



## SHROPSHIRE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

### Report

|   |   |   |   |   |                                       |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| Meeting Date  | 13 <sup>th</sup> February 2025  |   |   |   |                                       |  |
| Title of report   | Living well with cancer in Shropshire – A Report into people’s experiences of living with and beyond cancer in Shropshire                       |   |   |   |                                       |  |
| This report is for<br>(You will have been advised which applies)  | Discussion and agreement of recommendations   |   | Approval of recommendation s (With discussion by exception) | x | Information only (No recommendations) |  |
| Reporting Officer & email   | Lynn Cawley, Chief Officer, Healthwatch<br><a href="mailto:lynn.cawley@healthwatchshropshire.co.uk">lynn.cawley@healthwatchshropshire.co.uk</a> |   |   |   |                                       |  |
| Which Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy priorities does this report address? Please tick all that apply | Children & Young People   |   | Joined up working   | x |                                       |  |
|   | Mental Health   | x | Improving Population Health                                 | x |                                       |  |
|   | Healthy Weight & Physical Activity  | x | Working with and building strong and vibrant communities    |   |                                       |  |
|   | Workforce   |   | Reduce inequalities (see below)                             |   |                                       |  |
| What inequalities does this report address?   | Access to clear and understandable information and support across Shropshire pre and post diagnosis.  |   |   |   |                                       |  |

#### Report Content:

##### 1. Executive Summary and Recommendations

In 2024 Healthwatch Shropshire engaged with 390 people about living with and beyond cancer, including:

- 40 people who completed our online survey
- 226 people who we spoke to face-to-face at cancer support groups and Cancer Champion meetings across Shropshire
- 115 people who we spoke to at local Cancer events
- Nine professionals working directly with people with lived experience of cancer or responsible for implementing the NHS Shropshire Telford and Wrekin Integrated Cancer Strategy 2022-27 to ensure the views of the people we heard from would be taken into account.

Many people shared their positive experiences of cancer services and the non-NHS support available from local and national organisations and community cancer support groups.



## What would support people to live with and beyond cancer? – Key messages

These can be grouped under the following eight key points, supported by sample quotes:

‘Listen to individual circumstances.’

‘Read notes and have some kind of understanding before the appointment. She [carried on] without knowing anything of me as an individual.’

'It would be nice to be able to access blood test results remotely via a website or app so I am able to see them on a monthly basis.'

‘Talk to the patient, don’t assume they won’t understand and give them a chance to have someone with them.’

'It would be great if you could be contacted as soon as your results come in – I for one would be happy with a phone call whatever the results. Ask us.'

‘Remind staff that the people they are seeing are human beings and being told you have cancer is devastating.’

**3. Consider the amount, quality and timing of information given to patients after diagnosis**

'I would have appreciated being given time for information to sink in then a special session for me to ask questions in regard to my specific condition and the future.'

'Lots of leaflets given to read on first appointment. This was overwhelming. So much so that I couldn't read it all until recently. Would have been better with targeted information face-to-face on simple things, e.g. things I needed post-surgery and possible problems after surgery.'

**4. Improved clinical support for patients after diagnosis, treatment / discharge (including increased staffing)**

'Seeing a doctor more often. Having more physical examinations to reassure you that everything is OK.'

'Reinstate funding for the post.'

'More support for young women enduring hormonal treatment.'

**5. Improved access to additional emotional/wellbeing support and other therapies, including groups/workshops that promote exercise and wellbeing for people living with and beyond cancer (consider terminology, e.g. 'counselling')**

'It's a very difficult process and such a big psychological change I think they need to intervene earlier with alternatives to medical treatment.'

'I really enjoyed the make-up session, you felt so good, we wanted to go out afterwards.'

**6. Personalised support and information for families and carers (including at end of life)**

'Remember the partners are the patients support network.'

'Having a link and communicating to immediate family whilst in hospital would be advantageous.'

**7. Need for improved communication and joint working between professionals to make sure people are diagnosed early and have access to the right treatment at the right time, and things go smoothly (including improved waiting times and access to parking permits at the hospital)**

'Chemo should have started sooner and GP should have acted more quickly on health struggles I was having.'

'Just do your job in a timely manner... that's all I ask.'

'Improve waiting times for GPs to answer calls.'

**8. Need for a Shropshire Cancer Network, recognising the importance of community groups and their funding challenges - supported by accurate information and directories for the public and professionals so everyone knows the support is available and how to access it.**

'If one type of cancer patients needs post-surgery support, then why not everyone?'

'Everyone is so focused on what they are doing, there isn't anyone bringing us all together, we don't know what else is out there'.

As we met groups from across Shropshire, we heard a huge amount of positive feedback about people running community-led support group, their determination and passion about what they do, for example:

‘There is one person to thank for all of this and that is [], she is a force to be reckoned with but for all the right reasons. We have a lot to thank [her] for’.

The group is independent of any national charity yet manages to raise thousands of pounds a year for other cancer charities. I’m so proud of the group. Many hours of work by [] and the committee. They were encouraged by our local councillor [] It was her idea to apply. The work continues and the support for people and families who are affected by cancer is now forming a strong network in the South Shropshire area’.

## 2. Main Report

See **Appendix A. Healthwatch – “Living with Cancer in Shropshire” Report** attached

|   |                           |  |
|---|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Risk assessment and opportunities appraisal</b><br>(NB This will include the following: Risk Management, Human Rights, Equalities, Community, Environmental consequences and other Consultation) |                           |  |
| <b>Financial implications</b><br>(Any financial implications of note)   |                           |  |
| <b>Climate Change Appraisal as applicable</b>   |                           |  |
| <b>Where else has the paper been presented?</b>   | System Partnership Boards | ShIPP  |
|   | Voluntary Sector          | Cancer Support Groups                        |
|   | Other                     | Staff from SaTH and the Lingen Davies Centre |
| <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)</b> Portfolio holders can be found <a href="#">here</a> or your organisational lead e.g., Exec lead or Non-Exec/Clinical Lead                                  |                           |  |
| <b>Appendices:</b><br><br>Appendix A. Healthwatch – “Living with Cancer in Shropshire” Report   |                           |  |