

Press Release

For immediate release

Healthwatch focus on Hearing Loss services

NHS England estimates that 1 in 5 people in Shropshire, over 64,000, suffer from some degree of hearing loss. This is significantly higher than the national average for England. Healthwatch Shropshire would like to hear about people's experiences of NHS treatment and support. Healthwatch Shropshire are aware that some people have been struggling to access ear suction services at their local GP and would like to get a more detailed picture of all audiology services and treatments both in GP practices and in hospitals and clinics.

Jane Randall-Smith, Chief Officer of Healthwatch Shropshire, said: "Hearing loss is a 'Hot Topic' for us. It is often described as the 'hidden disability' and it affects so many of us that we really want to make sure that the patient voice is heard by those who provide and pay for the services. We are very keen to hear about good service and treatment as well as less good; all experiences can provide valuable learning for local health services. I would encourage those who would like to help us improve services to contact us through our website www.healthwatchshropshire.co.uk or ring us on 01743 237884."

Healthwatch Shropshire runs Hot Topics throughout the year where the spotlight is focused on particular aspects of the local health and social care system.

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.

Estimated figures for sufferers of hearing loss:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/prevalence-of-hearing-loss-by-local-authority-area-2014-ons-estimates/>

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