

Press Release

For immediate release:

Healthwatch visit Dementia Care Homes across the county.

One in six people over the age of 80 has dementia and 70% of people in care homes have dementia or severe memory problems. There will be over one million people with dementia in the UK by 2025, and there are over 40,000 people in the UK under 65 living with dementia today.

Dementia is of particular concern in Shropshire due to its large and growing ageing population. As the Shropshire Dementia Strategy 2017-2020 puts it, “As far as Shropshire health conditions go, we believe that dementia is a “sleeping giant”... one that has begun to wake up. Projections show that by 2031, 45% of the South Shropshire population will be over 65 years of age and will be among the three oldest populations across England and Wales.”

Healthwatch Shropshire, the local health and social care consumer champion, have carried out a series of visits to care homes who provide dementia care across the county to learn more about the care they provide and to identify areas of good practice.

In their report just published they found that:

- Overall the residents and relatives were happy with the care they were receiving at the homes they visited.
- End of Life Care is seen as an essential part of providing Dementia care.
- Homes are encouraging and supporting residents’ use of information technology to help them keep in contact with relatives or friends.
- Many homes have separate Dementia units and they found that purpose built care homes were more Dementia friendly in terms of the environment and décor. One non-purpose built home scored very highly.
- Activities on offer varied from home to home.
- Residents were supported to make choices e.g. what to eat or wear, or how to personalise their bedrooms at all eight homes and their communication needs were taken in to account whenever they were being asked to make choices.

Lynn Cawley, Healthwatch Shropshire Chief Officer, said “It is really important that those living with dementia in care homes receive the care they need. Our role is to listen to their experiences and identify where things are working well and where things could be improved. The visits were carried out by our trained volunteers, they observed the environment and talk to residents, their families and staff in the homes.

This project focused on dementia care but we are always keen to hear about people’s experiences of care homes and domestic care services and would ask people to get in touch.”

The full report can be found here:

<https://www.healthwatchshropshire.co.uk/report/2019-10-29/dementia-care-shropshire-care-homes-enter-view-summary-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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