

Press release

For immediate release:

HAVE YOUR SAY: A local charity urges people to speak out over future of health services

Healthwatch Shropshire is urging people to get involved and have their say on the future of health services in the county.

The NHS Future Fit programme focuses on the hospital services provided by Shrewsbury & Telford Hospital NHS Trust (SaTH) and Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust (SCHAT), with the aim of improving acute and community hospital services in Shropshire.

For the past three years work has been carried out on a Clinical Services Review. The NHS organisations that have overall responsibility for this review are Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group (SCCG) and Telford & Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Group (T&W CCG). They are responsible for deciding which health services will be provided in the county and they also pay for them.

There are proposals for a new clinical model and a 'preferred option' but both CCGs stress that **this is not a final decision**. They are going to share these proposals with the public and ask them what they think. It is hoped that a public consultation will begin later this year.

Healthwatch Shropshire is independent of both the CCGs and Hospital Trusts. It gathers the views of local people and feeds back to those who provide and commission NHS services. Healthwatch would like residents of Shropshire to get involved in these discussions, find out what is being proposed and have their say.

Jane Randall-Smith, Chief Officer of Healthwatch Shropshire, said: "It is understandable that the public may feel confused and disengaged by current discussions surrounding the future of hospital services. There has been a lot of debate and messages have not always been clear.

"However, it is crucial that the public do get involved and make their views known. The long term future of services and where these services will be located could potentially affect everyone at some point in their lives. This is not just about A&E but about improving the quality and sustainability of all services over the next 20 years."

To find out more about NHS Future Fit and the proposed clinical model go to www.healthwatchshropshire.co.uk/FutureFit Members of the public can also give feedback here or ask a question.

To contact Healthwatch Shropshire phone 01743 237884, email enquiries@healthwatchshropshire.co.uk or go online www.healthwatchshropshire.co.uk.

Healthwatch Shropshire is the independent health and social care champion for people in Shropshire. It gathers the views and experiences of patients, carers, and the general public about services. It then makes reports and recommendations about how these

services could or ought to be improved based on the information received from members of the public. This is shared with providers and commissioners who have a statutory duty to listen to Healthwatch and act on the information it shares with them.

Ends

Notes for Editors:

Healthwatch Shropshire is one of a network of 148 Local Healthwatch in England. It is supported by a national organisation, Healthwatch England.

It has a team working in community engagement, plus a volunteer programme, a visit programme to health and social care premises, an advocacy service and an associate membership scheme to involve the public in its work. It also has a signposting service to help people access health and social care services and support.

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