

People have their say over Wiltshire dementia care

People living with dementia and their unpaid carers have welcomed plans to provide a clearer pathway of care which would help people stay at home for as long as possible.

Local people in Wiltshire have given their views on proposals put forward by NHS Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group and Wiltshire Council to improve health and care services for those living with dementia in Wiltshire.

The proposals included providing a clear and consistent pathway for professionals, voluntary organisations and the public from the initial diagnosis of dementia onwards. This would involve a team of dementia specialists from different areas coming together to work alongside each other in one team and investing in more specialist nurses linked to the local GP practice.

Other plans include identifying a select number of care homes across the county to provide specialist care for people with the most complex needs.

The county's independent health and care champion Healthwatch Wiltshire spoke to members of the public last July and August about what they thought about the proposals and a new report *Talking to people about dementia: a focus on support for people with the most complex needs* has now been released which outlines their findings.

Lucie Woodruff, Healthwatch Wiltshire Manager, explained: "When the Wiltshire Dementia Strategy was first published in 2014, we formed a partnership with voluntary and community sector groups in the county to make sure the strategy delivered in practice what it promised on paper.

"The aim of this engagement was to enable the public to hear about how the dementia strategy is being put into practice and to have their say on new proposals for dementia care in Wiltshire."

Staff and volunteers at Healthwatch Wiltshire produced an online survey, hosted several public meetings around the county and visited care homes to get people's views about the proposals. They found:

- People thought it was important for those living with dementia to be able to stay at home for as long as possible, with 74% saying the proposal for a clearer pathway of care would enable this.
- They felt more resources should be allocated to support people to live in their homes.
- People emphasised that the proposal must include provision for support in a crisis if it is to be effective in enabling people living with dementia to stay at home for longer.
- There was also concerns about the impact that the proposal may have on carers and felt that adequate support for carers must be

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Healthwatch Wiltshire is the county's independent health and care champion. We listen to what people like about local health and care services, and what could be improved. These views are then shared with the decision-making organisations in the county, so together we can make a difference.

in place for it be successful.

- Those who were questioned thought there was a shortage of care home places for people with the most complex needs in Wiltshire, and the majority agreed that something should be put in place to address this issue.
- 78% of those who took part in the survey said that highly specialist dementia care should be provided in a small number of care homes.
- There was also widespread agreement that strong links and support from a team of dementia specialists could enable care homes to provide good quality care to this group of people.



One person said: “As a dementia champion, I have spoken to a lot of people with dementia who would rather stay in their own home for as long as possible. This proposal appears to offer that.”

Another carer added: “This will only work when focus is also placed on non-paid carers and that they also receive specialist support and respite to enable them to manage and cope with caring for the person with dementia.”

Others expressed concerns about the location of specialist care homes, whether there would be enough places to meet the demand and the potential impact on other care homes and their ability to care for people living with dementia.

The full report ***Talking to people about dementia: a focus on support for people with the most complex needs*** can be viewed at healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk/reports-publications and has been shared with Wiltshire NHS Clinical Commissioning Board and Wiltshire Council, so that they can use what people have told Healthwatch Wiltshire to inform their decisions about planning and providing dementia services in Wiltshire.

Ted Wilson, Director of Community and Joint Commissioning at Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group, said: “We know that people living with dementia want to stay at home and remain independent for as long as possible. The feedback people have provided to Healthwatch will be invaluable in informing the development of dementia services in Wiltshire to enable this to happen.”

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