



---

## Hospital merger approved

The merger of Poole Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and The Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust was confirmed this month by NHS England and NHS Improvement. The merger to create the University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust will take place on Thursday 1 October.

Watch a video message about the merger from Viv Aird, Chair of the Healthwatch Dorset Steering Group: [Click here](#)

---

## Helping you find the care you need this winter

We've moved into the autumn and the weather is turning colder. This can make some health problems worse, especially for older people and those with ongoing health issues. Covid-19 is adding to the usual concerns about keeping well in the winter, and it has resulted in changes to how people can access local health and care services.



If you or anyone you know, needs help finding out about local health and social care services, you can call **Healthwatch Dorset** on 0300 111 0102 or visit the [information and advice page](#) of our website.

For more information on the **free flu vaccine**: [Click here](#).

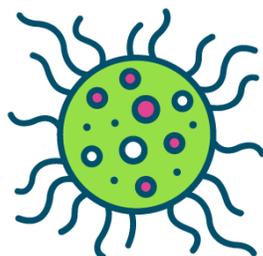
For the latest local guidance about Covid-19, visit the [BCP website](#).



## Evaluating and improving virtual health care

In recent months health and social care services have had to find new ways to care for people while reducing the risks of spreading Covid-19. This has led to a significant increase in appointments over the phone or online. For some people this has been a positive experience, while for others it has introduced a new barrier to accessing care.

We recently recruited five local people to take part in a national research study to understand patients' experiences of virtual and remote health consultations during the Covid-19 lockdown. Healthwatch England and National Voices have analysed the findings and created some top tips for patients and health and care professionals on how to get the most out of digital consultations. [Read the full Healthwatch England report](#).



## Update: care during Covid-19 survey

We want to say huge thank you to everyone who took part in our 'Care during Covid-19' survey, which ran from April to September this year. Over 180 people shared their experiences with us.

---

We are currently reviewing feedback and will publish a report later in the autumn. In the meantime, you can read Healthwatch England's briefing about what people told them about health and social care between April and June 2020: [Healthwatch England Covid-19 Briefing](#).

---

## Help make health and social care better for you and your community

---

**Healthwatch Dorset** is the county's independent health and care champion.

We exist to ensure that people are at the heart of care.

Our dedicated team of staff and volunteers listen to what people like about local health and care services, and what could be improved.

These views are then shared with the decision-making organisations in the county, so together we can make a real difference.

---

*Copyright © 2020 Healthwatch Dorset, All rights reserved.*

0300 111 0102

Healthwatch Dorset · The Bridge · Chaseside · Bournemouth, BH7 7BX · United Kingdom

<https://www.healthwatchdorset.co.uk>