



**healthwatch**  
Somerset



## **BRITISH POLIO FELLOWSHIP**

**IDENTIFYING ISSUES RELATING TO POST  
POLIO SUPPORT**



## **Background**

This report details the engagement that Healthwatch Somerset has had with the Taunton Post-Polio Support Group, the issues that arose around the understanding among professionals about post-polio syndrome and the ongoing joint work to highlight these with commissioners, GPs and health professionals.

## **Introduction**

In December 2015 Healthwatch Somerset met with members of the Taunton Deane Post-Polio Support Group. Members told us that there were a number of difficulties they experienced relating to a lack of GP's and other professionals understanding of post-polio syndrome. It was agreed that Healthwatch Somerset would support the group to research the issues people experienced and assist the group to write a report and circulate it to the Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group and other professionals.

## **What we did**

We visited the group and told them about the role of Healthwatch. We asked the group what issues they had experienced in Somerset. All of those present said that their GP didn't understand post-polio syndrome. There was a feeling among the group that GP's are no longer knowledgeable about the condition as polio has been eradicated in this country. This misunderstanding and lack of knowledge had led to misdiagnosis and incorrect treatment for some members of the group. Healthwatch Somerset then spoke with the group co-ordinator who is employed by the British Polio Foundation. There was agreement that further research to identify the extent of the problems was needed and that information to help health professionals be more aware of the ongoing difficulties polio survivors had would be valuable.

An offer to support the group to compile and circulate a questionnaire to its members was made and Healthwatch Somerset received an application to its Community Pot Fund. This fund is there to support small groups to research health and social care issues and raise awareness of them.

## **Next steps**

### **Healthwatch Somerset will.....**

Health watch Somerset will report on the findings of the consultation and the outcomes of the group's actions to the Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group and any other professionals identified in the results.

All the feedback provided through this engagement project will be inputted to Healthwatch Somerset's Feedback Feed Forward database and will be included in the Healthwatch Somerset quarterly report. Healthwatch Somerset will be sharing this report with Healthwatch Somerset partners including Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group, the Health and Wellbeing Board, Somerset County Council, The Care Quality Commission, NHS England and Healthwatch England. The report will also be presented to the Healthwatch Somerset Executive Group to propose further uptake of the issues identified in this report. The report will be available on the Healthwatch Somerset website [www.healthwatchsomerset.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchsomerset.co.uk) and circulated to our mailing lists via the monthly e-bulletin.

## Looking forward....

### Plans for future work between Healthwatch Somerset and members of the Polio Support Group

Healthwatch Somerset welcomes and encourages members of the Taunton Polio Support Group or those who support them to continue to contribute their feedback to us using the communication methods included at the end of this report.

Healthwatch Somerset also supports people to become volunteer champions so that they can represent the experiences and needs of their community. If you would like to find out more about volunteering with Healthwatch Somerset, please contact us using the details below.

## Tell us your story...

Healthwatch Somerset want to hear from you about your experiences so that we can tell services your needs to create the best local services.



**Text us - text somerset followed by your message to: 07860 021 603**



**Email us: [info@healthwatchsomerset.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchsomerset.co.uk)**



**Call us: 01823 751 403**



**Write to us at: Healthwatch Somerset,  
c/o Somerset Rural Youth Project,  
Unit 2, Suprema Estate,  
Edington, Bridgwater, TA7 9LF**

**Or visit our website to see more at: [www.healthwatchsomerset.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchsomerset.co.uk)**