

Press Release

For immediate release:

Giving your time has huge benefits

A local charity, Healthwatch Shropshire, is finding that the widely accepted benefits of volunteering for individuals and their communities are certainly true.

Fran Robinson volunteered to spend the day meeting young parents and their babies at a Baby Sensory Session where Healthwatch Shropshire was collecting parents' experiences of the support available for their mental health. Fran explained, "I had an interesting and enjoyable day helping to encourage participation in the Healthwatch survey by the Mum's at the group. As a bonus, I got to see lots of beautiful babies and chat with their Mum's about the real value of their opinions on Maternity Mental Health."

Healthwatch Shropshire volunteers have given over 1300 hours in the last year to help reach people in the local communities so that their experiences can help to shape the health and social care services that are provided locally.

Chris Knight volunteers as part of the team who visit wards, medical practices and care homes, "I believe that an important way to improve the quality of service in health and social care is to listen and relay back to providers and commissioners the opinions of those individuals experiencing services. Working as part of a team with shared goals is very satisfying."

Lynn Cawley, Chief Officer of Healthwatch Shropshire, said: "Healthwatch is all about local people being able to influence the delivery and design of health and social care services where they live. Volunteers are key to this work, not only in getting out into the community to listen to people's experiences, but also they bring an invaluable source of knowledge, experience and enthusiasm to our work." "Volunteering can be great fun," she added, "providing satisfaction, fulfilment and enjoyable experiences."

Voluntary roles at Healthwatch Shropshire give people the opportunity to meet new people, use and develop existing skills and knowledge, access training and support while making a difference in to their local community. They can be contacted at www.healthwatchshropshire.co.uk

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

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