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A Merry Christmas from Healthwatch Bristol, North Somerset and South Glos

Dear all,

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for supporting Healthwatch over the last year and helping us give patients a voice on the health and social care services they use.

It's been an exciting year for the team. In March and April we were involved in a large engagement project to find out what people in Bristol, North Somerset and South Glos thought of the NHS's Long Term Plan and how Government money should be spent improving services. Around 600 people gave us their feedback and we published our report on our findings in August meaning service providers now have more knowledge, especially for people with learning disabilities, cancer and autism, where services are not working well. Read our recommendations on the attachment.

In June we published our Children and Young People's Access to Mental Health Report after interviewing nearly 100 young people about how they sought help in times of stress and low points. We are delighted our recommendations to improve early intervention services have been taken up by the local clinical commissioning group. Our findings also went to the Mental Health Wellbeing Advisory Group after Jacqui Ford, Group Director at Weston College identified it as an "excellent piece of work." The Chair of the Quality Surveillance Group has additionally asked for us to send it to all their members. See more on the attachment.

Perhaps the biggest news for us this year was Healthwatch North Somerset winning a new contract which now (from October) includes Bristol and South Glos too. We are embracing new ways of working and focusing on co-production with the voluntary sector. It has been a busy time meeting people in our new areas as well as launching new websites for Bristol and South Glos which allow people to provide feedback and get involved with health and care services.

Additionally we would like to send out a seasonal message to our volunteers for all their goodwill this year. It is through their vital support and hard work that Healthwatch is

able to gain feedback from members of the public. They also attend meetings and provide office support. Members of the Healthwatch team have also been involved in co-production work, helping select new service providers. This has been assisting with a new contract for the Charlotte Keel Medical Practice in Bristol as well as working on the new Crisis & Recovery Centre to help support people with mental health needs in Weston. Patients can also get involved with naming the new service. [Survey here](#)

All volunteers play their part, so a big big THANK YOU from Julia and our new (job share) Volunteer Co-ordinator, Rachel, who will be meeting all our volunteers soon!

Healthwatch is the health and social care sector's single biggest source of patient feedback and evidence. 406,567 people contacted their local Healthwatch in the past year across 152 local branches and the Healthwatch network shared 2,053 reports with local services and decision-makers about the improvements people would like to see to local health services.

Your voice really does count, so get in touch with your health stories.

Have a happy and healthy Christmas!

*The Healthwatch Bristol, North Somerset and South Glos team*

