



What we heard – December 2024:

In December, we spoke to **37** 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 (including Rotherham Hospital, GP, Audiology and pharmacy 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 people's worries and concerns about current services are addressed and work to get services right for the future.

Hospital feedback:

We spoke to **10** people in December regarding their hospital care in Rotherham. We heard some worrying concerns about the standard of care provided and long waiting times were raised again. Praise was given for person centred care that one individual received and also for the Breathing Space service.



General Positive comments:

- “My surgeon checked my circumstances, and because I live alone, arranged for me to be an inpatient instead of day surgery. That made my recovery much easier”
- “Breathing Space is brilliant, a great service with really lovely staff, it’s just a shame the waiting lists are so long for treatment”

General Negative Comments:

- “My husband was kept in bed the majority of the time in hospital and as a consequence, on discharge, he now cannot stand or walk. This is a very big problem for us as we are quite elderly and I cannot now have him home or look after him, so consequently he has had to go into a care home which does not suit either of us. He should be at home. He is now awaiting an assessment. I 100% put this down to lack of attention and therapy whilst an inpatient. Cost of care is very worrying for me”
- “I’m waiting for an operation at Rotherham Hospital and have been told I could be waiting a long time. Luckily it's nothing too serious or life threatening”
- “I’m waiting for an operation at Rotherham Hospital and have been told it could be a year!”
- “I’ve been waiting ages for an operation on my leg! I don't want to complain, what can you do? Who knows when it will be, how long is a piece of string??”
- “My elderly partner was ignored and left in a side room without a drink all day. It took me 4 hours to get his pads changed. His expensive hearing aids were discarded with the sheets...”
- “My consultant wanted me to return for another appointment in 4 months. After several phone calls I got an appointment for 7 months later...”
- “I had right eye surgery in October...the nurse said I would be put on the waiting list for my left eye. I rang the booking clerk [and was told it] was likely to be March...I am really struggling...and need to read a lot [for my job]”

GP Services:

We spoke to **9** people about GP services in Rotherham this month and heard from registered patients from several practices. We have heard of some positive practices at some GP surgeries, where the provision of new triage services and convenient appointment times have made things easier for patients. However, for others appointment availability continues to be an issue and communication with patients could be improved.



General Positive Comments:

- “I needed a quick appointment with a doctor after having worrying problems with my mobility. I rang my surgery at 8.am on the Monday and got an appointment at 10.10 that same day”
- “Answered the phone in good time.Tried to be helpful within the restrictions of the capacity”

General Negative Comments:

- “Hard to get appointments”
- “I hate having to fill those forms in to get an appointment at my surgery, it's not easy”
- “At my surgery, if you want an appointment you have to fill in a triage form which then goes to the doctor for them to decide how urgent it is. I don't understand how you can get an appointment for the same day but not for the following day. Also, what do people do who can't read and write?”
- “Had to wait weeks for a face to face appointment, need to get a better balance of face to face and telephone. GP's know nothing about you. Feel like you are a nuisance. Feels like you have to be prepared to fight for any sort of referral”

Pharmacies:

We heard from **1** person about pharmacy services in Rotherham during December. The feedback was so lovely, we just had to share!



- “I went to collect a prescription and was asked if I'd like a blood pressure check there and then. Was really impressed with this and the pharmacist was lovely and explained the figures to me. He offered general advice on how to keep my blood pressure down through a healthy lifestyle as it turned out my blood pressure was slightly high. He said he'd pass the information onto my doctor and they may be in touch if they're concerned about the reading”

Audiology services:

We heard from **2** people this month about audiology services. Waiting times continue to be an issue, but the RNID drop in clinics were praised for the quick and convenient service they provide.



- “The RNID clinics are brilliant because you can just drop-in when you need new tubes or batteries for your hearing aids. If you had to wait to have them replaced at RCHC you'd be waiting up to 2 months. Great service!”
- “My hearing aids aren't working. I've been referred to audiology but their waiting times for appointments are taking up to a year. I'm frustrated at this as my hearing is an issue and I feel that waiting a year is ridiculous. I'd heard that some Specsavers have the NHS contract for NHS hearing aids, but none of them do anymore”

General comments about other local services:

We also heard feedback about some other local services this month, all to do with social care and all negative. Concerns were raised in all settings regarding care standards.



- “The care home my relative is in isn't good at all. I'm concerned about so many safety and safeguarding aspects. The boiler room isn't locked for example. I made a complaint to the manager and then they left and nothing has happened since and then suddenly they are wanting to move my relative elsewhere!?”
- “Rothercare is useless. The staff don't believe you, basically call you liars and they don't call when they say they will. I stayed in all morning the other day and they didn't call and that put my whole day out!”
- “I was told I'd been assigned a social worker four weeks ago and they still haven't been in touch. I know they're overworked but I don't have any help to care for my severely disabled daughter other than a day centre twice a week”

General comments regarding the NHS:

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

- “I think there should be a better way of assessing people and then prioritising people for the care they need. Also, some people just expect medication and doctors are very quick to give out medication and not assess someone's lifestyle first. I think that there should be funding available to provide people with access to gyms...if gyms offered people free sessions, they would use it!”
- “NHS generally is over-run, I don't know what the answer is, but there's so much of it just not working as well as it should be. Not enough GP's definitely!”

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

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Website: <https://healthwatchrotherham.org.uk/contact-us>





Committed to quality

We are committed to the quality of our information. Every three years we perform an in depth audit so that we can be certain of this.

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