

Press Release

For immediate release:

Shropshire Patient Champion Takes Local Views to Heart of Westminster



Representatives from Healthwatch Shropshire recently travelled to London to join forces with more than 100 fellow local Healthwatch organisations at the annual parliamentary reception. It was an opportunity to raise the real life concerns of people using health and social care services with their local MPs.

Attended by parliamentarians, as well as key decision makers from across the health and social care sector, the event provided an opportunity to speak with them about the work Healthwatch Shropshire has been doing to shape local services on behalf of Shropshire residents. This has included raising the concerns of patients and their families who are using the young people's mental health services in Shropshire; visiting care homes and services for people with dementia to hear first hand about their experiences; and visiting GP practices to find out how they are meeting the information and communication support needs of patients, service users, carers and parents with a disability, impairment or sensory loss.

With local health and social care services going through rapid change with the launch of the NHS Long Term Plan, it has never been more important for services to involve the people

they serve in shaping the future of health and social care.

The good news is that Healthwatch is getting more people to come forward to share their views on the issues in their areas. When acted upon by commissioners, care providers and clinicians, people's experiences and ideas are leading to safer, better quality care. In this way people are where they should be – at the centre of their service.

Philip Dunne, MP for Ludlow, said: "Healthwatch Shropshire plays a vital role as the champion of patients in Shropshire, giving people the chance to air their views about the NHS services and care we receive. I regularly speak with Healthwatch Shropshire, but it was good to meet them in Westminster to discuss the work they are doing to influence the future of health services in Shropshire."

Lynn Cawley, Chief Officer of Healthwatch Shropshire, said: "It was a great opportunity to attend Parliament and highlight our hard work locally to parliamentarians, especially one of our own MPs, Philip Dunne. The efforts of our dedicated team of staff and volunteers at helping to influence the way health and social care services are delivered in Shropshire were praised by all we met, particularly by Healthwatch England."

Held in the Houses of Parliament, the reception was hosted by national body Healthwatch England to mark the launch of its sixth annual report.

Healthwatch Shropshire is the independent consumer champion for health and social care in Shropshire. It gathers the views and experiences of patients, service users, carers, and the general public about services including hospitals, GPs, mental health services, community health services, pharmacists, opticians, residential care and children's services. It also has statutory powers that it can use to influence service provision by encouraging improvements.

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.

Healthwatch Shropshire also provides the Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service (IHCAS) for Shropshire. The IHCAS service provides information, advice and, if necessary, can support people through the NHS complaints process.

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