



New report reveals not all dementia patients receive same level of care in Wiltshire



People being diagnosed with dementia in Wiltshire are not getting consistent care from their GP surgeries – according to a report published by the county’s independent health and care champion.

Healthwatch Wiltshire spoke to 195 people - including those who have been diagnosed with dementia, their families, volunteers and professionals - to find out about their experience of being diagnosed with dementia at their local GP surgery and mixed results were found.

Some people said their GPs were dismissive of their concerns about their memory; they didn’t get a clear diagnosis and they weren’t referred on to other services or offered reviews.

Others reported GPs who listened to people’s concerns and carried out memory tests, gave a clear diagnosis, prescribed medication, referred their patients to other support services and reviewed regularly.

One carer said: “The quality of dementia care can depend on your surgery – there are some positive experiences.”

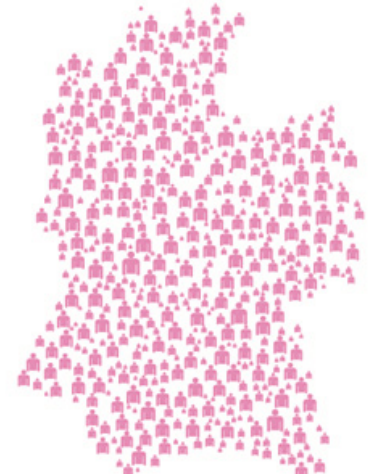
Another said: “My father was diagnosed last July by his GP. I found it very isolating. The GP didn’t inform us about what we could do and didn’t explain everything to me. Later on, the GP casually mentioned Dementia Advisers and said they would refer us. No one got in touch but I made direct contact and the services offered by the Alzheimer’s charities are great.”

The Healthwatch Wiltshire report *Talking to people about dementia: a focus on primary care*, first published in March this year, found other key themes, including:

- People said they valued a clear, direct dementia diagnosis – not everyone had this with some saying their GP had hinted it could be dementia but was not direct.
- Unpaid carers said the approach of their health care centre had an impact on their quality of life. Those who were recognised as a carer at their GP practice and given priority appointments reported a positive experience.
- Many people were concerned about the lack of ongoing support from their health care centre for people living with dementia. Some people reported they had not talked to their health care centre for a number of years.

Lucie Woodruff, Healthwatch Wiltshire manager, said: “With an estimated 6,624 people living with dementia in Wiltshire, we have made it a top priority to talk to people in the county about their experiences of dementia care and support.

“Our role at Healthwatch is to ensure we gather views both good and bad from members of the public and then pass these on to the decision-making bodies who plan, pay for and run these services in



6,624 estimated number of people in Wiltshire living with dementia

Wiltshire. It's important that people have a say in how their local health and care service is run, so they can help shape it for the better."

The report's findings have been presented to the Wiltshire Health and Wellbeing Board, the Dementia Delivery Board and the commissioners and providers of dementia services in the county.

Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group (Wiltshire CCG) and Wiltshire Council say work has and continues to be planned, delivered and reviewed around each area that has been commented on by the public in the Healthwatch Wiltshire report.



9 Dementia Advisers in Wiltshire

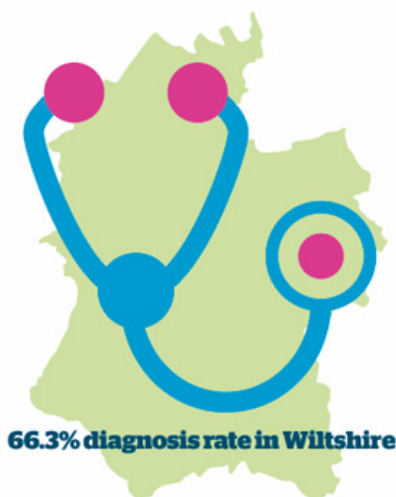
They say 256 practice staff across the county have received Dementia Friends training and the CCG's dementia lead has provided more training to GPs across the county. The feedback from Healthwatch reports has and will be sent to each GP practice and the key themes in the report have been identified and included in the Wiltshire Dementia Strategy Action Plan.

Ted Wilson, Director of Community Services and Joint Commissioning for Wiltshire CCG, said: "We work closely with our service providers and are using the feedback provided through the Healthwatch report to inform continuous improvement in services for those living with and affected by dementia.

"Dementia diagnosis rates for Wiltshire are above the national average and this is something we are really proud of. Our dementia advisers are doing a great job in supporting patients and their families post-diagnosis, at home and in their local communities. They provide confidential advice and information to help improve understanding about dementia, what might happen in the future and to make informed decisions about care and treatment.

"None of us can be complacent about the care available for people living with dementia; we must continuously strive to deliver the best services possible."

The full *Talking to people about dementia: a focus on primary care* report is available to download at: healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk/reports-publications



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Healthwatch Wiltshire is a local independent organisation which exists to speak up for people on health and care. If you have used a service recently then we would like to hear from you. We use what people tell us when we meet with the commissioners and providers of services to make sure that they take account of your views and experiences.

Healthwatch Wiltshire is part of Evolving Communities CIC, a community interest company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales with company number 08464602.

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