

Press Release

For immediate release:

The top five things people in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin would like to see improved in local NHS services to help them lead healthier lives

Hundreds of people in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin have shared their views on how to improve local NHS services.

Easier access to treatment and services; help with making lifestyle choices; better information about support available; improved communication around prevention; and more training for healthcare staff on conditions such as mental health were the top five things people in the region would like to see implemented to help them lead healthy lives.

Their views were shared as part of Healthwatch Shropshire and Healthwatch Telford & Wrekin's What Would You Do? campaign and the findings are now revealed in a report published today.

More than 640 residents, patients and their families took part in 'What Would You do?' activities, which launched in March to encourage people in the region to share their views about how extra money from the Government should be spent on local NHS services.

The public were asked to give their views about how local services could improve, and to share ideas about how the NHS can help people live healthier lives and take more control of their care.

The report also reveals people in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin would like:

- Professionals to take a 'person-centred' approach
- Easier access to GP appointments
- Local services to meet local needs, such as the accident and emergency department in Telford
- Increased support and practical aids to help people stay in their homes for as long as possible
- Better use of technology by the NHS. This could help people to look after themselves better, but only where appropriate. Some older people and those with learning disabilities, may find it difficult to use technology to access this information

- Improved appointment times and access to continued support for those with mental health conditions
- The development of more joined-up services, so all NHS staff have access to medical records
- Earlier diagnosis for people living with dementia, so they can access the right support and care.

Lynn Cawley, Chief Officer at Healthwatch Shropshire, said: “The Government is investing an additional £20 billion a year in the NHS as part of the NHS Long Term Plan. We were asked to help find out what local people thought was the best way for the NHS in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin to invest in the right services as part of this plan.”

Paul Shirley, General Manager at Healthwatch Telford & Wrekin, said: “We are grateful to all the people that took part in the surveys and focus groups. The groups that reported the poorest experiences of getting help were those people who had long-term conditions such as arthritis and diabetes, people with mental health difficulties and people with heart and lung disease. The majority of respondents from these three groups also reported feeling that they had not received timely and consistent information about their condition from all services.

“However, people with cancer seemed to be the happiest with the communication that they had received. All this feedback is in our new report which has been presented to the Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP).

Lynn Cawley added: “Both Healthwatch will continue to share any results from our wider engagement, including relevant comments and reports with the STP so that the views of people in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin continue to be taken into account as the Long Term Plan is implemented.”

An online survey and focus groups were held throughout the region to get local people’s views. One person told Healthwatch Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin: “As a carer for a mental health patient, who has a very long and complex medical and psychiatric history, I would like my needs to be taken into account when deciding my partner’s treatment plan.

“When she is ill, it puts a lot of strain on me as I have heart, bowel and other health problems, which are totally ignored by the mental health services.”

Another with a long-term condition commented: “I underwent tests very quickly and saw the consultant quickly several times. They gave me advice and we agreed a long-term treatment plan which was acceptable to me and is still working.”

Healthwatch Shropshire and Healthwatch Telford & Wrekin are now recommending the findings of the report to be considered in the development of the local Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin STP plan.

Sir Neil McKay, Independent Chair of Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP), said: “I would like to thank Healthwatch Shropshire and Healthwatch Telford & Wrekin colleagues on producing this important report, which has reached many different people across Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin.

“As an STP we understand the importance of developing our health and care services based on the views of our local population, alongside the evidence on population health. It is interesting to note that people said they wanted: ‘A person-centred approach to our care,’ and this is central to all the work we are doing. People are at the heart of everything we do and by delivering joined up services in both the acute and community settings we can give everyone the best start in life, creating healthier communities and helping people to age well.

“Together with the views of our partners, clinicians, staff and service users we can identify what is working well, what can be improved and what is important to them. This will enable us to plan, design and deliver health and social care services that are right for our local population of Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin.”

The report, ‘*What would you do? The NHS Long Term Plan in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin*’ can be viewed here: <http://www.healthwatchshropshire.co.uk/what-would-you-do-nhs-long-term-plan-shropshire-telford-wrekin-report>

Ends

Notes for Editors:

Healthwatch Shropshire and Healthwatch Telford & Wrekin are part of a network of 148 Local Healthwatch in England. It is supported by a national organisation, Healthwatch England.

Both have teams 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.

Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP) is made up of health and care commissioners and providers. Partners include Shropshire Council, Telford & Wrekin Council, NHS Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group, NHS Telford & Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Group, Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust, Robert

Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust and West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust.

Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin STP has been created to encourage health and care organisations to work more closely together to improve outcomes and care for local people, reduce pressures on services and make best use of our financial resources.

It sets out ambitious plans for transformed neighbourhood services; safe and effective hospital care; ways in which new technology can be harnessed; and how gaps in the workforce can be filled and financial resources better spent.

Shropshire, Telford & Shropshire STP is one of 44 sustainability and transformation partnerships across England.

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