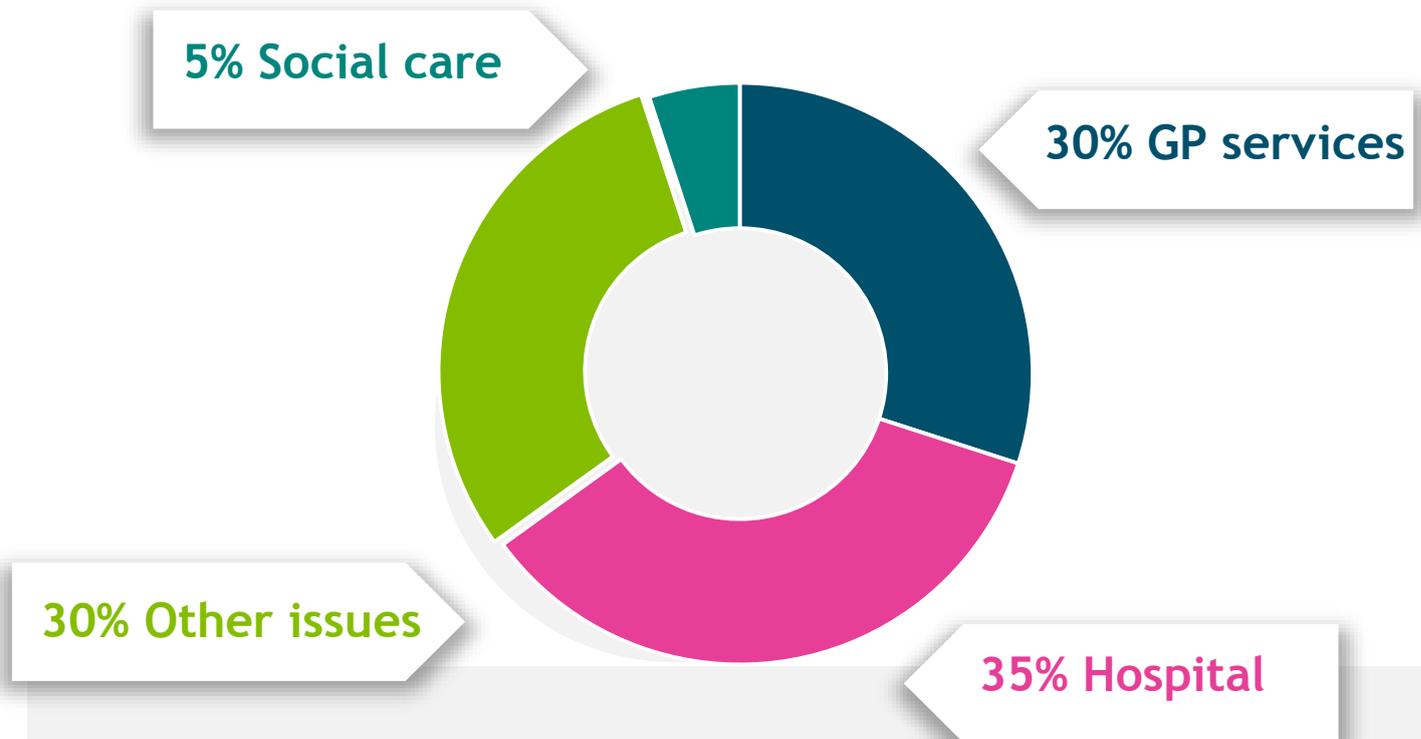
www.healthwatchswindon

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## What do people want to know?

People don't always know how to get the information they need to make decisions about their own health and care. Healthwatch plays an important role in providing advice and pointing people in the right direction for the support they need.

Here are the most common things that people ask us:



## How we provide people with advice and information

Finding the right care or support can be worrying and stressful. There a number of organisations that can provide help, but people don't know where to look. Last year we helped over 500 people access the advice and information they need.

You can come to us for advice and information in a number of ways including:

- + Specific advice and information online via social media

- + Our 'Contact Us' form
- + At community events
- + Promoting helpful services across our social media channels
- + Over the phone
- + Via e-mail - [info@healthwatchswindon.org.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchswindon.org.uk)



**Mrs B:** Who has mobility issues, was struggling to get to the hospital doors from the taxi. Healthwatch were able to put her in touch with OWLS, a volunteer group based at the hospital who meet and greet with wheelchairs.

*'Thanks to Healthwatch and OWLS I no longer have to worry before I attend the hospital'*



## Are you looking for help?

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.healthwatchswindon.org.uk](http://www.healthwatchswindon.org.uk)

t: 01793 497777

e: [info@healthwatchswindon.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchswindon.co.uk)



# Our volunteers

Norma Thompson, Healthwatch Swindon volunteer. See next page for Norma's story.

## Norma's Story

Norma, a retired mental health nurse from Swindon, volunteers with Healthwatch because of her motivation to improve health and care for everyone in her community. She does this by visiting local services to find out what is working well and what could be improved for people.

“I want to help build a society where all people have equal access to services and can share their views about health and social care, no matter their background.

“I would say to others who are thinking about volunteering - you can make a difference. Volunteering has a real and valuable impact on people, communities and society.

“My philosophy is simple. Get involved. Do good. Help others.”



## How do our volunteers help us?

At Healthwatch Swindon we couldn't make all of these improvements without the support of our 19 volunteers that work with us to help make care better for their communities.

What our volunteers do:

- + Raise awareness of the work we do in the community
- + Attend meetings and represent Healthwatch
- + Volunteers are members of our Advisory Group
- + Collect people's views and experiences which we use in our reports
- + Many are members of local Patient Participation Groups



*Nazma Ramruttun, Healthwatch volunteer at an event at New College, Swindon*

## A big thank you to Swindon Healthwatch volunteers for all the help and feedback they have provided this year

This year the volunteers have represented us at many meetings including:

- Equality & Access Group
- Swindon Limbless Association

- Parkinson's Swindon
- Safeguarding Adults Board
- Swindon Seniors Forum

Many attend their local Patient Participation Group to gather views and feedback.

The volunteers have also been involved in collating information for the NHS 10 Year Plan Survey at groups and events.

## Meet our volunteers

We caught up with a couple of our fantastic volunteers to show you how their work truly makes a difference to the lives of people in our area.

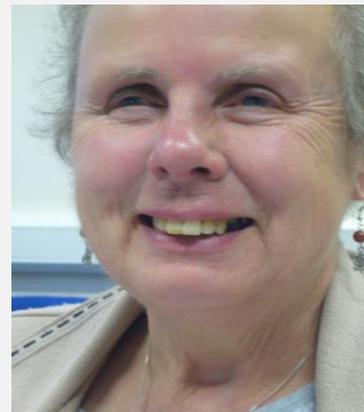


### Maria

*My volunteering for Healthwatch has shown me the very good work that is done in hospitals and other NHS services. The public's view can be surprising but mostly positive. We do such a good job letting the relevant agencies know the thoughts and wishes of the public. It's just a shame we are not better known. I like working for HW because I am given the opportunity to pick the jobs I am interested in and I can be as busy or not at times and dates that suit me. I have also made friends with people I would not usually come across. It's been a pleasure!*

### Moya

*For the last few years I have volunteered at Healthwatch. During this time I have covered a wide range of activities such as a pharmacy visit to Boots I was pleased to see the respectful way the pharmacist dealt with Methadone prescriptions and needle exchange. I have also been involved in a Dementia project with Swindon Borough Council to attempt to make Swindon more Dementia friendly. I have enjoyed my time as a Healthwatch volunteer.*



## Volunteer with us

Are you feeling inspired? We are always on the lookout for more volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering get in touch:  
[www.healthwatchswindon.org.uk](http://www.healthwatchswindon.org.uk)  
 t: 01793 497777  
 e: [info@healthwatchswindon.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchswindon.co.uk)

“It was great to promoting Healthwatch at New College. It was wonderful to see so many young people enthused about volunteering”

Katie  
Healthwatch Volunteer





**NHS Complaints  
Advocacy**

*NHS Complaints Advocate Jim Hogg*

## NHS Complaints Advocacy

We are commissioned to provide 20 hours per week of free, confidential and independent NHS Complaints Advocacy to the residents of Swindon.

As well as complaints advocacy, we also support clients to appeal Continuing Health Care (CHC) funding decisions.

Between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019, we supported **109** new clients to pursue complaints through the NHS Complaints Procedure. Of this:

- + **89** clients were able to self-advocate using the Healthwatch Swindon self- help pack
- + **20** clients required advocacy support, which may have included multiple consultations and communication with outside agencies.
- + A further **7** clients were “carried over” from the previous year.

Of the 109 complaint enquiries for the year, the break down for the top ten cases are as follows:

### Providers who were the subject of the complaint

+ GP	52
+ Hospital	31
+ Mental Health Services	7
+ Dentist	5
+ Community Services	3

### Complaint classification

+ Care and treatment	50
+ Access to services	22
+ Administration	5
+ Diagnosis	5
+ Staff behaviour	5

## Case Study

We were contacted by a client who had concerns with treatment which they had received following a 999 call to the home address. The client was assessed at home by the ambulance staff, but was not taken to hospital.

The client wished to make a complaint, but did not feel confident to do this on their own.

We contacted the ambulance service to register the complaint, and with the client’s consent, were able to obtain the Patient Care record for the incident.

The ambulance service conducted an investigation into the complaint and provided the client with a comprehensive response. The client was satisfied with the explanation provided.

The client went on to say: “Thank you [Healthwatch] for supporting me over the last few months....It’s thanks to you that I was able to get a detailed report from the ambulance service, which before meeting you, I did not know I could do. Nor did I realise that I could make a formal complaint....I feel confident in your expertise and fully supported.



# Our finances



## How we use our money

To help us carry out our work, we are funded by our local authority. In 2018-19 we spent £133,365

### Income:

- + Funding received from local authority
- + £143,424 - total income

### Expenditure

- + How much it costs to run Healthwatch - £18,512
  - + How much we pay our staff - £111,093
  - + Our operational costs - £3,760
  - + Total expenditure - £133,365
-



**Our plans for**

**next year**

# Our plans for next year

We will be building on the feedback we have gathered from the NHS 10 year plan survey

- + Advisory Group members have set out our priorities for the following year and will continue to focus on our Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (BSW STP) priorities of:
- + Ageing well / frailty
- + Primary Care Networks
- + We are working with Swindon Borough Council to carry out Enter and Views in local care providers to improve service provision
- + We will continue to work to establish Patient Participation Groups across Swindon

“Healthwatch Swindon are working hard to obtain the views and opinions of Swindon residents with regards their health and social care requirements and any issues that may need to be addressed. They are also ensuring that patients and service users can air their views to make improvements to Swindon’s health care and social care provisions and to help address their need for high quality services.”

*Harry Dale, Healthwatch Advisory Group*



# Message from our CEO

I feel privileged to have been personally involved in Local Healthwatch from very early on, having started out as a project coordinator for Healthwatch at The Care Forum back in 2013. It's amazing to look back and see how Healthwatch has gone from strength to strength during this time. We've learned some vital lessons along the way, often simply by listening to our volunteers who keep us grounded in the regions we serve.

This year we have welcomed quite a few new volunteers to the project, which is always a sign that the work being done is worthwhile and matters to people. I'd like to use this opportunity to welcome you, and say a big thank you for your commitment.

The recent issues around IMH in Swindon have underlined the importance of Healthwatch as a patient and public voice. We have worked tirelessly on behalf of patients and the public to highlight the issues faced by local people around accessing GP appointments, for example. We conducted enter and views in IMH services, led by local volunteers, which flagged up staffing issues at a call centre. We worked hard using our contacts and social media to keep local people informed too. Although it's never positive when a provider can't deliver the services people need, I am proud of the Healthwatch team of staff and volunteers for shining a light on the issues and being part of the solution this year. We will ensure that in the year ahead we continue to support local people to demand high quality services in Swindon.



*Morgan Daly, Interim CEO, The Care Forum*

**Morgan Daly**

# Thank you

Thank you to everyone in 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 staff and volunteers
- + The voluntary organisations that have contributed to our work

VERY BIG thank you to everyone who supported the forum last week.

I have heard that it was a great forum made even more successful by your willingness to step up to the plate and muck in. The forums are a true reflection of partnership working at its best. The readiness to manage the refreshments, direct table facilitators, help at the sign in desk and set up the tables was brilliant. The quality of the table facilitation meant that everyone was fully involved.

**Cath Johnston**  
Planning and Development Officer -  
Learning Disabilities



# Contact us

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If you need this in an alternative format please contact us.

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