# Celebrating our long-term volunteers

Healthwatch has been around for over ten years, and some of our amazing volunteers have been with us for just as long. Find out their experiences of volunteering for Healthwatch.

Volunteering for Healthwatch offers many benefits, from helping your local community to giving you a chance to use your skills to help people.

For Volunteers’ Week, we want to thank all of our incredible volunteers and highlight how they are making health and care services better in their local communities.

## Jenny

Jenny has volunteered at Healthwatch Bucks since May 2013, first as a board member and then as Chair.

“As a lightly resourced organisation, volunteering for Healthwatch Bucks expands our capacity for achieving more and is at the heart of what we do. Volunteering offers our local communities a friendly and sympathetic listening ear. We also collect personal experiences and stories of health and care treatments and speak out for people to influence change and improvements in health and care.”

“I’ve forever advocated that organisations can achieve more by working together. I’m proud to be the Healthwatch Bucks’s representative on the ongoing Bucks Cancer Lived Experience Partnership. Together the partnership is already influencing change by listening to and acting on the voices of cancer patients and their carers.”

## Lynne

Lynne started volunteering for Healthwatch Calderdale and Kirklees in 2014 because she wanted to provide support and enable everyone’s voices to be heard and make a positive difference.

“I enjoy being part of a team whose members are all seeking to achieve the same aspired outcomes. Volunteering makes a difference because it enables to capture and provision of feedback relating to where services could be improved and how that might be achieved, gaps in service provision and how to avoid these and we support services to be the best they can be with the resources available.”

## Robert

Robert has been volunteering for Healthwatch Darlington since they were first set up, first as part of its advisory committee but then joined the Board in 2015.

“I am a retired GP and I was looking for a voluntary role that was related to Healthcare. One of the roles of a GP is to act as an advocate for patients navigating the somewhat difficult waters of health and social care and I saw Healthwatch as an extension of that. I also felt that my insight as a healthcare provider would be helpful to the local Healthwatch.”

“I think that we have a positive impact. I am appointed by Healthwatch as a Governor of the local NHS Foundation Trust and that produces the opportunity to have an impact upon the local delivery of Healthcare and to get to know the critical decision makers on a personal basis and thus create a shared understanding of the issues.  My involvement with the local NHS Foundation Trust enables me to act as a channel between the management of the Trust and what Healthwatch is hearing from the public about local services.”

## Judith

Judith has been volunteering for Healthwatch Somerset for eight years.

“Healthwatch gives an opportunity for local people and communities to be represented at the meetings we attend.”

“I enjoy the challenge of hearing what the issues are and then working out how we can help to resolve them. Also supporting people by signposting them.”

“Healthwatch makes a difference because we have a voice. Healthwatch is able to speak at decision making bodies, so the patient view can be taken into account when decisions are made.”

## Making a difference together

Our long-term volunteers have helped Healthwatch listen to your views and champion your voices to NHS leaders and decision makers for over ten years. Together they have helped us achieve real change and improve services for communities across England.

## Want to get involved?

If being a volunteer appeals to you, join us and help make services better for your community.

[Find out more about volunteering](https://www.healthwatch.co.uk/volunteer)