



What we heard – February 2025:

In February, we spoke to **82** 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, Dentistry 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 people's worries and concerns about current services are addressed and work to get services right for the future.

Hospital feedback:

We spoke to **22** people in February regarding their hospital care in Rotherham. We heard some positive feedback this month about great care and communication, as well as one person who wanted to take the time to thank the ICU department for saving their life. Negative feedback this month mostly centres around waiting times and a lack of communication. We have also had some feedback regarding the new parking system that has just been introduced.



General Positive Comments:

- “I was admitted to hospital in November 24 with a life-threatening condition. I would like to thank the ICU department for saving my life”

- "I've been in Rotherham hospital several times over the last few years and it's been an excellent experience. Coronary care, once for an issue with my lungs and an eye operation. Every time it's been excellent with excellent care being provided"
- "I had been sent by my GP for an ultrasound and I was seen within a few minutes of booking in with a lovely woman. She was really helpful explaining the process throughout the appointment"

General Negative Comments:

- "I was referred for an urgent dermatology appointment but still had to wait 7 months, only to have a 5 minute appointment where the dermatologist felt the lump and said I need to be referred to surgery and it isn't a dermatology matter. No idea how long I'll be waiting for that and had no confirmation that it has even been referred"
- "I'm going around in circles with issues with my chest. I have COPD and have some awful symptoms, coughing, pain, shortness of breath and coughing up phlegm. The hospital say there is nothing wrong and I don't understand how this can be. I need some answers"
- "I have been waiting about a year now for a hospital appointment for surgery and I was told I'd have an appointment by now. Everytime I try to contact the reception for orthodontics, they don't answer. I've left voicemails but they haven't got back to me"
- "ENDOSCOPY - Not enough time, I don't feel heard, u feel dismissed, as though I'm wasting their time, I don't feel believed, I feel rushed"
- "I was sent to B6 with suspected DVT but after 3 hours...I asked how long it was going to be as I'd had no pain medication and was told there were 4 people in front of me. I asked again after 5 hours and was told the same thing so I walked out"
- "The parking situation at the hospital is awful, it really puts me off going there. I hope they can do something about it"
- "Accident & emergency could be cleaner with shorter waiting times"
- "Given a diagnosis in April of a condition which may have affected several organs, primarily liver, I felt very reassured that an Ultrasound scan was arranged very promptly. In May 2024...I was told I would need a Fibroscan...received an appointment for this in August, this was subsequently cancelled and a new appointment issued for October, this was cancelled another appointment sent out. To date this scan has been cancelled 4 times, I now have an appointment in April 2025. I have received no explanation whatsoever as to why nor have I any confidence that this appointment will take place"

- “Rotherham hospital have started a new parking system and as a Blue badge holder there was little information around the car park. When I went to the pay point in the car park on my arrival to check what I needed to do, an attendant was there being very condescending to Blue badge holders and wasn't helpful at all. Blue badge holders have to know their badge number, then input it prior to leaving in the discount code box, followed by the reg of the car. This was causing blue badge holders distress through multiple trips back to their cars”
- “Rotherham Hospital parking is a nightmare! They've introduced a new system but I bet that doesn't work either. There's never any spaces”

GP Services:

We spoke to **24** people about GP services this month and heard from registered patients from several practices. We have had some positive feedback about two GP surgeries, where patients feel listened to and helped. However, as well as hearing this month about problems getting appointments, we have also heard about problems with follow up appointments and referrals. Digital access has also been raised as an issue again.



General Positive Comments:

- “My GP practice is always helpful and listens. Can normally get appointment when need one”
- “All GP's that I've seen have been excellent. Very happy with the clinical care received. Also the nurses I've seen for blood tests have all been really approachable and reassuring. Reception staff are friendly and helpful. Overall a really good surgery”

General Negative Comments:

- “I've been told to call the doctors but I've been trying to get through all morning”
- “I left my previous GP after receiving a Hepatitis diagnosis as they were refusing to prescribe the required medication stating that whoever diagnosed me had to prescribe it. I was left without medication for almost 2 weeks when I should be taking meds for this every day”
- “I get fed up trying to book appointments at my GP practice. When you call, you can be 15 in the queue and often I put the phone down and don't bother. It's off putting”

- “It took a week for my GP to check a letter from my consultant and implement the changes required”
- “I’ve been told I have heart failure but never had a follow-up appointment at my doctors”
- “The new Anima triaging system is awful. Several times it has been clear the information I’ve entered did not end up being seen by the GP I saw, which led to things being missed. In addition completing a request is lengthy and complicated. It relies far too much on the patient being able to identify all relevant symptoms. The way information is then summarised by AI makes this a dangerous system in my opinion, and the possibility of important clinical information being missed poses a real risk to patient safety. In addition, this system would be totally inaccessible to many people, such as those with difficulties accessing or using the Internet, those with cognitive difficulties, those with sensory or communication needs or those with mental health difficulties. In short, this system significantly disadvantages the most vulnerable patients and reduces their chances of accessing medical care which is appalling. Especially as this patient group are arguably those most in need of medical care. I wonder if any Impact Assessments were done before rolling this out?”
- “GP surgeries could have more appointments available instead of being told to ring back the next day and rude receptionists who obviously have more training than doctors”
- “Mistakes being made left, right and centre at my local GP’s”
- “I have submitted a report from a physiotherapist re my hip [as] a recent hip x ray indicated 'need to discuss with gp'. I hadn't heard from the surgery, so I contacted them. I have an appointment for end of March”
- “Too difficult to get an appointment face to face. I have long covid and my GP put me on [medication]... promising regular follow ups. Had 2 telephone appointments a year ago. Meds put on repeat. My medical notes say I am depressed (I'm not) and menopausal (I am and have been on hrt for 10 years). Absolutely fed up of being disregarded and unheard/ignored”
- “My medical centre used to have a well women's clinic which was brilliant! Services like this are a real loss, this could be so beneficial and could save GP's time”
- “I use a mobility scooter and have several prescriptions on repeat, but I have to go into my GP in person to order them. I have to do a half hour journey to get there from home. I have tried to do this online and have had some help with this but I just can't do it, I don't really understand all this digital stuff”
- “I'm not happy with my current GP practice and want to move”
- “My GP said they'd refer me to Rotherham hospital over Christmas but the referral wasn't sent until February”

- “My GP is crap, I’ve been without meds for 6 months now!”
- “I’m waiting for a 'routine ecg'. I asked my GP for a letter to confirm the wait time to see if I could use benenden health to get the appointment quicker. Instead they call me just to say probably nothing to worry about and don't need to go private. I pay for that service anyway so what business is it or theirs if I want to try and get seen quicker”
- “You can never get an appointment when you want one”

Mental health services:

We heard from **7** people this month about mental health services, none of which has been positive.

- “My partner has gone two weeks without medication even after constant calls from my partner and myself regarding this. Asked to speak to a manager...and still no communication”
- “Lack of hands on care from mental health services”
- “Mental health services are shit. I’ve been in Swallownest Court, that was crap and have a mental health worker, she’s crap”



Dentists:

We heard from **5** people this month who've been unable to register with a dentist. We also heard from someone who was no longer able to use their dentist due to lack of accessibility.

- “ I have become a wheelchair user due to chronic illness and now can't access the local dentist I have used for over 40 years. They don't provide a ramp , not even a removable one. This is disgraceful, people with all kinds of mobility issues should not have to struggle with basic access”
- “I haven't got a dentist yet because there is no response from any of them. I desperately need to get some dentures”



General comments about other local services:



We also heard feedback about some other local services this month. A few concerns have been raised about adult social care and funding this month. Positive feedback has been received again for the services that the RNID provide for hearing aid users, as well as some great care provided by the ambulance service.

- “The RNID drop-ins are fantastic! I don't know what we'd do without the service. When it was Covid, Lorraine made sure we weren't without batteries for our hearing aids and went out of her way to make sure we had these and stood at the end of our drive and left these for us”
- “These drop-ins [RNID] are great for being able to get batteries and tubes replaced. It's a good job we don't have to wait for an appointment at Greasbrough Road (Community Health Centre) as their waiting times are so long”
- “Breathing Space - I've had lots of tests and investigations due to my respiratory issues and I have been waiting for results for ages. I keep calling and they just tell me they're still looking into things. I've called several times, absolutely rubbish!!”
- “I've had a social worker for my youngest child, she only worked 2 days and was never around when I needed her. Useless”
- My child has special needs and doesn't have the ability to manage their money and social care do this for them. I care for them everyday and they should pay me £60 per week and they sometimes forget to pay me and are usually late. I don't know how they can get away with this...they said I would be paid each week on a set day”
- “My husband has MS and we have been housed in RMBC sheltered housing. Due to his struggles, they assessed and installed an automatic toilet that washes and dries you. It recently broke and they sent someone to mend it, which they didn't, it was actually worse. I have now had a bill for £400, I can't afford to pay that, we are both not working”
- “Social is supposed to pay door to door to take my child to Sense a few times a week. They have awarded me the money but after 9 weeks, I'm still paying for it out of my own pocket. I can't afford it anymore but if I don't pay she doesn't go to the day centre and I don't get a break”
- “I go into care homes as part of my role... Normally the staff work really hard and are dedicated and caring. However without exception all the homes are chronically understaffed and it breaks my heart to see residents distressed because they have to wait so long for attention”
- “When using an ambulance for the 1st time in my life due to a heart attack both were friendly efficient and put me at my ease even came to see me in resus to see how i was which i thought was lovely”

General comments regarding the NHS:

We also heard a few general comments this month regarding the NHS.

- “We feel that the care for the elderly is very poor. We’ve had personal experiences recently and medics seem to want to withdraw medication and treatment despite there being hope for loved ones. We also feel that the NHS generally is completely overwhelmed”
- “I’ve worked in the NHS for most of my career and feel that there are too many people in management roles and not enough workers on the ground”

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

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Telephone: 01709 717130

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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