

Healthwatch

Voices

Your views on your health and care services in Devon: Winter 2018



In this issue:

**#SpeakUp
campaign**

**Tackling loneliness: the Healthwatch
Devon community responds**

**Changing health and
social care in Devon**

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We welcome all contributions* to Healthwatch Voices but regret that we cannot guarantee publication and we reserve the right to edit for reasons of space or style.

To contribute an article, please email info@healthwatchdevon.co.uk

*Published items do not necessarily represent the views of Healthwatch Devon

Articles may include personal accounts which have been anonymised.

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Cover: Ken Holland, see p.6

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Amendment to p.7 para.2 - Healthwatch Devon Voices, Autumn 2017. "Last year 1.1 billion prescription items were dispensed nationally in primary care at a cost of £9.2billion."

In this issue . . .

As we enter 2018 it is important to note that the well-publicised winter pressures across the country have pressed Devon services but in general they have fared better than other areas. Devon's emergency departments have won acclaim for their systems and processes and this will have stood them in good stead to deal with pressure points like this within the year.

However, on the day of *VOICES* going to press Care Quality Commission have released their report about Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust which lists areas of concern which the Trust has to respond to. As the independent health and social care champion, Healthwatch Devon is concerned about the impact of incidents of poor practice on the patients and families involved. We will continue to work with CQC and the Trust to champion the voices of the people and ensure that your stories are passed on so lessons are learnt and positive changes are made. Check our website for further information.

Healthwatch Devon is taking part in the #SpeakUp Campaign, led by Healthwatch England. We want to encourage people all over Devon to tell us their experiences - good, bad or mixed. By increasing the amount of feedback we get we can get a clearer picture of what is happening. But, to do this we need your help.

This issue looks back at our work over the last three months including our recent Good Care Matters (p.9) and Accessing NHS Dental Care reports (p.9). We hope that this is useful to you as well as services and

commissioners. Our work is in part directed by what people tell us. If new concerns arise we may decide to do some targeted work.

We also look forward to our work in the coming months. We are excited about the developments for our Tackling Loneliness project. Following the powerful images seen in our photo competition we are holding a workshop event in February for members and supporters to reflect on findings and recommendations in preparation of our report (p.7).

In addition, Healthwatch Devon has developed joint working with our neighbours Healthwatch Plymouth and Healthwatch Torbay over recent months. We have found out people's experiences of the NHS 111 service across all areas featured inside (p.5). 'Changing health and social care in Devon' (p.4) describes how planning is taking place. The three Local Healthwatch are working together to attend meetings and ensure that public feedback is heard. Our next issue of *Voices* will reflect this joint working and report on our work across all three areas. Watch this space!

And finally - what we do is led by you. As I have explained our work is partly led by your feedback. We are a small team of staff, volunteers and board members. We are making a New Year drive to expand the numbers and range of our volunteers and board members (p.12). The more you get involved the more we can do.

Colin Potter, Chief Executive

Thanks, celebrations and successes at the 4th Annual General Meeting

Healthwatch Devon held our AGM on Wednesday 18 October in Kingsteignton. We were reporting on our activities for the year 2016-2017, which was our fourth year of operation - but our first full year as an independent charity.

Sue White (right), who recently stood down after three and a half years as Chair of Healthwatch Devon, gave a report about our successes within 2016-2017, stressing the importance of our partnership working with Devon Communities Together, Libraries Unlimited and Citizens Advice Devon in reaching out to a wide range of people to get their views about services and our joint work with Healthwatch Plymouth and Healthwatch Torbay. The role of Chair has now been taken on by David Rogers, who has been Vice Chair to Sue and who led the AGM proceedings. David presented Sue with flowers to thank her on behalf of the trustees, staff and volunteers for her years of dedicated service to Healthwatch Devon. Sue continues her involvement with us as a Trustee.



NHS 111 service

When you need urgent medical advice or treatment you can phone NHS 111 for free, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. When you call NHS 111 you will speak to a telephone adviser, supported by healthcare professionals such as nurses or paramedics. They will ask you a series of questions to assess your symptoms which allows them to direct you to the best medical care for your needs.



Healthwatch Devon, Healthwatch Plymouth and Healthwatch Torbay asked for feedback about people's experiences of the NHS 111 service and this is what we heard.

Parent reassured and well treated by NHS 111 and walk-in centre services*

I have a young son, under 2 at the time, who was really unwell. It was early evening and I'd put him to bed but I was concerned about him and didn't know what to do. I called NHS 111 and spoke to a very helpful lady who asked me some questions and got me to do some checks on my son. The lady organised for me to take him to an appointment at the RD&E walk in centre within an hour of making the call. The doctor I saw was extremely kind and understanding with me and my son and gave me a diagnosis for why he was unwell. I felt reassured and well treated and was told I'd done the right thing to contact them. It's hard when you know something isn't right with a little one but don't know what to do and I felt the NHS 111 service provided exactly the right amount of out of hours support.

Communication issues during 111 consultations*

Person described that having spoken to 111 there were language barriers with the call handler which caused communication issues during the consultation.

Efficient service provided by NHS 111 and out of hours GP*

My relation had to call 111 Saturday morning, they were dealt with quickly and passed to the out of hours GP who triaged the call very quickly and sent a prescription to the local pharmacy. All in all, a very efficient service and experience.

Lots of questions but happy with experience**

My call was answered quickly but there were a lot of questions, some seemed more relevant than others and some were then repeated by the clinician who I was passed on to speak to. A bit frustrating to be asked the same questions again but they were very thorough and arranged a call back from the Devon Docs referral service within half an hour. Half an hour after that we were at the Out of Hours Surgery at Torbay Hospital being seen by a Doctor. Very pleased with the service overall.

Our local 111 service is working effectively!**

With worsening breathing problems, I phoned the 111 service lunchtime on a Saturday, a very polite woman helped me through their standard signposting questions. At the end of the questions the woman decided I should actually see a GP and booked me a teatime appointment at Torbay Hospital with their Out of Hours GP. Excellent.

Person reported long delays in getting through***

I kept getting chest pains and feeling faint. I phoned 111 and it took forever to get through, then I waited for the Nurse [and] she said [I needed to speak to] a Doctor so I waited again. He eventually sent a paramedic who had limited English. He gave me an aspirin and said to go to my own GP. The next day it happened again so my friend took me to Derriford. After 6 and 3/4 hours I was admitted. I spent 3 weeks on a Cardiac Ward and ended up having 2 arrests and a pace maker fitted.

Parent happy with swift and efficient service***

My son very suddenly developed Scarlet Fever. We rang 111 at 7.30. We had to get a bus to Derriford, but by 9.30 am we had been assisted with a diagnosis for my son and help given. We were thrilled with the quality of the service and impressed with the speed of it. Staff all very kind and helpful.

Overall feedback received by all local Healthwatch regarding the NHS 111 service was positive. However, the experiences shared with Healthwatch Devon and Healthwatch Plymouth did indicate some issues with getting through to the service and possible communication issues with call handlers.

Healthwatch Torbay reported that although people found the series of questions asked quite long-winded, they are happy with the speed of service after the phone consultation.

Thank you for your support and please continue to share your experiences by calling 0800 520 0640, email: info@healthwatchdevon.co.uk or complete our short survey at the back of this publication.

*Experience shared with Healthwatch Devon

**Experience shared with Healthwatch Torbay

***Experience shared with Healthwatch Plymouth

Local Context

#SpeakUp

Healthwatch Devon reveals local people's health priorities for 2018 and urges them to share their stories

During the period 01 April - 30 September 2017 Healthwatch Devon engaged with more than 3,200 people.

This engagement was carried out through our events, activities and through our project work and surveys. Included in this figure are the 151 people who used our 'have your say' feedback form to share with us their experiences of health and social care services in Devon.

The following are the services that are being reported to Healthwatch Devon:

Hospital services (30%) including outpatient services at community hospitals.

Primary care services (30%) including accessing GPs and issues with appointment systems.

Adult social care (28%) including residential and nursing care homes.

Mental health services (11%) including community mental health teams

#SpeakUP

Healthwatch Devon has joined a national campaign, launched today by Healthwatch England, to get more people to share their views about these and other issues. Your views were then shared with those who have the power to make change happen. We are

urging you to contact Healthwatch Devon to speak up about your ideas and experiences.

If you have an idea that could help improve health and social care for you, a loved one or your community, contact us www.healthwatchdevon.co.uk and #SpeakUp. No matter how big or small the issue, we want to hear about it.

Colin Potter, Chief Executive of Healthwatch Devon said:

"The more that people share their ideas, experiences and concerns about NHS and social care, the more services can understand when improvements are needed. That is why we are encouraging people to #SpeakUp in 2018 to help make services better for the people of Devon".

**To #SpeakUp and have your say please call 0800 520 0640
or email info@healthwatchdevon.co.uk**



How you can get involved

We're here to help make health and social care better.

Would you like to join the team?

Become a Volunteer

Join our dedicated volunteer team who are actively involved in helping people have their say on local services.

- **Events team** - meeting people and listening to their experiences of health and social care around Devon
- **Enter and View** - talking with any health or social care establishment about what makes good care
- **Enquiries and Admin** - helping with enquiries and administration
- **Promotions** - meeting with organisations and health professionals promoting Healthwatch Devon

Join the Board

Our Board Members serve for a fixed time and due to this some Board vacancies have emerged in the following areas:

- Finances
- Business
- Legal Advice
- HR

The Board meet monthly and as required between Board meetings, with a degree of flexibility.

For more information and to get involved please call 0800 520 0640 or email info@healthwatchdevon.co.uk

Changing health and social care in Devon

Regular readers of Voices will be aware of our updates about the Sustainability and Transformation Plan. The STP is a comprehensive five-year plan to transform health and care services for local people so they are fit for the future and coordinated across the whole of Devon. Commissioners and service providers are all signed up to this.

This is needed due to current and future changes including...

Huge growth in the use of NHS and social care services - demand has risen by 50% in a decade.



An **increase in population and people with complex needs** - a higher level of input and coordination required.



New medicines and treatments - which increase costs.



Increasing demands that have to be delivered within **fairly level annual funding**.



Real **difficulties in recruiting** to roles in the NHS and social care.



Widening health inequalities - fifteen years life expectancy gap.



For more information about: the Devon STP check out the STP website '*Shaping Future Care*' [here](#); read the information about the seven STP priorities [here](#); view the Top 10 developments and successes [here](#)

Local Healthwatch working together

The three Local Healthwatch (Devon, Plymouth and Torbay) have been instrumental in pushing for greater transparency and engagement from the STP with the public. We were involved in the STP Review of Devon's acute hospital services early last year. And all three Local Healthwatch are represented on the STP Clinical Cabinet and share out representation on the work stream committees to ensure that the voice of the public can be heard. We all intend to keep the public informed as the STP develops.

Joint work is set to increase further with all three Local Healthwatch sharing good practice and ideas. The next edition of Voices will feature both the individual and joint work of all three Local Healthwatch to give a coordinated picture across the whole area. Watch this space!

Thank you so much for letting me know. I feel quite honoured to have a photo on the cover of a report! All this came from chatting to some of you at the Respect Festival in Exeter, and taking a leaflet home with me.



Ignored

- Ken Holland

In 2017, we launched a competition asking photographers to illustrate what it's like to feel lonely or isolated.

We were delighted with the response, which has provided a gallery of photographs. These images will shape a report that will help senior health and social care managers explain what loneliness looks and feels.

On 21 November 2017, The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor of Exeter visited to judge our photo competition, along with Healthwatch Devon volunteer Helen Imber and one of our trustees Rosemary Whitehouse.

They were overwhelmed by the thought provoking images. The winning submission, pictured above, will be used as the cover of our report due out later this year.



FEB

An invitation

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Tackling Loneliness in Devon: the Healthwatch Devon community responds

What's it all about?

The purpose of this meeting is to enable our community to review the findings of our loneliness project. Over 500 individuals and groups across Devon gave us their views and shared their experiences of loneliness. The results of our work will provide a community voice to help decision makers understand the impact of loneliness, how people are helping to overcome the problem and what people think are effective solutions. We want to help the Devon community understand what is happening and what can be put in place to help tackle this problem which has been highlighted nationally as well as locally. To find out more please visit www.healthwatchdevon.co.uk/loneliness

Who is this event for?

This event is for our members and supporters, people who have participated in our project and commissioners and providers of health and social care services in Devon.

The event will be in workshop style and there are 60 free tickets. It will run from 10 am till 3 pm and more information about the day will be sent out in due course. We will ask you to reflect on the work the community has contributed to and give us your views for recommendations for providers and commissioners.

Paid parking is available on site at the front of County Hall (Topsham Road entrance) and you will need to go to the main reception desk to obtain an entry pass to the Coaver Club which is a short walk from the main entrance. People with mobility vehicles can obtain a vehicle pass to the door of the club and there is limited disabled parking at the hall. Please let us know if you need help with disabled parking.

A light lunch will be provided. Although this is a free event, we do ask that if you have booked and are subsequently unable to attend, please let us know as soon as possible so we can release the place to someone else.



10:00 - 15:00

Coaver Club, Exeter

email: info@healthwatchdevon.co.uk

BOOK at <http://bit.ly/2yX3AAA> or call 01392 248919 ext. 7111 and speak to Clare.

Did you know...

84% of British people are lonely

13% feel lonely ALL THE TIME

2/3 of people know someone who is lonely



think people are too scared to admit they're lonely

You told us

#itstartswithyou

During the last quarter we have been gathering people's views and published a suite of new reports. These reports are being shared with the NHS, commissioners and service providers you have the power to make change happen. You can view our full reports and people's responses on our website [here](#)



Views about products routinely available on prescription

In June 2017 NEW Devon CCG announced their new prescribing guidance for gluten free products. The new guidance recommended that patients under 18 years of age should be able to receive a limited range of gluten free items: bread, flour, multipurpose flour mixes, and pasta, on prescription. Patients aged 18 years and over should no longer receive gluten free products on prescription.

Following this decision, which came into effect on 1st July 2017, Healthwatch Devon received feedback from several people that were unhappy with these changes.

We wanted to know what others felt about these changes, including those who might not be directly affected by the changes to the policy regarding gluten free prescriptions. How the NHS allocates its resources is something that impacts on everyone.

This report combines the feedback we received regarding the changes in gluten free prescription policy as well as results from a survey asking for views on which products should routinely be available on prescription.

An Enter and view report Heanton Nursing Home

commissioner
request

Healthwatch Devon is delighted to publish our latest Enter and View report. This report is on Heanton Nursing Home, nr. Punchardon and is part of our “Good Care Matters” series of consumer guides. This project asks people what they think is good about living in a residential care home, and we are finding that residents and their relatives have great things to say about residential care when it is done well. Read full report [here](#)



Accessing NHS Dental Care

Speaking out on health and care services

In September 2016, NHS England presented an update to Devon Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee as to the current position on Access to NHS Dentistry in Devon, at that time, illustrated that:

- Demand for NHS dental places in Devon has increased.
- Numbers of patients currently on the waiting list for an NHS dentist has increased.
- Whilst the waiting list for a dentist has increased in all areas, the areas of greatest increases have been for Exeter and East Devon.

One year on

Healthwatch Devon regularly hears that accessing an NHS dentist can be difficult. We also know that it can be a problem getting the right dental treatment on the NHS and that fees and charges are an issue. The full report is available [here](#)

independent
inquiry



Your views are shared with those that have the power to make change happen.

#SpeakUp by calling 0800 520 0640
email info@healthwatchdevon.co.uk

I was a walking heart attack



Ron Morris, 48, is married with three children aged 17, 14 and 11. The family lives in Stoke-on-Trent and Ron works as a printer in the nearby town of Stone.

Ron feels he had a lucky escape thanks to his NHS Health Check. When he received an invitation to attend one from his GP in December 2013, he had no doubts about taking up the offer, even though he felt fine.

"My father had a stroke at the same age as me, and this was always at the back of my mind... although he survived for another 20 years, he had no life after the stroke...most of the time he was just sat in a chair, wasting away."

Even though Ron's father was a smoker, which Ron wasn't, he was right to be concerned. Your family history is one of the risk factors for a stroke.

Ron attended his NHS Health Check on his way to work (or so he thought) and his blood pressure was found to be dangerously high. So high in fact, that the doctors who saw him couldn't believe he was up and about.

He recalls: *"The nurse looked at me and said: 'You're a walking heart attack or stroke. You're not going to work today - you're going to hospital.'"* Ron was admitted to his local acute medical unit, where he was put on a drip and given medication, which brought his blood pressure under control. Over the next few days, Ron had other tests, including a CT scan and tests on his liver and kidneys, which luckily came back clear.

On the third day, he was allowed to go home to his family, but he will be taking blood pressure-lowering medicines every day for the rest of his life, in addition to aspirin. *"I'd rather not have to take them, but they're doing an important job,"* he says.

NHS Health Checks

How Ron manages his health now

"I used to be fitter when I was younger. I played a lot of sport, but as you get older these fade away. Since this happened I've been doing more swimming, and in the summer I'll cycle more and play golf."

- Taking medicines to lower his blood pressure
- Improved diet and exercise habits
- Reduced salt intake

Stroke: the silent killer

Ron's family is understandably relieved that he got the help he did before it was too late. "Otherwise my children wouldn't have anyone to drive them everywhere," he laughs.

He urges anyone receiving an invitation to an NHS Health Check to take it up.

"It doesn't take long and could save your life. Who knows what could have happened to me if I hadn't gone."

Why have an NHS Health Check?

Watch this video to hear Dr Dawn Harper explain why going for your NHS Health Check is so important, and Ron's description of how having one saved his life.

<https://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/nhs-health-check/Pages/NHS-Health-Check-Rons-story.aspx>

Most GP surgeries in Devon offer an NHS Health Check - list available at www.healthwatchdevon.co.uk

How I got my hearing aids

- Adam Hart-Davies

I think it began with the birds. My wife is fanatical about having our bedroom windows open, and she often said “Oh aren’t the birds lovely? Listen: there’s a robin, and a blackbird, and surely that’s a thrush...”

I could not hear them at all.

Then there were my grandchildren, who had to be told to speak loudly if they wanted to communicate with me. Luckily they shouted most of the time anyway. My assistant and my step-daughter, however, both have rather quiet voices, and I was forever having to say “Sorry, say again.”

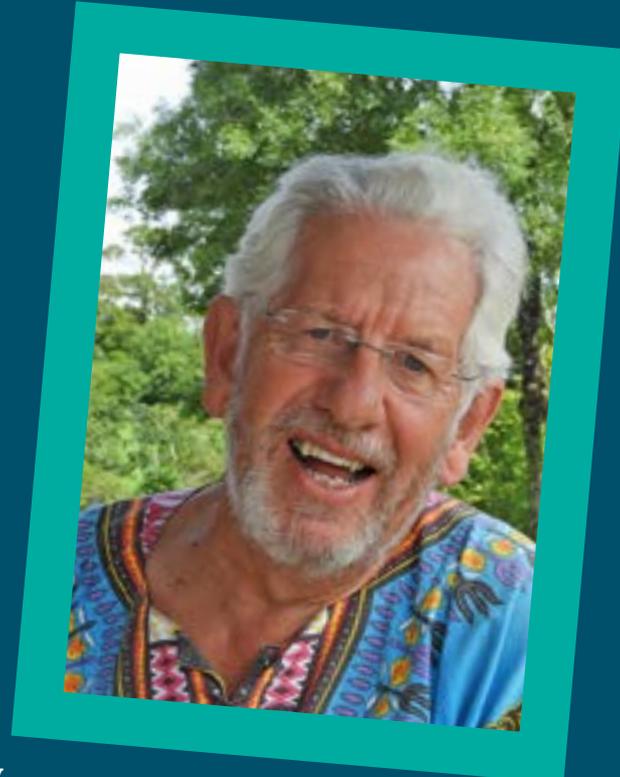
When talking to someone, I often found that I heard only about one word in three, which meant that I had to wait until the end of a sentence and then try to work out what had been said from the few words I had heard.

Meanwhile the telephone was becoming a serious problem. Increasingly I could not hear properly, and I had to ask the caller to repeat everything. Excuses like “*Sorry, this is a bad line.*” were becoming less and less credible.

On television I found drama programmes difficult to follow, because I could not hear all the words. Sometimes when I was presenting a tv programme, I could not hear the director’s instructions.

The worst situation was the noisy party, reception, or restaurant. In a crowded bar I could not even hear the person sitting next to me, talking face to face, because the background noise was overwhelming.

Eventually my wife persuaded me to get my hearing tested. This turned out to be simple and painless. All you have to do is go to your doctor. The GP will refer you for a hearing test, which takes only about ten minutes. You sit in a little soundproof booth, like a cupboard, wearing a pair of headphones, and the audiologist plays a sequence of notes through them, one ear at a time. Every time you hear a note you press a button. When it is finished you will be shown a picture of your range of hearing.



My hearing is slightly worse in my right ear than my left. In both cases I can hear reasonably well at low frequencies - I can hear a motorbike from half a mile away. At high frequencies it is much worse. I could not hear those birds, and I had difficulty with soft female voices.

This was, I gathered, typical of old people, especially men. Loss of hearing can be caused by working in a noisy environment - in a factory or near a road drill - or by listening to too much music at high volume, or by illness, but mine was just the result of old age.

When I got my first hearing aids I did not like them much, but once I got used to them I found I could hear much better than before. I can usually cope with soft women’s voices, and I can hear the birds bellowing out their dawn chorus. We have a particularly noisy thrush that yells at us in the spring, from a pine tree 50 yards away.

Noisy environments remain difficult, but I have learned to stand or sit against a wall, so that all the sound comes from one direction.

I wear my hearing aids all the time, taking them out only at night, for showers, and for swimming. The only real down side is that when I first wake up I still cannot hear those birds until I put my hearing aids back in.

Have you had to wait for treatment? If so, what was your experience?

You can contact us (anonymously if you want) and we’ll pass on your comments to health service managers.

- Email info@healthwatchdevon.co.uk
- Call 0800 520 0640
- Use our feedback form on the back page or online here





Living Options Devon

Living Options Devon is a disability charity based in Exeter and Barnstaple, working to empower disabled people and Deaf people so that they can live the lives they choose.

80% of the Trustees and volunteers and over 50% of the charity's staff have disabilities or are Deaf, making Living Options a user-led charity with first hand understanding of the issues faced by disabled people.

The charity has launched a number of new projects this year including:

Heritage Ability: a new 3 year project that is working to improve accessibility at over twenty heritage places across the South West. From the west tip of Cornwall all the way to Gloucestershire, the project is developing a range of accessible interpretation, enabling disabled people and Deaf people to have inspiring and meaningful experiences at these places. Many of the sites will also benefit from an all-terrain mobility scooter, enabling people with limited mobility to enjoy outdoor beauty spots. Staff and volunteers will also receive awareness training so that they feel confident to meet people's needs.

Time to Talk: service aims to reduce loneliness and isolation and improve wellbeing for people with a disability or who are Deaf. Funded by the Big Lottery for 5 years, there will be a dedicated telephone service with a team of volunteers offering peer support, signposting and referrals. The service will be available 4 days a week, including evenings and weekends. For Deaf people who use British Sign Language (BSL) there is a webcam service, provided by people who speak fluent BSL. Hot Topic Forums and a disabled Life Coach++ will offer face-to-face support.

Devon Engagement Service: is provided by a group of organisations working together to engage people in the development of local health and social care services. The service works with Devon County Council (DCC) and the two local Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to deliver accessible consultation activities such as focus groups, surveys and meetings so those who may be affected by the changes can have their say.

Some of the achievements of the service since April include the involvement of deaf people to inform the tendering process for a new Sign Language contract and the provision of feedback on DCCs Pinpoint website to influence its future development.

Get involved!

Time to Talk

The team are looking for volunteers to provide the telephone and webcam service. They are looking for people who have either lived experience or knowledge of a long-term health condition able to commit for at least 6 months, for 2-4 hours per week.

Heritage Ability

Fancy getting out and about? The project is looking for disabled and Deaf people to carry out mystery visits at sites across the South West.

Devon Engagement Service

There are lots of opportunities to have your say and participate in the Devon Engagement Service.

For further details on the volunteer opportunities, email info@livingoptions.org or call 01392 459222.



What do you think of health and social care services in Devon?

We're here to help make care better. We listen to your experiences of services, and share them with those with the power to make change happen.

Join the hundreds of people in your community who share their story with Healthwatch. No matter how big or small the issue, we want to hear about it. Together we can help make care better for everyone.

#ItStartsWithYou

www.healthwatchdevon.co.uk

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