

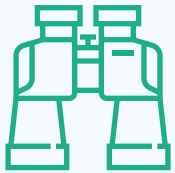
# What people have told us about health and social care

A review of Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay's  
impact and outcomes – July to September 2022

# About us

## Your health and social care champion

Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay are your independent health and social care champion for local people. Our role is to make sure NHS leaders, and other decision makers, hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice on all your health and social care needs.



### Our vision

A world where we can all get the health and care we need.



### Our mission

To make sure people's experiences help make health and care better.



### Our values

- Listening to people and making sure their voices are heard.
- Including everyone in the conversation – especially those who don't always have their voice heard.
- Analysing different people's experiences to learn how to improve care.
- Acting on feedback and driving change.
- Partnering with care providers, Government, and the voluntary sector – serving as the public's independent advocate.

# Our quarter in review

Find out which services people are telling Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay about this quarter.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, public feedback about services reduced but during the last 6 months we have seen an increase in what the public are telling us about the health and social care services they access. This report covers the period 1 July to 30 September 2022.

## Reaching out

**369 people**

shared their experiences of health and social care services with us: 66% of comments were about **Primary Care Services** and **53%** of those responses were concerning **Access to GPs**.

**193 people**

shared a complaint or concern about health and social care services, with the top theme being about GP services. the main themes being **Administration**, **Staff**, and **Treatment and Care**.

## Making a difference to care



Healthwatch published

**3 reports**

about patient experience and the improvements people would like to see to health and social care services. (see p.11)

Our latest report is

**Accessing Services in Devon: Feedback from the Deaf Community**, highlighting **difficulties accessing interpreting services**. A BSL version of this report is available. (see p.11)

## Health and care that works for you



**20 escalations** of which 3 were referred to our Healthwatch Champions or Local Healthwatch Advisor; with the remainder being referred to NHS Advocacy, NHS England, Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) or the relevant service provider.

**36 responses**

to public feedback from Health and Social Care providers.

**5 formal requests for information**

responding to issues raised by the public. Healthwatch requested information/Freedom of Information to service providers.

# Responding to people's experiences

Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay has a Feedback Centre on their local website. We use this feedback to inform local NHS leaders and Care providers to improve services for everyone. We're completely independent and impartial and any experiences shared are confidential.



**369 people**

asked for information, provided reviews and concerns to Healthwatch between 01 July and 30 September

## Most frequently reviewed service by the public

**66%** of comments were about "primary care" which includes feedback about GP services, NHS Dental, Pharmacy and Opticians.

Of this 66%, over **53%** were comments about GP services, specifically "Administration", "Staff", "Treatment and Care".

We **signposted** people **78** times, most of which were about "dental access".

## Concerns raised were around

- access to services (GP and NHS Dental)
- slow responses to e-Consult/online enquires (GP)
- long waits on the telephone (GP)
- short notice temporary closures of local pharmacies
- diagnosis and assessment (GP and Hospital services)

## Request for information – 5

## Issues Raised and who to

- Complaint about elective surgery – NHS Devon
- Devon & Cornwall Care Record – NHS Devon
- Funding of out of area GP appointment – NHS Devon
- Removal of patient from GP List – NHS Devon
- Dental provision in North Devon – NHSE SW

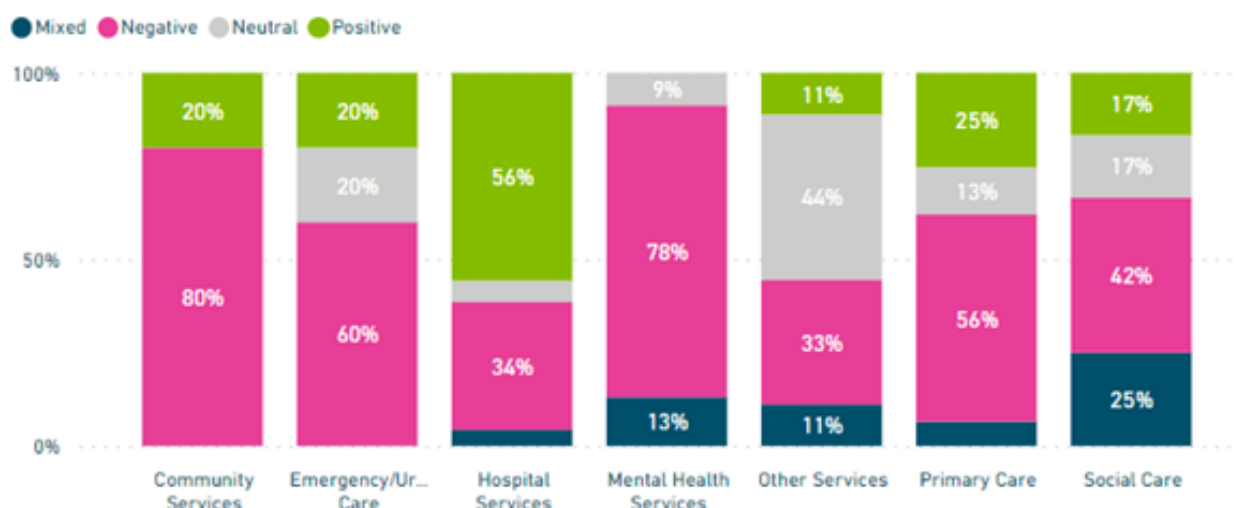
## Themes most commented on

**Devon:** Access to Services, followed by Treatment and Care

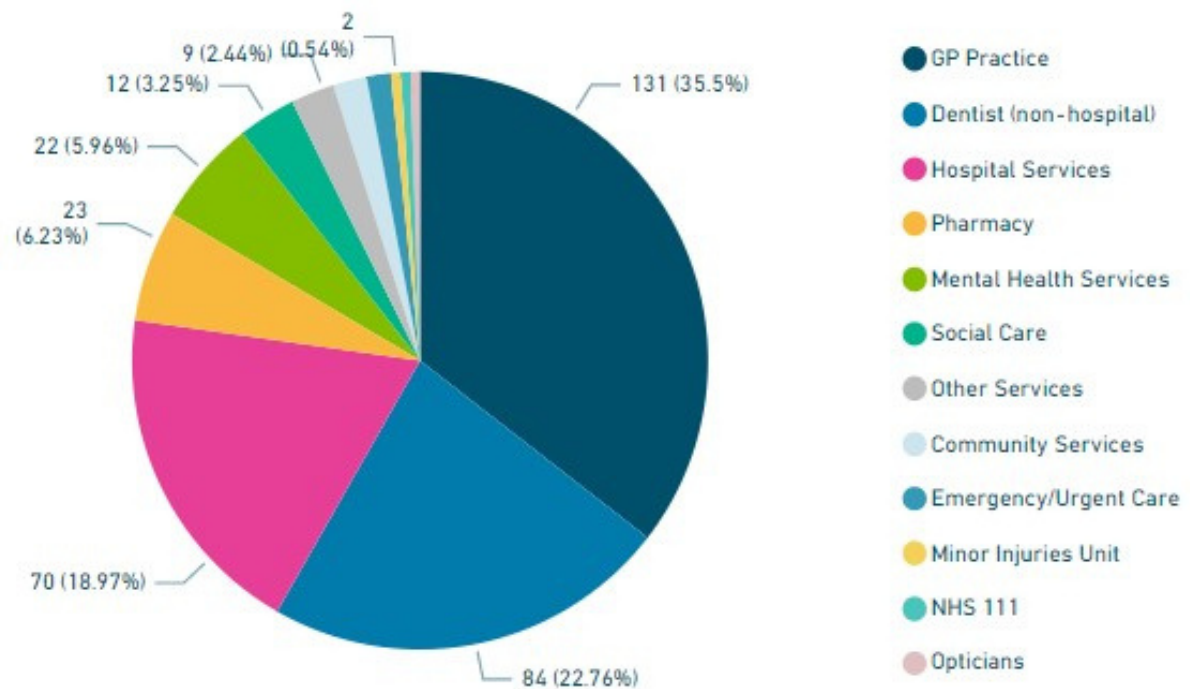
**Plymouth:** Administration, followed by Treatment and Care & Access

**Torbay:** Staff, followed by Treatment and Care

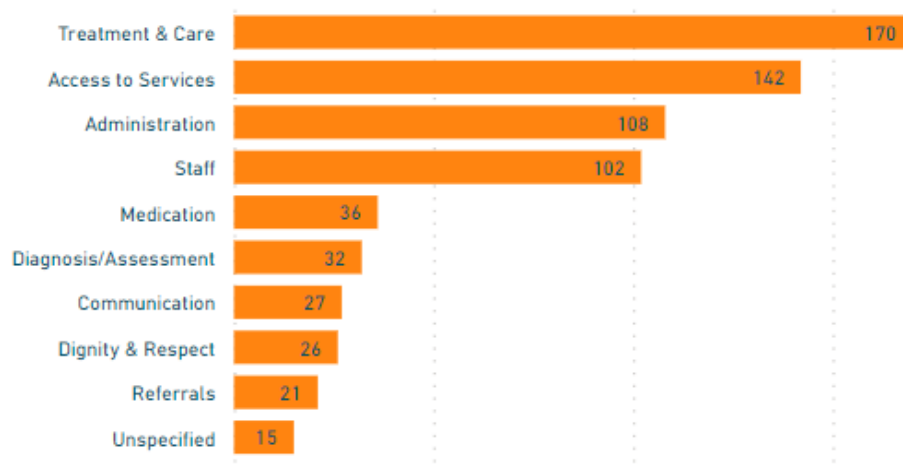
## How people feel about services



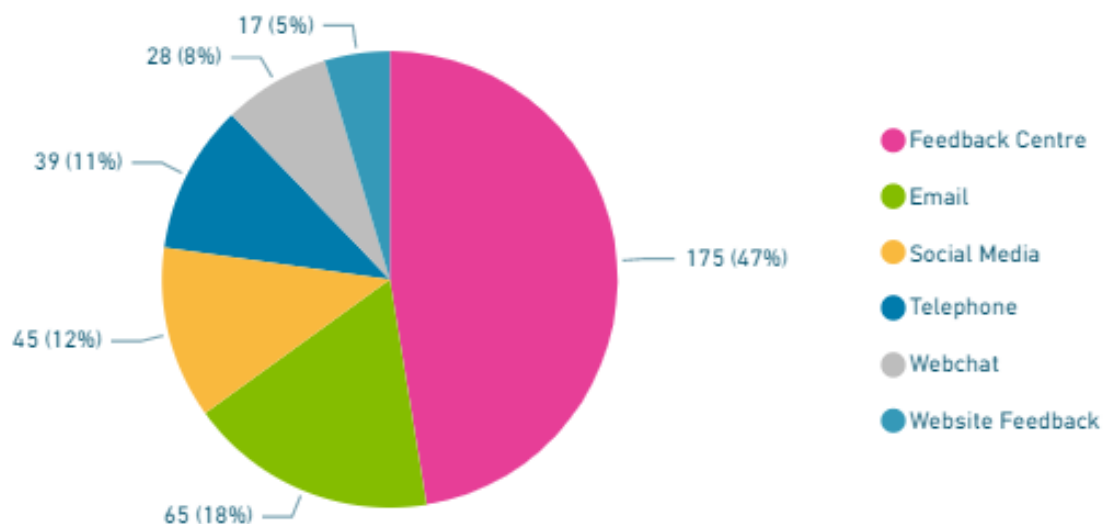
## Which services people are telling us about



## Top 5 themes



## How people contact us



# Feedback centre reviews

Real life experiences people are sharing with Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay using our website feedback centres and freephone number 0800 520 0640.

Please note: any feedback, service ratings or comments included here are taken from public voices and are NOT the view of Healthwatch.

## 23 hours in a wheelchair waiting to be seen by doctors

**healthwatch**  
Plymouth

"I sat for 23 hours in a wheelchair at Derriford A&E waiting to be seen by doctors but nobody came to help me throughout the night. There was total chaos and confusion. No explanations coming through it has got so bad at Derriford now. The contract going back in house was the worst decision ever made. Where have all the doctors and staff gone and staff just left sitting in a chair is not good enough."



### Action taken

Healthwatch Plymouth shared feedback with Patient Experience Manager at Derriford Hospital.

## Desperate parents plea to CAMHS

**healthwatch**  
Devon

"We are emailing as parents at a loss with what to do. Our 12-year-old son is in desperate need of mental health support, but our desperate pleas have been ignored over and over. His behaviour is becoming increasingly worse, he is on the brink of permanent exclusion from school, and we literally do not know what more we can do to support him. CAMHS are stating there is not a mental health need on their third and most recent fob off, even when supported by his GP and school. We find it astounding that despite begging and pleading for mental health support for our disabled child we are being fobbed off with such ease and little regard for the impact it is having on my son and those around him. The school have put him on the waiting list for Devon counsellors, but it is not just mental health support he needs, we also need help with the autism side. The school have tried many strategies, as have we but as of yet we have been unable to find a way to manage his behaviours. Both the school and we are in agreement that the support he requires is beyond ours and their capabilities. Both the educational psychologist and GP are in agreement our son is in need of support as qualified healthcare professionals, yet we are still being turned away. I find it sad that I am having to resort to yet another email to beg for basic help."

### Action taken

Healthwatch Devon escalated this to a Healthwatch Champion at Citizens Advice.



## Torbay A&E staff not recognising a patient in cardiac distress

"I drove my wife to hospital because she was experiencing central pain and numbness through both arms. On arrival to A&E she was checked in and triaged quite quickly, sharing details of her condition and an upcoming referral with a cardiologist. We then saw a Nurse who did an instantaneous ECG (which for that moment showed a normal heart rhythm), took some blood and administered a Covid19 PCR test. However, despite my wife showing obvious symptoms of an issue with her heart we were made to sit in the very busy waiting area. 30 minutes later we were called and another instantaneous ECG returned a normal result. However, whilst with the Nurse the symptoms started to present and my wife vomited but we were asked to return to the waiting area where we waited for around 2.5 hours where my wife's condition gradually worsened.

Two more episodes of vomiting and despite my repeated attempts to get her some attention, this didn't happen until I made one of the nurse aware that my wife had lost consciousness. While I attempted to maintain her airway the nurse came and we were moved into a side room where at last a doctor appeared. Whilst not properly conscious she was moved into a resus bay and prepared for transfer onto the CCU. She arrived in the CCU just before midnight, the on-call cardiologist was called, and he arrived extremely promptly and performed an emergency coronary angioplasty and stent insertion. The resus staff and the staff on the CCU were exemplary in their treatment and care whereas I can't help thinking back that if my wife had been on her own, she would've died in Torbay A&E that evening!"

### Action taken

Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay escalated this case to PEM, Torbay Hospital.

## Going above and beyond

"Brilliant!  
I recently had a cataract operation at the REI, Derriford.  
I was petrified as I had a bad experience several years ago with eye treatment. They were all so good and patient and explained everything from the nurses up to the wonderful Consultant who went above and beyond for me."



*"Thank you ever so much for the compliments and kind words. We are pleased to hear that your experience this time around was much more positive than ones previously. We will ensure this compliment is passed onto the relevant teams involved".*

**Clinical Administration Manager REI, Derriford**

# Advice and Information

Find out how Healthwatch Devon Champions, part of Citizens Advice, are helping people in Devon.



## 50 people

called our freephone number 0800 520 0640 to speak with a Healthwatch Advisor.

### Outcomes as a result of Covid vaccination

This Client's partner received his first Covid jab and within 48 hours could not move.

Client reports symptoms of serious rheumatoid arthritis that are so bad that on some days partner cannot get out of bed. Client is struggling to manage her caring role and job outside the home and the family are receiving no practical support at home. Client says that when she is at work partner will not take his medication due to mental health issues.



### What difference did this make

The Healthwatch Champion advised how as a Carer she could obtain possible practical help at home from Devon adult social care. The Client was also made aware that she also had a right to a carer's needs assessment and provided contact details of Devon Carers who she may approach for further advice and support.

The Client was given information on the Vaccine Damage Payment and now has more information on eligibility, how to claim and time limits for claims. The Client was also made aware that in addition they may wish to seek legal advice for possible compensation and she was informed where to get this legal advice.

As a result of advice from our Healthwatch Champion our Client knows what practical help may be available to the family and how to request it. This should alleviate some stress and worry. Also, how to claim the Vaccine Damage Payment which if successful, would help to alleviate some of the family's financial pressures.



# Case study

Find out how your feedback can lead to improvements in services for all.

## Delay in cancer diagnosis

Client believes that her symptoms were dismissed by medical professionals as psychosomatic, and is seeking financial compensation.

Client aged 32 has been unable to work for 2 years due to complex medical conditions one of which is colon cancer. Client says that the delay in diagnosing cancer has impacted her emotionally and financially and she would like to seek financial compensation.

Client says that between May and November 2021 she visited her GP 32 times and A&E 3 times.

Client says she was misdiagnosed with a UTI infection when in fact her symptoms were a result of colon cancer that had spread to her bladder. Client believes that her symptoms were dismissed by medical professionals as psychosomatic. This led to a delay in Client's cancer diagnosis of around 9 months and Client finally had surgery to remove the cancer in January 2022.

Client says she is very happy with her GP but says that she feels let down by two male medical professionals at Torbay hospital who could have found the cancer sooner.



"Now I know I'm not alone. I'm grateful that Citizens Advice are raising awareness of 'female symptoms being dismissed as psychosomatic.'"

Client



## What difference did this make

A Healthwatch Champion, sent this client details on how to find free or affordable legal help and how to find a legal adviser via the Law Society, She was also sent details on where to get practical and emotional support via Cancer Support UK. As a result, the Client reported feeling less stressed because she has a clear path to follow to try to obtain both financial compensation and emotional support from Cancer Support UK.

The Healthwatch Champion invited this client to take part in a local (Teignbridge) R&C campaigns survey about 'female symptoms being dismissed as psychosomatic'. The Client consented and the Healthwatch Champion completed the survey with the Client over the telephone. She was pleased to take part in the R&C survey as be able to help make change. The client said she was happy that Citizens Advice are trying to do something about female symptoms being dismissed and now knows that she is not alone.

This Client was given the Healthwatch contact centre number and knows she can return for help if needed.

# Case study

Find out how your feedback leads to improvements in services for all.

## Access to Mental Health Support

Thanks to people sharing their experiences of health services, we are able to support them in getting the advice and information they need.

A Client with a functional neurological disorder and Mental Health issues including severe anxiety contacted one of our Healthwatch Champions. He was unable to sustain a tenancy due to his Mental Health and had recently been homeless. He had approached his GP for Mental Health support and his GP duly referred him to the North Devon Community Mental Health Team (NDCMHT).

The Client was assessed by the NDCMHT and placed on the waiting list. He went back to his GP some weeks later with deteriorating Mental Health. The GP wrote to NDCMHT again but both Client and GP received no response.

This Client had high levels of anxiety, and urgently needed face-to-face Mental Health support. His Mental Health was deteriorating, and he reported taking an overdose that required A&E CPR.

During conversations with the Healthwatch Champion the Client disclosed historic child sexual abuse and Client had been told that Devon Rape crisis would be unable to help him. The Healthwatch Champion wrote to NDCMHT on the Client's behalf stressing urgency of Client's case, and followed up with a call to the Mental Health Team Duty worker. There was still no response from NDCMHT after several weeks, so the Healthwatch Champion made an official complaint to NDCMHT on 25/5/2022.

### What difference did this make

2 days after the Healthwatch Champion submitted a complaint the Client received a call from a manager at NDCMHT advising that he would be able to access face to face support from the Homeless Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN).

Our Client reports that he has seen the CPN already and has further weekly sessions booked. Client has been advised that the CPN can help him prepare for counselling/therapy from Devon Rape Crisis.

Our Client is much happier now he is receiving regular face to face Mental Health support and this support should also help him sustain his tenancy.

## 3 ways Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay have made a difference for the community

Throughout our work we have gathered information about health inequalities by speaking to local people whose experiences aren't often heard.



### Accessibility and effectiveness of BSL services

We recognise the value of listening to people and making sure their voices are heard.

We held a series of meetings with the South West representative of the Royal Association for Deaf People to discuss various concerns that were being raised around access to British Sign Language (BSL) qualified interpreters. One Devon has thanked Healthwatch for the work we carried out. They will use the insights in the report to inform their review of accessibility and effectiveness of BSL services.

Report is available in British Sign Language by – [clicking here](#)



### You told us – how waiting lists need to be addressed?

We value the insight that's gained from analysing many different people's experiences to learn how to improve care.

NHS Devon CCG asked Healthwatch to assist in running focus groups, to find out how elective care waiting lists have impacted patients and how people would like the waiting lists to be addressed. The CCG is grateful all those involved for the insights which will influence 3 key areas: Protecting Elective Care (PEC); Waiting well – supporting you whilst waiting for care and A Wider Elective Care programme.

Read the full report – download [here](#)



### Views on mental health services in North Devon

We act on feedback and drive change. Listening has to positively affect outcomes and influence important decisions about people's care.

In 2021, Healthwatch, working with North Dartmoor Primary Care Network (NDPCN), highlighted Mental Health support was particularly important to the community. A recent follow up found 39% of respondents rated MH care as "poor" or "extremely poor".

Read detailed findings and statement from NDPCN – download [here](#)

**All our reports are available to read on our websites at Healthwatch in [Devon](#), [Plymouth](#) and [Torbay](#).**

## Request to service providers

Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay serve as the public's independent advocate and want to build stronger alliances with our local health and care providers. Together we can better understand health and care issues affecting our audiences.

### 3 ways we can achieve more together:

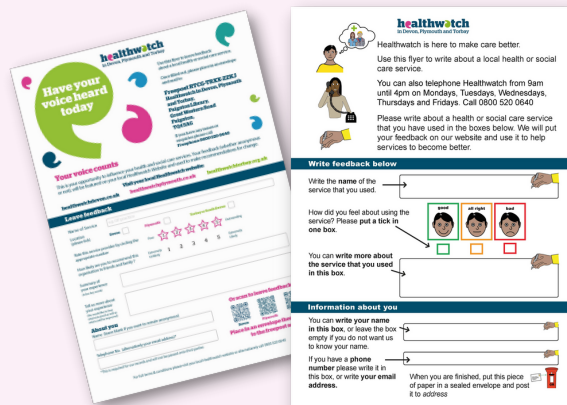
#### #1 Posters

We are happy to email over a digital file, or post printed (and laminated) A4 posters for you to display on your notice boards.



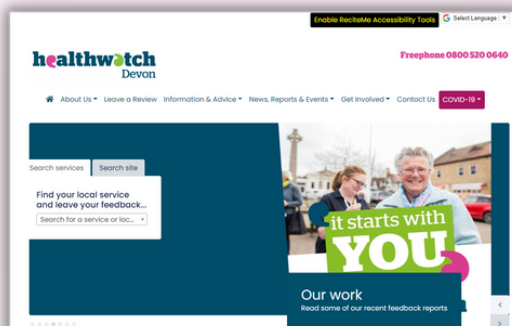
#### #2 Feedback forms

We have standard and Easy Read feedback forms printed that we are happy to post or deliver to you for display in your waiting area.

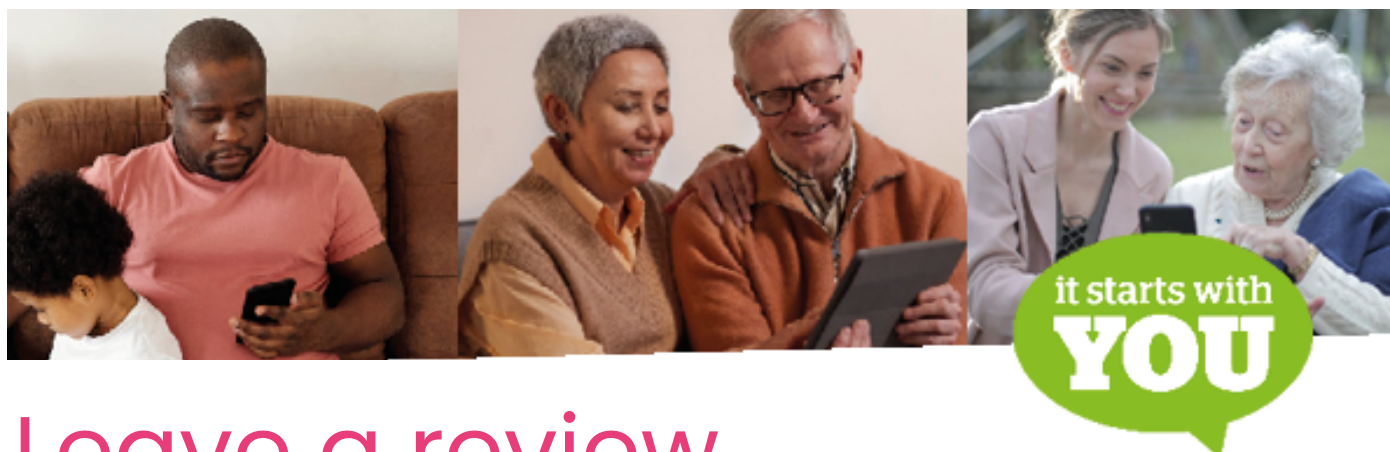


#### #3 Website links

Our IT expert is happy to set up reciprocal links to our active, content rich websites.



**Please email us:** [communications@hwdevon-plymouth-torbay.org](mailto:communications@hwdevon-plymouth-torbay.org)



# Leave a review

Share your experiences of using local health and social care with Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay.

## Together we can help make care better for everyone

Join the hundreds of people in your community who share their experience of local Health and social care services. No matter how big or small the issue, we want to hear about it.

## Call us on FREEPHONE 0800 520 0640

or leave a review online using the QR code below or visiting your local Healthwatch online.

## Visit your local Healthwatch WEBSITE

[Healthwatch Devon](#) | [Healthwatch Plymouth](#) | [Healthwatch Torbay](#)

<p><b>healthwatch</b> Devon</p> <p>info@healthwatchdevon.co.uk healthwatchdevon.co.uk</p> <p>  @HwDevon   @healthwatchdevon   @hwdevon         </p> <p>Scan to find health and social care services in Devon to leave</p>	<p><b>healthwatch</b> Plymouth</p> <p>info@healthwatchplymouth.co.uk healthwatchplymouth.co.uk</p> <p>  @HealthwatchPlym   @HealthwatchPlymouth   @healthwatchplym         </p> <p>Scan to find health and social care services in Plymouth to leave</p>	<p><b>healthwatch</b> Torbay</p> <p>info@healthwatchtorbay.org.uk healthwatchtorbay.org.uk</p> <p>  @HWTorbay   @HealthwatchTorbay   @healthwatchtorbay         </p> <p>Scan to find health and social care services in Torbay to leave</p>
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# healthwatch

in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay

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Visit your local Healthwatch website:

[Healthwatch Devon](#)

[Healthwatch Plymouth](#)

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