

Press Release

Embargoed until 12:00, 9 October 2019

Healthwatch Shropshire wants to hear about General Practice access.

Healthwatch Shropshire, the local independent consumer champion for health and social care, would like to know about people's experiences of using their GP services, how easy is it to access their GP or practice nurse? The NHS recommends that people with fevers, stomach upset, aches & pains or headaches contact the local pharmacist instead of their GP. If people can't easily get an appointment with their GP and use other services such as their local pharmacy Healthwatch would like to hear about that experience as well.

The latest GP Patient Survey showed that there was a wide range of patient satisfaction rates for availability of appointments at GP practices. Across the county, it varies from 34% satisfied to 95% satisfied. Healthwatch would like to hear about the reality behind the statistics.

Lynn Cawley, Chief Officer, said; "We often find that the detail patients give us about their experiences is invaluable in helping to make things better. We are independent, we record experiences anonymously and then can feed them back to service providers and those who coordinate services."

"We carried out some research in 2015 that showed patients lacked an understanding of how GP appointment systems worked and we are still hearing that message. Now practices are offering 'extended hours' appointments, where patients can book to see a GP until 8pm on weekdays and over the weekend, and can book appointments online we would like to know how the patient experience has been affected. The NHS recommends that people with fevers, stomach upset, aches & pains or headaches contact the local pharmacist instead of their GP, if people are using pharmacies how did they find the experience?"

Healthwatch Shropshire can be contacted on 01743 237884 or enquiries@healthwatchshropshire.co.uk .

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 (IHCA) for Shropshire. The IHCA service provides information, advice and, if necessary, can support people through the NHS complaints process.

Contact

Lynn Cawley, Chief Officer Tel: 01743 237884

Healthwatch Shropshire

4 The Creative Quarter, Shrewsbury Business Park, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6LG

Tel: 01743 237884 Email enquiries@healthwatchshropshire.co.uk

Website www.healthwatchshropshire.co.uk