



What we heard – April 2024:

In April, we spoke to **47** people regarding their experiences with health and social care services in Rotherham. This information was gathered from in-person engagement, events and telephone/email enquiries. We spoke to people from a variety of backgrounds and ages. You can view our most spoken about topics and services below (Rotherham Hospital, GP services and Mental health services). All feedback is fed back to services at various opportunities throughout the month to highlight any areas that need to be improved to help the patient experience.

About us:

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Rotherham. We are here to make sure that those running services put people at the heart of care.

Our sole purpose is to understand the needs, experiences and concerns of people who use health and social care services and to speak out on their behalf. We focus on ensuring that peoples' worries and concerns about current services are addressed and work to get services right for the future.

Hospital feedback:

We spoke to **13** people in March regarding their hospital care in Rotherham. Most of the concerns were around waiting times for follow up appointments but a lack of communication between departments was also raised as an issue. We had two really positive comments this month regarding A&E and the general kindness and care received from staff.



General Positive comments:

- “Rotherham hospital has been fabulous whilst I've been under their care. I had an endoscopy today and despite it not being a very nice procedure, the whole thing ran very smoothly and the staff were kind”
- “I had to go to A&E recently and only waited an hour. I was taken up to the acute medical unit and within half an hour a doctor was at my side talking to me about what might be wrong. The staff were amazing! I may need surgery but I've had lots of information about what is going on and the reasons I might need this surgery including considering all my other health conditions. I feel very involved in my care”

General Negative Comments:

- “There is no integration of care. I am asked the same questions over and over each time I have appointments. There is no crossover between specialties, each department works separately. There’s no overview or holistic approach”
- “I’m still waiting for a sigmoidoscopy following attendance at A&E acute surgical unit in January”
- “I am overdue for three different clinic appointments, 18 months overdue for one, 12 months for another (annual test) and the third just a few weeks but I expected to be put on a waiting list for surgery last month”

GP Services:

We spoke to **10** people about GP services in Rotherham this month and heard from registered patients from several practices. The attitude of staff towards patients was a recurring area of concern this month although there is recognition of some good GP practices.



General Positive Comments:

- “The new system to be able to book GP appointments online is great! Much more efficient. At least you definitely get a call back”
- “My son is neurodiverse with some learning difficulties and he gets a yearly check up with a GP and a nurse at our practice. We’re very happy with the care there”

General Negative Comments:

- “I have had to make a number of complaints to my GP practice. Recently I had an issue with reception staff not checking the system before trying to send me home”
- “Sometimes the staff’s attitude isn’t great at my practice. Often you can tell if someone is having a bad day, but patients have their own worries and just need someone to be polite and kind with them”
- “Most of the GPs in my surgery are very demeaning in how they speak to me due to my medical history”
- “I have many health conditions and I struggle to lose weight. My GP won’t put me in touch with a dietician or anyone to help with my eating habits until I lose weight myself first. I have tried so many times and I can’t lose weight. I really want some help with this”

Dental services:

We haven’t had much feedback about dental services this month but we have heard about people struggling to get an NHS dentist. When dentists who are on the NHS find a dentist website as possibly taking on NHS patients are contacted, a lot of them are only offering private treatment or



the option of being put on a waiting list.

Additionally, we have also heard about long waiting lists for orthodontic treatment which are impacting on the health and wellbeing of individuals.

Mental Health Services:

We spoke to **7** people this month regarding the care they have received from mental health services. Concerns were raised again about treatment plans not always being appropriate, as well as a general lack of information and support.



- "I don't think it really helped me"
- "I've waited approximately a year to be seen and in the meantime, my mental health has deteriorated"
- "I was offered group sessions but they're no good for me and they won't offer me 1 to 1 therapy"
- "My relative's mental health is terrible, they need an assessment but no one will come to the house to do one and they may not be able to make it to the doctors"
- "I've been discharged without being given a reason why"
- "Mental health services need to be better. I have had to have time off work due to mainly work related stress and I didn't know where to turn. I didn't want talking therapy, so what does a person do in this situation?"

General comments regarding the NHS:

We also heard some general comments from a number of patients regarding the NHS.

- "I feel that due to how I identify, attitudes can change towards me"
- "I'd like to be able to pre-book my own appointments in advance. I'd like to be able to book online for routine screenings e.g smear tests"
- I feel that generally speaking people put too much emphasis on getting a diagnosis for things. There's a lot to be said for looking after yourself and finding coping strategies, not everything requires a diagnosis. This is putting huge amounts of pressure on services"
- "The waiting times for assessments for Autism and ADHD are very worrying. What do people do while they're waiting for an assessment?"
- "I think something needs to be done generally speaking in terms of all healthcare services. Older people are living longer now, so we need the systems in place to allow equal care for everyone!"
- "I'd like to see more preventative services so that pressures lessen on NHS services/departments"
- "I struggle to get to my medical appointments due to bus services"

Finally, we also had an example of great collaborative working this month! We were told of a case where a Rotherham resident turned to their Pharmacy service for advice. Their pharmacy advised them to call 111 which they did. 111 made them an appointment at Rotherham hospital for 2 hours later where they were seen by a doctor in under an hour.

Want to share your own experiences with us? Get in touch:

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