

## Press Release

For immediate release: 9 July 2018

### **#ItStartsWithYou campaign launches in Shropshire**

Healthwatch Shropshire is launching a campaign to encourage people across the county to share their experiences to help make health and care better for their communities.

The #ItStartsWithYou campaign returns for a second year. The campaign encourages people to have their say, and highlights the difference that people are already making to health and social care services by sharing their experiences.

Over the last 5 years thousands of people have contacted Healthwatch Shropshire (HWS) and used their voice to make a difference to the care of others. Thanks to people telling HWS what they think about health and care services, positive changes that benefit the people using them have been seen across hospital, General Practice, dental and care home services.

Jane Randall-Smith, Chief Officer, said: "However big or small the issue, Healthwatch Shropshire wants to hear about it from you. If it's important to one person, it's very likely that it affects other people too. By sharing your story you can help doctors, dentists, hospitals and care homes understand what's working well and what could be better. It might just feel like your story, but if it matters to you, it matters to us, and it really can make a difference."

Vanessa Barrett, the newly elected Chair of HWS, said: "It continues to be shown that patient testimony can sometimes provide better insight into services than the hard statistical information collected by service providers. Service users can be unsure how they can best use their experience to improve services for others, but if they contact Healthwatch Shropshire they will be able to discuss their experience confidentially and we can help them while setting out other options that may be available to them."

People can let Healthwatch Shropshire know what they think about local health and care services by phone 01743 237884, by post 'freepost HEALTHWATCH SHROPSHIRE', by email [enquiries@healthwatchshropshire.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchshropshire.co.uk) or online at [www.healthwatchshropshire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchshropshire.co.uk). The more comments received the more influence Healthwatch Shropshire has to improve services for local people.

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.

### **Contact**

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