

Shaping the Future of Healthwatch in Shropshire

Local Healthwatch – Questions & Answers

Q. What is Local Healthwatch?

A. Healthwatch gives people a powerful voice locally and nationally. Local Healthwatch works to help people get the best out of their local health and social care services with the aim of ensuring that patients and the public are at the heart of decisions about service delivery, improvement and change. Local Healthwatch voices people's concerns and provides feedback to service providers and commissioners. Through local engagement it collects vital data on how and why people use services in their area. Its place on the Health and Wellbeing Board means local Healthwatch can represent the voice of people in decision-making. Local Healthwatch directly supports people in their community by giving them information or signposting them to the local services they need.

Local Healthwatch are independent organisations dealing with local concerns and they are commissioned directly by local authorities.

Q. What does Local Healthwatch do?

A. Local Healthwatch:

- promotes and supports the involvement of people in the monitoring, commissioning and provision of local care services;
- obtains the views of people about their needs for and experience of local care services and makes those views known to those involved in the commissioning, provision and scrutiny of care services;
- undertakes reports and makes recommendations about how services could or should be improved;
- provides information and advice to the public about accessing health and social care services and choice in relation to aspects of those services;
- makes the views and experiences of people known to Healthwatch England helping it to carry out its role as national champion;
- makes recommendations to Healthwatch England to advise the Care Quality Commission to carry out special reviews or investigations into areas of concern (or, if the circumstances justify it, go direct to the CQC with their recommendations, for example if urgent action is required by the CQC);
- either provides NHS complaints advocacy (IHCAS) or signposts people to the provider of the service

Q. How long has Local Healthwatch been operating?

A. Local Healthwatch for Shropshire launched on 1st April 2013. Healthwatch Shropshire currently runs Local Healthwatch in Shropshire – further details can be viewed here <http://www.healthwatchshropshire.co.uk/>

Q. We already have a Local Healthwatch so why are you asking people what it should look like?

A. Shropshire Council funds the work of Local Healthwatch in Shropshire through a contract. It is important that we ensure that the contract clearly and accurately sets out what is required of Local Healthwatch and that this reflects the aims and wishes of users of health and social care services as well as many other stakeholders. The current contract is coming to an end so it is right that we give people the chance to set out again what they would like their Local Healthwatch to look like under a new arrangement for the future.

In addition, health and care services are managed and delivered across both Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin are becoming more joined-up so we're interested in people's views about how Local Healthwatch should operate in this context.

Q. How is Local Healthwatch funded?

A. Funding for Local Healthwatch comes from the Department of Health and Social Care, who provide the money for Shropshire Council as a grant. The amount available to Shropshire's Local Healthwatch is based on the number and demographics of the people living in Shropshire.

Q. What is the Health and Wellbeing Board?

A. Each Local Authority must have a Health and Wellbeing Board covering health, public health and social care for children and adults. The Board must include a Local Healthwatch representative to ensure that feedback from patients and service users can influence and shape health and social care services.

Q. What is the Care Quality Commission (CQC)?

A. The CQC is the independent regulator of all health and social care services in England. The CQC makes sure that care provided by hospitals, dentists, ambulances, care homes and services in people's own homes and elsewhere meets government standards of quality and safety.

Q. What is Healthwatch England?

A. Healthwatch England represents Healthwatch at a national level. It is a committee of the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and is responsible for setting standards and providing support and leadership to Local Healthwatch organisations.