

## Press Release

For immediate release: 6 October 2015

### Healthwatch Shropshire celebrates contract extension

Healthwatch Shropshire is celebrating after being awarded a two year extension of its contract by Shropshire Council, to run from April 2016.

During the last two and a half years the charity has successfully established itself as the independent champion for health and social care for the people of Shropshire. This has resulted in a number of improvements in the provision of local services including an increase in NHS dental provision and improvements to care homes. Details of the changes brought about as a result of people's comments can be found in Healthwatch Shropshire's You Said, We Did reports at [www.healthwatchshropshire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchshropshire.co.uk).

Carole Hall, Healthwatch Shropshire Chair, said:

"This is excellent news and we are delighted that Shropshire Council has recognised the good work of the organisation over the past few years by granting us this extension. All the Board Members, our staff team and our volunteers look forward to continuing to work hard on behalf of the people of Shropshire and deliver good outcomes for our population. We look forward, also, to working closely with the commissioners of our services to ensure that we concentrate our efforts where they are most needed."

Councillor Karen Calder, Shropshire Council's Cabinet Member for Health and Chair of Shropshire's Health and Wellbeing Board, said:

"The council is really happy to be able to offer this contract extension. Healthwatch Shropshire only came into being in 2013. In this short time it has firmly established itself in its role as a valued and independent organisation, which is able to influence health and care commissioners by ensuring that patients' and service users' experiences are heard and understood. The Healthwatch Shropshire team and board should be proud of the work they have done so far. We look forward to continuing our work with Healthwatch Shropshire into the future."

Healthwatch Shropshire gathers experiences and opinions from patients, carers, service users and the wider public about health and social care services across Shropshire, then makes sure those views are used to improve services for all.

The organisation also provides information and signposting services to support the people of Shropshire in making choices about health and social care services and how to access them.

It has a statutory authority to carry out Enter and View visits to locations where health and social care services are being delivered, observe what is happening, and report on its findings.

Healthwatch Shropshire provides an exciting range of voluntary opportunities and is always keen to hear from anybody who is interested in this area of work. Contact 01743 237884 / [enquiries@healthwatchshropshire.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchshropshire.co.uk) for further information.

**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 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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