



January–March 2023

About us

About Healthwatch Wiltshire

Healthwatch Wiltshire is your local health and social care champion. As an independent statutory body, we have the power to make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers listen to local feedback and improve standards of care. We also help people to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.

Our priorities

For 2022/23 are:

Primary care

- Following on from our work on accessing GP services and how they are recovering post-pandemic.

Mental health

- Monitoring services in light of increasing demand, with a particular focus on learning disabilities and autism.

Children and young people

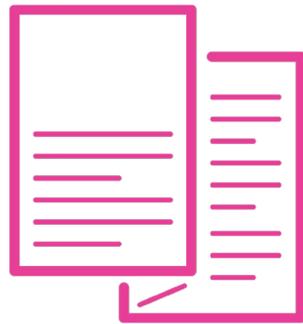
- Young Healthwatch volunteers will focus on sexual health.

Hospital discharge

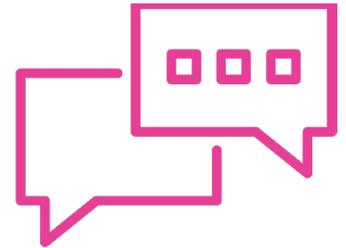
- Exploring the links between discharge and social care.

Highlights

Published 2 reports



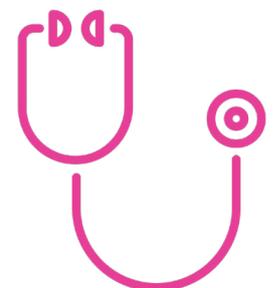
Asked people to help us set our priorities



Prepared launch of two surveys for autistic people and their carers



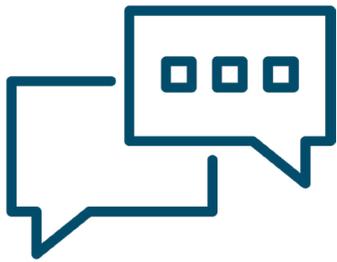
Shared our report on GP phone messages with GP representatives



Represented public voices at new NHS neighbourhood initiative



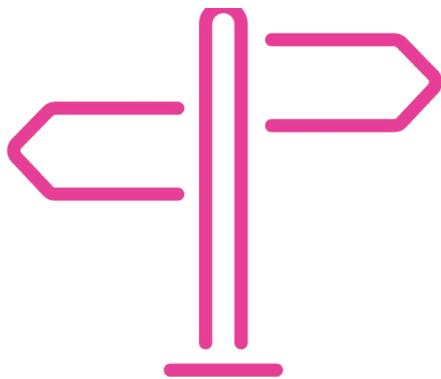
Talking and listening



226

people shared their experience of services with us

We attended **47** meetings, forums and events



62

contacts were given information and signposted through our Helpdesk Hub Team...

...with an average call time of **19** minutes

16

volunteers were involved...

...and volunteered over **175** hours



218

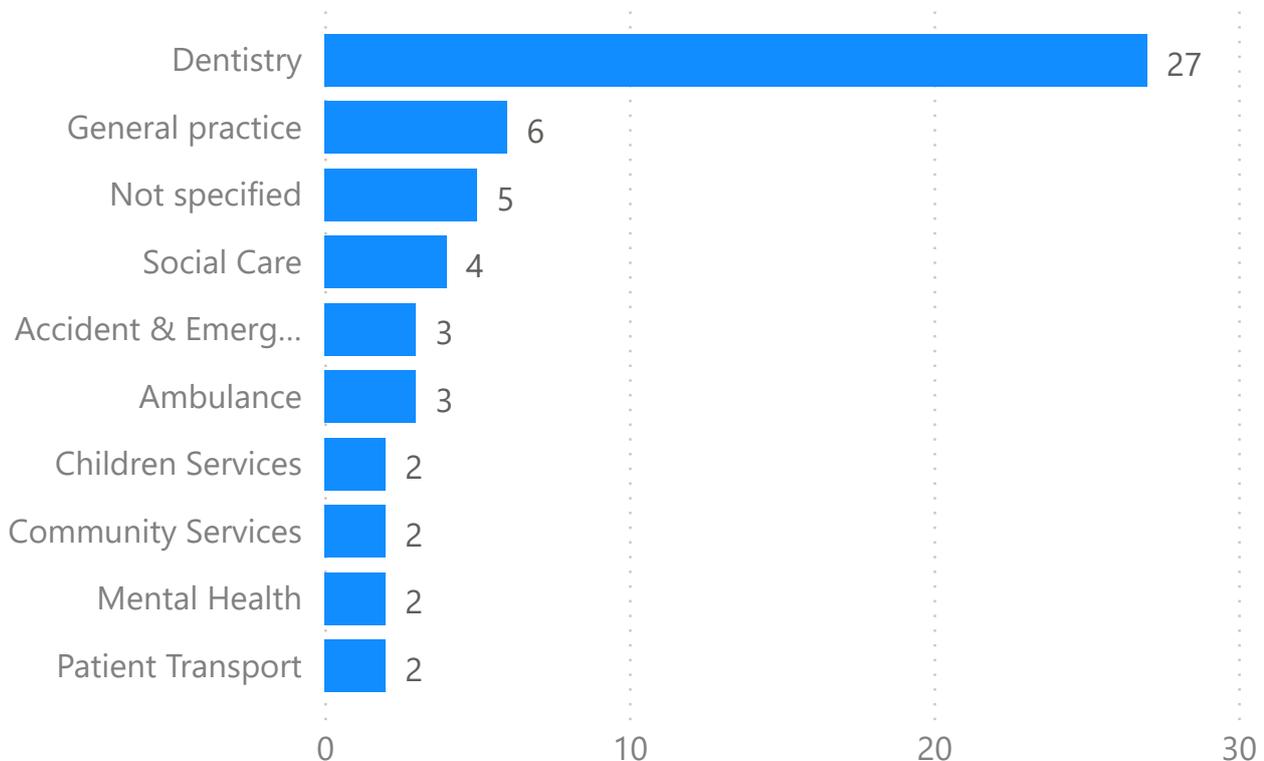
social media posts...

...reached **11,192** people

...and our website received **7,804** page views

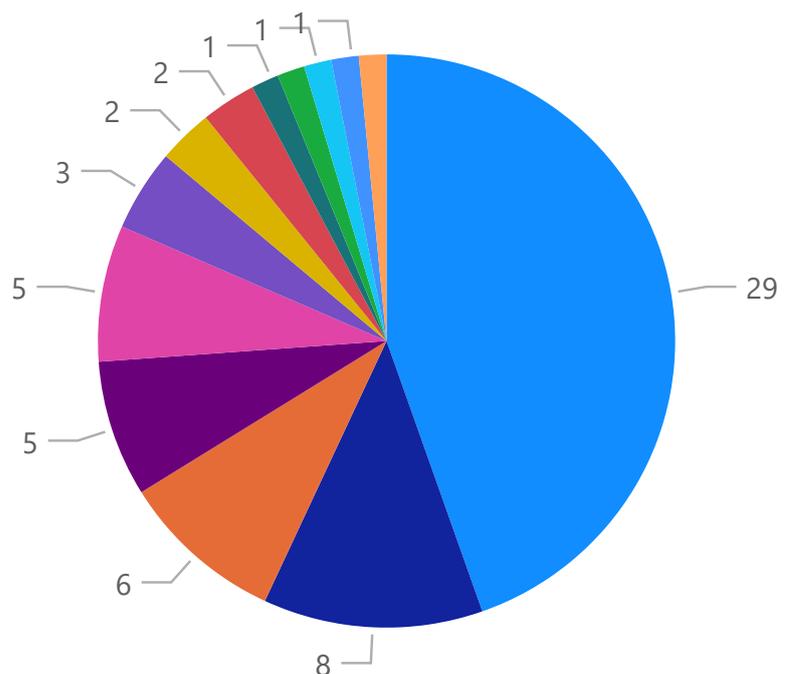
Experiences you shared

Top 10 Services

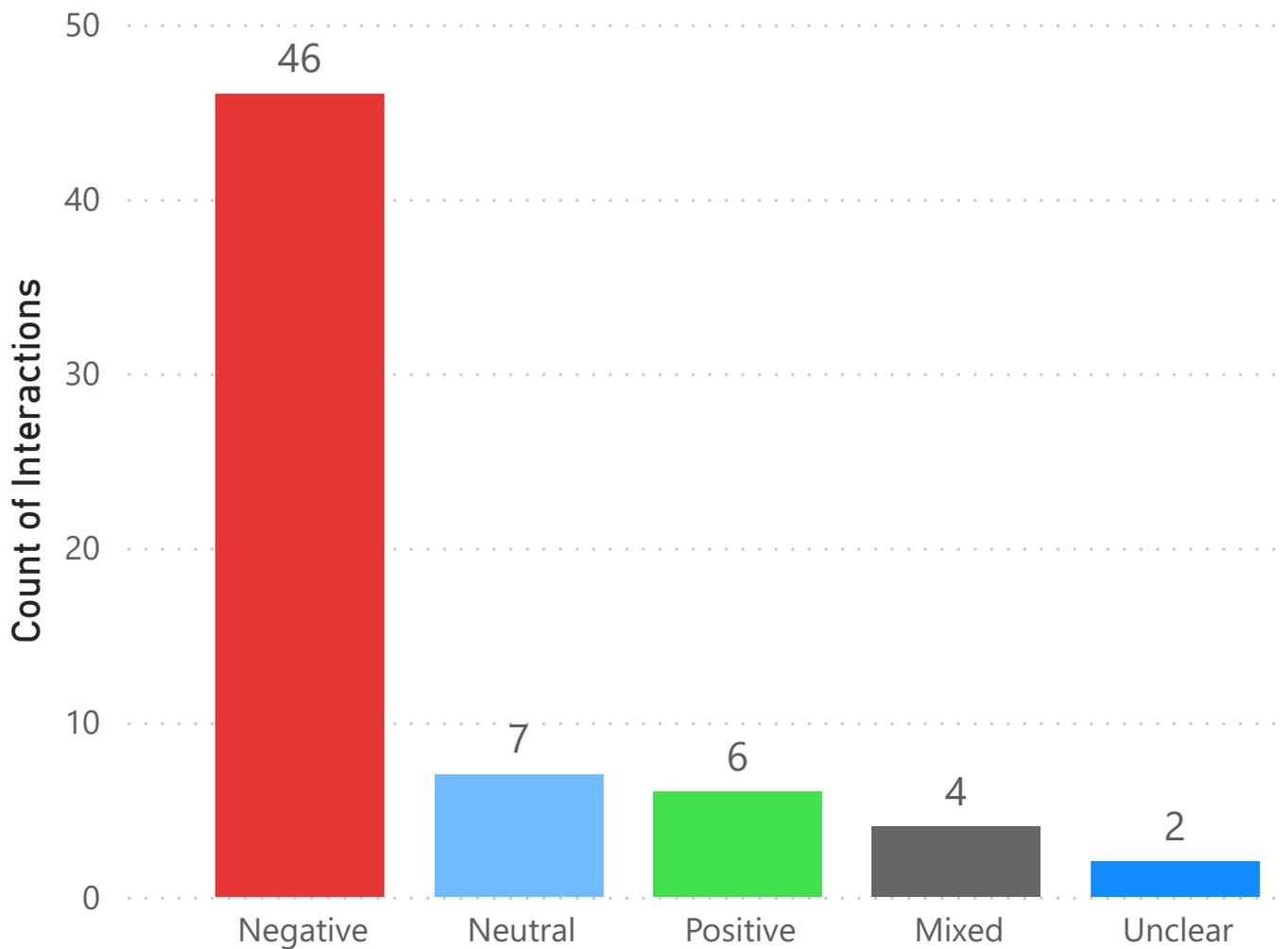


Top 10 Themes

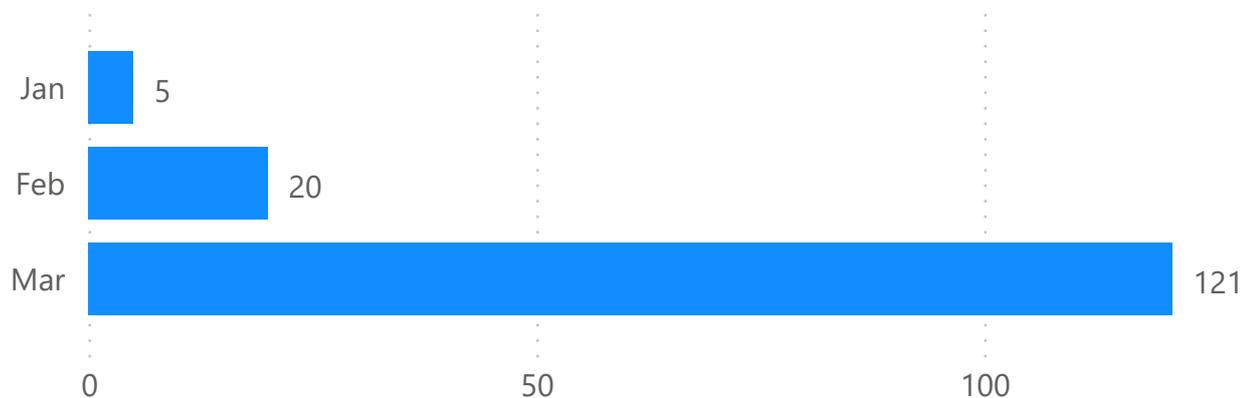
- Access and Choice
- Treatment/Care
- Not specified
- Communication
- Support available
- Level of provision
- Assessment
- Waiting times
- Care planning
- Diagnosis
- Dignity and respect
- Medication
- Staffing/Staff attitudes



Story Sentiment



Number of people who shared their feedback/raised issues about health and care services



Our work

Public asked to help set next year's priorities

At the beginning of March, we called on the people of Wiltshire to tell us what they think we should be working on in the coming year.

Each year we decide on our key projects, based on public feedback, and we shortlisted six potential projects for 2023/24:

- The wellbeing of children and young people
- Mental health and autism
- Hospital discharge and care at home
- Accessing GP services
- How the cost of living is affecting our health
- Pharmacy services

The survey ran for two weeks during March and we received 127 responses from the public. We also asked our volunteers for their ideas on which of these shortlisted projects should be part of next year's workplan.

The results of both our survey and the



feedback from volunteers will be collated into a report and used to create our new workplan.

Thank you to everyone who shared their views with us!

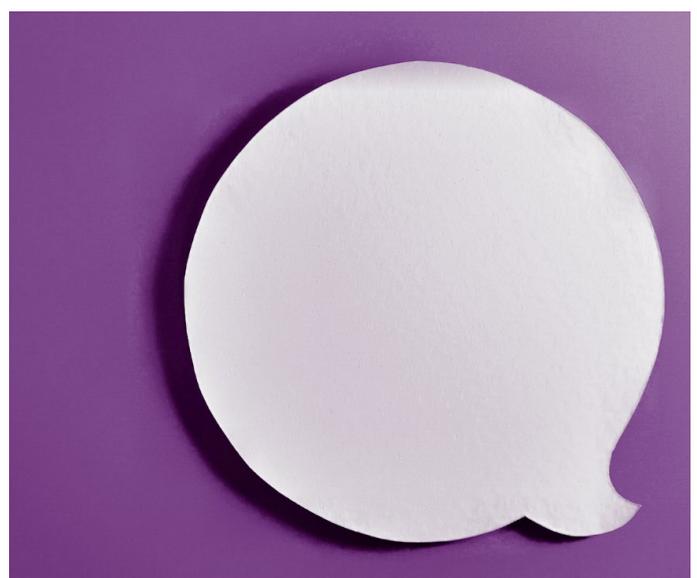
New surveys will focus on views of autistic people, their families and carers

We have been working with Wiltshire Service Users' Network (WSUN) on two new surveys which ask autistic people, and their families and carers, what they think of mental health services in the county.

We want to learn more about the experiences of autistic people, aged 14 and over, who have accessed mental health support in Wiltshire in the last three years, and what they think could be better.

We would also like to find out the experiences of carers and relatives in helping the autistic person they care for to get this support.

This project follows on from our previous work with WSUN, which heard the experiences of autistic people when they attended health and care appointments.



The surveys will be launched in early May, with a report detailing our findings due out later in the summer.

We join new neighbourhood initiative

Neighbourhood Collaboratives, which include partners from health and social care, local authorities, the voluntary and community sector and police and fire services, are being set up across the region by the BSW Integrated Care Board to identify and reduce health and wellbeing gaps in our local communities.

We have been asked to join the steering group

of the Wiltshire Collaborative Network, which oversees these Neighbourhood Collaboratives, and brings them together to share information and learning.

We're looking forward to being part of this network and monitoring how the collaboratives work together to tackle local health and wellbeing challenges.

Advice and support when you need it

Our website offers a range of advice and information to help you keep up to date with the latest changes in health and care.

Over the last quarter we have updated our Where to get cost of living support in Wiltshire page, with new information on the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding, and details of who is eligible, such as those who are off grid.

Meanwhile, pages with information on local mental health services, for both adults and children and young people, were the most visited during this quarter.

Our mental health resources lists were also downloaded more than 40 times.

[Visit our advice and information section](#) for more articles.

Where to get cost of living support in Wiltshire

Advice and Information - 28 November 2022

Local organisations that can give you practical help and support.



Making a difference

Mystery shop focuses on GP practices' phone messages

For the GP Phone Messages Review, our research team of volunteers carried out a mystery shop, listening to automated messages and assessing their content, tone and length.

The mystery shop revealed a wide variation in the information provided in recorded phone messages, and the way the messages were delivered.

Our research team identified that good messages are easy to understand, are as short as possible and have a friendly, reassuring tone. Calls that cut off, long, rambling messages and a defensive tone are confusing, and may make the patient feel they are a nuisance.

We made recommendations based on these observations, with one of our volunteers creating a template message that could be adopted by practices.



Catharine Symington, Interim Manager at Healthwatch Wiltshire, said: "These projects were a huge and complex task for our volunteers and we are hugely grateful for their determination and thoroughness in carrying out this very detailed piece of work.

"Their observations and assessments have provided GP practices with valuable tools to help them improve their websites and phone messages, which are vital first points of contact for patients."

This work was the second half of a two-part project, which first looked at the websites of GP practices across Wiltshire.

Since both reports were published, we've been invited to take part in a podcast with Wessex Local Medical Committees Ltd (Wessex LMC).



Many thanks for sharing this useful piece of research with us. It is good to see that a significant majority of reviewers found the messages easy to understand and informative [but] it would appear that practices could focus more on making their messaging more welcoming and personal.

"Your list of positive features provides a good aspirational template on which practices can base their phone messaging."

Dr Andy Purbrick, Joint Chief Executive, Wessex LMCs



Patients' feedback sparks overhaul of hospital complaints process

Feedback from patients who made a complaint about their care at Salisbury District Hospital is being used to overhaul its complaints handling process

Our report highlights the findings of a survey which heard the views of people who had been through the hospital's complaints handling process between April and June 2022.

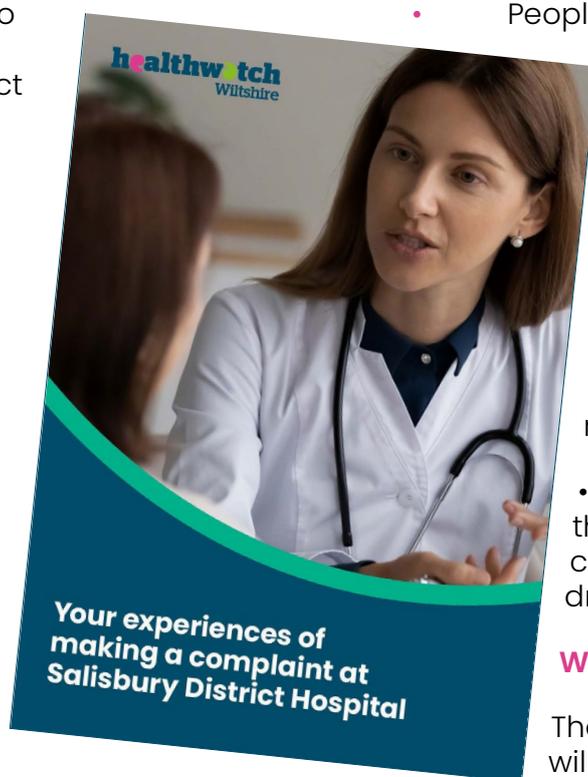
Patients and their families told us of feeling lost in the system, that they weren't listened to and had little confidence that changes would be made following the issues they had raised.

These experiences have led to a review of the way the hospital handles complaints by Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust, which manages it.

What did people tell us?

Our report reveals that people found it difficult to find information on how to make a complaint and didn't fully understand the role of the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) at Salisbury District Hospital. We also found:

- People didn't feel they were kept properly informed of where they were in the complaints process, timelines were not always adhered to, and updates not always provided.
- There was a lack of signposting to additional support, such as advocacy services.
- Staff sometimes seemed reluctant to take ownership of a complaint.



- People felt disempowered and that they could not challenge decisions made by the hospital Trust.

- People thought that points or questions they raised were not properly addressed.
- Apologies did not feel meaningful or sincere.
- People were not confident that the outcome of their complaint would help to drive improvements.

What happens next?

The findings of our report will form the basis of a new Complaints Handling Policy, which is due to be launched by Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust in April 2023.

Victoria Aldridge, Head of Patient Experience at Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust, said: "We have welcomed the opportunity to work with Healthwatch Wiltshire. The Trust acknowledges and accepts the findings from this project and strongly supports the identified areas for improvement... with the findings shaping both our new Complaints Policy and improving the processes associated with this."

Guy Patterson, Projects Lead at Healthwatch Wiltshire, said: "We're delighted to see how your feedback is shaping the improvements Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust are intending to make. We're also very pleased to see how committed they are to ensuring the patient voice is heard. We will revisit this project later in the year to see what progress has been made with the introduction of the new Complaints Handling Policy."

[Read the report](#) on our website.

What people said

Signposting story – family welfare and advocacy

Our Hub team received an email from a person who was unhappy with the actions of a social worker supporting their family and had made a complaint to Wiltshire Council.

The person explained that the social worker had excluded them from meetings regarding their children and was giving “preferential treatment” to their husband who they described as emotionally abusive. They also said their request to have another social worker assigned to them while their complaint was being investigated had been “completely ignored.”

“The whole situation has had a very

significant impact on my mental health and I feel fraught about it much of the time. Please can you tell me what help might be available to me?”

Our Hub team advised them to contact the Family Rights Group, which supports people to understand the law and child welfare processes. The group has an advice line and can assist people to self advocate.

They were also signposted to Family Lives, a national charity which gives advice on all aspects of family life. It offers a free helpline and has an online forum, which provides a safe space for parents to share their experiences.

Signposting story – getting a Carer’s Assessment

We received feedback via an online form about adult social care services. The person had been told their mother needed a Carer’s Assessment but it had never been carried out. Their satisfaction rating on the form was ‘Very dissatisfied.’

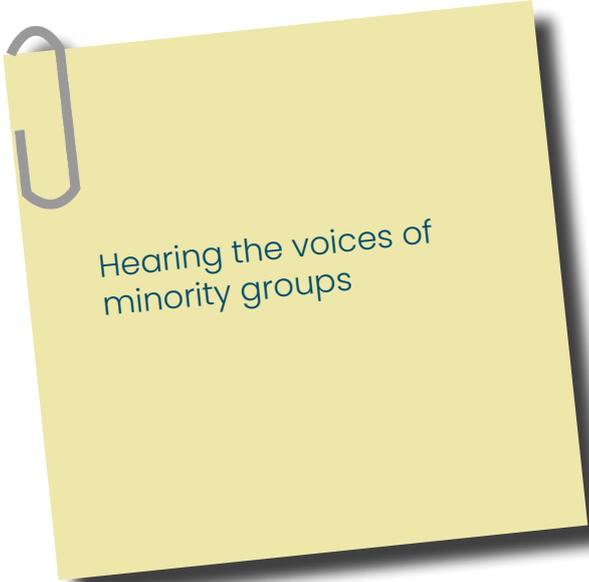
Our Hub team responded to say that Carer Support Wiltshire carries out Carer’s Assessments and advised the person to contact Carer Support so they could be advised of what

the wait time would be.

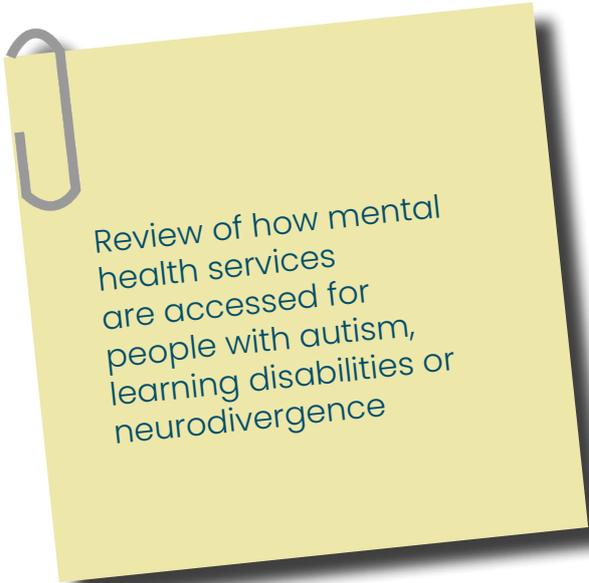
Our team also advised contacting the mother’s GP, who may also be able to help and could discuss the next steps with them.

If the person was still not having any success, they were advised that they could make a formal complaint to social care services and a link giving further information about this was attached.

Coming up



Hearing the voices of
minority groups



Review of how mental
health services
are accessed for
people with autism,
learning disabilities or
neurodivergence

Find out more about our work at healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk

healthwatch Wiltshire

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