



## SHROPSHIRE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

### Report

|  |   |   |   |  |   |
|--|---|---|---|--|---|
| <b>Meeting Date</b>  | 22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2025   |   |   |  |   |
| <b>Title of report</b>   | <b>Healthwatch Shropshire Update and Next Steps</b>   |   |   |  |   |
| <b>This report is for</b><br>(You will have been advised which applies)  | Discussion and agreement of recommendations   | X | Approval of recommendations<br>(With discussion by exception) | Information only<br>(No recommendations) |   |
| <b>Reporting Officer &amp; email</b>   | Lynn Cawley (Chief Officer)<br><a href="mailto:Lynn.cawley@healthwatchshropshire.co.uk">Lynn.cawley@healthwatchshropshire.co.uk</a>           |   |   |  |   |
| <b>Which Joint Health &amp; Wellbeing Strategy priorities does this report address? Please tick all that apply</b> | Children & Young People   | X | Joined up working   |  | X |
|  | Mental Health   | X | Improving Population Health                                   |  | X |
|  | Healthy Weight & Physical Activity  |   | Working with and building strong and vibrant communities      |  | X |
|  | Workforce   |   | Reduce inequalities (see below)                               |  | X |
| <b>What inequalities does this report address?</b>   | Access to independent public voice and advocacy – particularly for people who are digitally excluded and those with protected characteristics |   |   |  |   |

### Report content

#### 1. Executive Summary

The report aims to update members of Shropshire Health and Wellbeing Board regarding the work undertaken by Healthwatch Shropshire since April 2025 in response to our own priorities and our partnership working across the Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Integrated Care System. It also draws attention to the changes facing the Healthwatch network in 2026 following the publication of the Dash Review and NHS 10 Year Plan and the decision to abolish Healthwatch.

Healthwatch Shropshire has been part of this system since 2013. We are independent of the NHS and social care and non-political. We work to ensure the public voice is heard by completing face-to-face engagement projects, Enter & View visits and spotlight reports, reporting our findings to highlight what is working well, identifying gaps in services and where improvements should be made, as well as the work being done in response to public involvement and feedback. We are unique in that we publish reports focusing on qualitative feedback, including direct quotes from people. We ensure these reports are accessible to people providing and regulating services, and importantly, anyone using health and social care services in Shropshire.

Healthwatch Shropshire also offer information and signposting and deliver the Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service for Shropshire residents and anyone using NHS services in Shropshire. We are trusted and respected for the work we do but have also shown we are keen to support system improvement, offering constructing challenge and a way for people to share their views and experiences anonymously with an independent body.

#### 2. Recommendations

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to consider the implication of the decision to abolish Healthwatch on the independent voice of people using health and social care services in Shropshire, particularly as this system has seen significant issues raised by reports such as the Ockenden Report into Maternity Care and the Dispatches programme about our Emergency Departments. At a time when it is important to build public trust and confidence in services and to ensure openness and transparency, we ask the Health and Wellbeing Board

1. To ensure the principle and function of independent feedback remains on the agenda and agree practical next steps.
2. To seek clarification on the mechanism for the transfer of Healthwatch functions into the ICB and Shropshire Council, expected implications for resources and whether any mitigations are envisaged with regards to its impact upon people's willingness to report experience and complain directly to providers and commissioners.

### 3. Report:

see Appendix A

|  |   |                    |
|--|---|--------------------|
| <b>Risk assessment and opportunities appraisal</b><br><i>(NB This will include the following: Risk Management, Human Rights, Equalities, Community, Environmental consequences and other Consultation)</i> | <b>For information:</b><br><a href="#"><u>Equalities impact assessment: 10 Year Health Plan for England - GOV.UK</u></a> Published 17/12/25 |                    |
| <b>Financial implications</b><br><i>(Any financial implications of note)</i>   | To be determined  |                    |
| <b>Climate Change Appraisal as applicable</b>  | NA  |                    |
| <b>Where else has the paper been presented?</b>  | System Partnership Boards   |                    |
|  | Voluntary Sector  |                    |
|  | Other   | Shropshire Council |
| <b>List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)</b>  |   |                    |
| <b>Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) or your organisational lead e.g., Exec lead or Non-Exec/Clinical Lead – HWS is commissioned by SC and a statutory member of the HWBB</b>                              |   |                    |
| <b>Appendices</b><br>Appendix A. Healthwatch Shropshire & the Independent Voice – full report<br>Appendix B. Healthwatch Shropshire – presentation   |   |                    |