

This is me!



**“Using the arts to engage with
older people”**

ArtCare

elevate

healthwatch
Wiltshire

WSUN
Wiltshire and Swindon Users' Network

Wiltshire Council
Where everybody matters

This is me!

Many older people in Wiltshire are using both health and social care services which are provided by different organisations. There is an increasing emphasis on 'joined up' care with a focus on the individual at the heart of decisions, staying in their own homes and communities for as long as possible. This requires providers and commissioners to work together to integrate their services. So what does it feel like to be using health and social care services in Wiltshire? The best way to find out is by asking the people who are using those services!

Older people's experiences of using health and care services

Healthwatch Wiltshire won a grant from the Wiltshire Council Arts and Health Innovation Fund in September 2014. The grant was for a project to help us discover older peoples' experiences of using health and social care, or of caring for someone who does. Healthwatch Wiltshire invited the Wiltshire and Swindon Users' Network to work alongside us on the project. Together we commissioned Elevate, an Arts and Health organisation in Wiltshire. Elevate used tea parties both in the community and in people's own homes to encourage individuals to have their say. The tea parties included vintage china, home-made cake and live music, served by hostesses in 1950s costumes. The parties took place across Wiltshire between July and October 2015.

What happened?

Elevate ran five community tea parties in Wiltshire through which older people and their unpaid carers had the chance to enjoy the tea, cake, and music. Because we wanted to reach people who are not able to get out easily, Elevate ran ten individual 'take away' tea parties in people's own homes. Altogether over one hundred people got involved with the project.

During the tea parties, Elevate used its skilled artists to create an informal and fun environment where people could relax and enjoy themselves. This provided the chance to have conversations over a cuppa through which we could ask older people, and their unpaid carers, about their experiences of using health and social care. People told us about what it was like to be in their shoes. Their stories are powerful examples of being older, frail, living with health conditions, and living independently in Wiltshire.

Elevate gathered all of the conversations together in writing. Powerful quotes direct from the participants were sent through Twitter. They also filmed some of the conversations and made a short film which can be found on the Healthwatch Wiltshire website.



Tea Party
@hwwteaparties



Following

Carer-"nowadays there's more info for carers at surgeries, hospitals etc. Help is there- people need to make use of it"

3:25 p.m. - 17 Sep 2015



Tea Party
@hwwteaparties



Following

"I sometimes feel alone, if anything goes wrong it's all down to me "

1:13 p.m. - 5 Oct 2015



So what did people say?

There were six main themes that came out of all the conversations with older people and their unpaid carers:

- People who have had a stay in hospital and then come home told us that often the communication between different services isn't good enough. This can result in confusion and things not happening as promised.
- Looking after a relative, spouse, or friend is rewarding but tough work. Unpaid carers provide a hugely valuable service and they need support to carry on with their role.
- People who fund their own social care can feel ignored and struggle to get the information and support they need to organise and pay for their own care.
- People who use care at home (domiciliary care) want it to be 'person centred'. Ideally that means having the same staff coming to care for them and coming at set times which suit the person. Good communication with the Care Agency office is crucial.
- Transport is a big issue in parts of rural Wiltshire. Getting to hospital and back home can be costly and difficult.
- It was clear to us how important both reliable social connections and the opportunity to participate in meaningful activities are for older people.



Tea Party
@hwwteaparties



"if the carers leave things in a muddle it's horrible for me as I have to live in that world"

1:02 p.m. - 5 Oct 2015



Tea Party
@hwwteaparties



"Hospital has one version of events & social care has another. A chasm between them - no understanding between them what can/can't be done"

2:35 p.m. - 5 Oct 2015



What else did we learn through the project?

The project has given us a great opportunity to speak to older people and to find out about their experiences. We also took away some other learning:

- The tea parties provided a chance for older people, and their unpaid carers, to open up about things in a way they may not have if we had sent a survey or asked them to come to a meeting.
 - It was an honour to be invited into people's homes and to meet people in their support groups. We learned that through patiently listening to the voice of older people, you can find out some really important information about health and care services.
 - Some people wanted to participate but only wanted to share their views anonymously.
 - It would be great for there to be more things like this project happening across Wiltshire.
- Participants who engaged with the project greatly enjoyed having fun and being made to feel special.

What next?

This report will go to the Wiltshire Health and Wellbeing Board which is made up of all the organisations which plan and pay for health and care services in the county. All the conversations have been recorded and will be used by Healthwatch Wiltshire in its work on 'Better Care for Older People'. WSUN will also use the information to inform its work in engaging with older people particularly those who are harder to reach. This work is all about making sure that the experiences of older people are used to improve services.

Thank you!

A huge 'thank you' to all the organisations which helped us reach older people and their unpaid carers:

- Downton Good Companions
- Alzheimer's Support
- Carer Support Wiltshire
- Till Valley Day Centre, Shrewton
- Volunteers from Healthwatch Wiltshire and the Wiltshire and Swindon Users Network
- The Elevate team
- Wiltshire Heights Care Home, Bradford on Avon
- Wiltshire Council Arts and Health Innovation Fund

An even bigger 'thank you' to the older people and their unpaid carers who took part in the project.

To find out more about us:

Elevate: www.artcare.salisbury.nhs.uk/elevate.htm

Wiltshire and Swindon Users Network: www.wsun.co.uk

Healthwatch Wiltshire: www.healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk

