

## Life in a care home in Shropshire, what's it really like?

- a new study compiles the views and experiences of those who live, visit and work in care homes across England.
- Wide variation revealed, with great care contrasting with homes failing to get the basics right for every resident.
- National Care champion Healthwatch England urges homes to be more open to using feedback from residents, relatives and staff to help drive improvement.

Work by Shropshire Healthwatch has helped to inform a new national report on peoples' experience of care homes using Enter & View reports from the 20 homes visited in Shropshire in the last year.

Between January 2016 and April 2017, local Healthwatch staff and volunteers across England visited 197 care homes across 63 different local authority areas, including Shropshire to find out what day to day life is really like for many of those living in care homes.

The Healthwatch report outlines key next steps for care homes in Shropshire, how feedback can be used to identify a whole host of small, low cost changes that ensure all residents feel 'at home'.

The majority of residents and relatives Healthwatch spoke with considered the care they received to be good, with innovative homes showing what is possible without breaking the bank.

Local Healthwatch representatives also saw staff going above and beyond the call of duty to connect with those they care for and really helping them to live their lives - including in one home where regular 'pub nights' are organised in the care home with pub food on the menu, a glass of beer or wine with dinner and pub themed entertainment enabling residents to have a night out at 'the local'.

However, Healthwatch volunteer visitors also witnessed homes not getting the basics right with even those providing excellent care failing to tick all the boxes.

Issues local Healthwatch found involved environment, activities, staffing and wider health needs.

Although many of the reports produced by local Healthwatch organisations raise concerns about people's experiences, the vast majority of care home managers have responded to the feedback very positively, often agreeing to review processes and making changes very quickly.

"The situation in Shropshire in many ways mirrors the national picture; our Enter & View teams see many examples of good personalised care along with some that raise concerns. Generally care providers are keen to receive the feedback from residents and to learn from our observations." Daphne Lewis, Chair, Healthwatch Shropshire

Local care home reports can be found on the Healthwatch Shropshire website:  
[www.healthwatchshropshire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchshropshire.co.uk)

**Imelda Redmond, National Director of Healthwatch England, said:**

*"It's not easy running a care home, particularly as the sector as a whole is trying to get to grips with the dual challenge of managing rising demand with limited resources. But getting the basics right doesn't have to cost the earth and should be the least we should all be able to expect for our loved ones and ourselves should we need care support.*

*"Care homes are not institutions, they are people's homes, and the only way to ensure they feel like this for residents is to put them at the heart of shaping how the care home runs. Healthwatch is here to help with this and I would urge anyone who wants to share their experiences, good or bad, to get in touch."*

### **Notes to Editors:**

#### **About us**

Healthwatch Shropshire is the independent champion for people who use health and social care services. We exist to ensure that people are at the heart of care. We listen to what people like about services, and what could be improved and we share their views with those with the power to make change happen. We also help people find the information they need about services in their area.

We have the power to ensure that people's voices are heard by the government and those running services. As well as seeking the public's views ourselves, we also encourage services to involve people in decisions that affect them. Our sole purpose is to help make care better for people.

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#### **List of local Healthwatch who have contributed to the Care Homes report:**

Barnet, Birmingham, Bradford and District, Bromley, Bucks, Cambridgeshire, Central Bedfordshire, Central West London, Cheshire West and Chester, County Durham, Coventry, Croydon, Darlington, Derbyshire, Devon, East Riding of

Yorkshire, Gloucestershire, Halton, Havering, Herefordshire, Hertfordshire, Hillingdon, Kent, Kirklees, Lambeth, Lancashire, Leeds, Lewisham, Lincolnshire, Liverpool, Newcastle upon Tyne, North East Lincolnshire, North Somerset, North Yorkshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Portsmouth, Redbridge, Richmond upon Thames, Rochdale, Sandwell, Sheffield, Shropshire, South Gloucestershire, South Tyneside, St Helens, Staffordshire, Stoke on Trent, Suffolk, Surrey, Telford and Wrekin, Thurrock, Torbay, Tower Hamlets, Trafford, Waltham Forest, Wakefield, Warrington, Warwickshire, Wiltshire, Wirral, Wolverhampton, Worcestershire, York.