



## What we heard – June 2024:

In June, we spoke to **68** 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 and dental services and digital technology). 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 June regarding their hospital care in Rotherham. The main concerns raised this month are about waiting times at A&E, parking at the hospital and waiting for test results, with people telling us about the problems they have faced in these areas.



At one engagement event we heard from 4 individuals who had been to Rotherham Hospital for tests, one over a year ago, and had still not had the results.

We did also have some positive experiences fed back to us, with some patients receiving high levels of care from staff.

### **General Positive comments:**

- “The people at Rotherham Hospital are marvellous. They work so hard to ensure you are taken care of”
- “When I get up to the Ward I feel like royalty, they can't do enough to ensure I'm ok and also my carer is too. We get a cuppa as soon as we get inside and are greeted with smiles. It makes coming here so much easier”

- “Hospital Outpatients Appointment - very good experience , good care”
- “Very pleased with the service at Weston Park and Rotherham Hospital”

## General Negative Comments:

- “Rotherham Hospital. Not a good experience. Very noisy wards, terrible quality of food, and doctors who don't keep their patient informed in any way of the progress of their treatment. I signed myself out eventually”
- “We had to wait 14 hours to be seen in A&E”
- “Our GP sent us to A&E with a letter. However, on arrival we were left waiting. After 3 hours we had to leave as I have diabetes and needed my medication, plus Costa & the shops were closed so we had no access to food”
- “I had a scan at Rotherham Hospital and they said they'd be in touch within a month with the results. It's probably about 6 months ago and I still haven't heard anything. I asked my GP if they'd got the results but they haven't heard anything either. I have tried calling the hospital but you can't get through to them, it just rings out”

## Negative Comments about parking

These are some of the comments we had about parking at Rotherham Hospital. There was also a discussion amongst a number of people at one of our engagement events about the stress it can cause prior to appointments.

- “I have to go to Ward A6 weekly at Rotherham hospital and struggle to park in the blue badge car park. My carer has to then spend ages tracking down a wheelchair for me to get into the hospital. The parking is terrible there and needs to be sorted out because without being able to park here, I can't access my treatment”
- “I just left the hospital because I couldn't park and missed my appointment. Why can't parking be for people who need it due to health or disability reasons and fine the people who abuse this? People could catch a shuttle bus if parking was available somewhere else and they could walk to the bus etc. I tried the blue badge car park but the car park was full and some didn't have blue badges, why can't the hospital take action over this? I will go back to my GP to be referred to a different hospital because I've had enough of this ridiculous situation”
- “The car park at Rotherham Hospital is terrible. Both disabled and non disabled spaces, there aren't enough of either. I park down the road but they are putting yellow lines on all the nearby avenues which leaves people with nowhere to park their car”
- “The car parking situation at the hospital is terrible”

## GP Services:

We spoke to **14** people about GP services in Rotherham this month and heard from registered patients from several practices. The main issues this month are around getting appointments, some of which appear to be to do with staff shortages.



### General Positive Comments:

- “The staff at my medical centre are really lovely! The way they talk to you in such a friendly manner is very reassuring. They can't always offer you appointments as soon as you'd like them but it helps that they speak with you empathetically and in a caring manner. The staff on reception that I've dealt with always seem to want to go above and beyond when they can”
- “I'm very pleased with my new practice as it has 6-8 GPs”
- “I'm very pleased with the service I get at my surgery. The surgery sees me every 6 months for MOT's and I feel the standard of care is high”

### General Negative Comments:

- “I can't get a GP appointment at my surgery. I have been offered one someone else which isn't ideal as I don't know where I'm going”
- “My new GP is much better than my old one - the staff there can be very rude”
- “I'm struggling to get face to face appointments with my GP”
- “I struggled to get appointments at my previous GP's as 4 GP's left leaving only 2”
- “Can't get an appointment at my GP surgery. Can't get through on the phone and when I go in person they tell me to call on the phone between certain hours”
- “I was given incorrect information about having a right to choose where your care/treatment is”

## Dental services:

We heard from **6** people this month about dental services, 4 of those were struggling to register with an NHS dentist and wanted our assistance in finding one.



We also heard general discussions about dental waiting lists and people being taken off books if they have been to the dentist for a while, but not being contacted about it. Concerns were raised that routine 6 monthly check up appointments aren't always made when you're at the dentist and no reminders are sent out to tell people that they need to make one.

## Hearing aid services:

We had some feedback this month about hearing aid services, with 4 people sharing their experiences with us. We are aware of current waiting times at the Community Health Centre and have been able to signpost people to the hearing aid drop-in services.



- “These drop-ins at the libraries and health centres are fantastic. It’s a great service and you don’t need to worry if your hearing aid batteries run out or if you have any minor issues with it”
- “I have been waiting 5 months to get an appointment about an annoying sound through my hearing aid at the community health centre. When I call I can’t get through to anyone”
- “I have been struggling to get hearing aid batteries”
- “I have been waiting nearly 6 months to have my hearing aid re-tuned. I can hear a strange sound and I’m desperate to get it sorted out”

## Digital technology:

We continue to have negative feedback about digital technology and in particular, the Anima system that some GP practices are now using. We’re hearing a lot of discussions around how hard it is to understand and use when out and about on our engagements. We are also hearing that some staff are not confident with it either. This is some of the feedback we had.



- “My surgery is using a system called Anima for making appointments and it’s just not suitable, especially for older people who may struggle with technology anyway”
- “I have to go into my GP surgery to make an appointment as it’s tricky getting through on the phone. I know some people can make appointments online but I don’t have anything to do with that. I’m 88 years old and don’t know how I’m expected to learn how to use all this new technology? I ask my daughter to sort things out for me and my wife. She’s great and doesn’t mind helping us”

## General comments about other local services:

We also heard feedback about a variety of local services this month:

- “Diabetic services are very poor. We used to have the diabetic eye clinic in Maltby but that’s gone now too.”



- “I’m concerned that Maltby is being forgotten about. There are lots of new houses being built but no consideration as to how the amount of people in Maltby will be catered for in terms of health and medical services. Services are already stretched!”
- “There used to be different services being run from the Health Centre, but many services seem to have gone or moved elsewhere e.g physio”
- “The capacity of the hydro pool at Park Rehab is still limited to the numbers during Covid and has not been increased to pre covid loading allowance”
- “My care home is really good. Staff listen to me and I have a review of my care plan every month... I’m very happy there”
- “My relative is autistic and has finally been given a diagnosis but we waited over a year for the assessment from the initial referral”
- “Since finding out my wife has dementia around 18 months ago, we’ve had very little information or offer of support”

## General comments regarding the NHS:

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

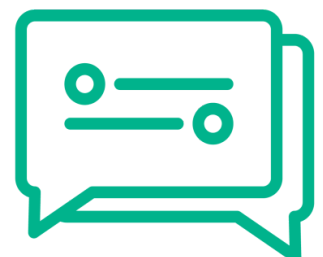
- “I worry that the NHS seems to be becoming more about making money than providing a caring service”
- “I think there should be better incentives to bring more doctors and specialists into the NHS as we don’t seem to be able to keep staff. Perhaps some way of creating an agreement to work within the NHS for so many years following qualifying”
- “I have been thinking about going private for my healthcare as it all seems much easier to get the treatment you need. I am lucky that I have a choice and am financially able to do this should I wish – but I know not everyone has this option”
- “I can’t complain about the NHS as I know they are overstretched. There isn’t enough funding and there aren’t enough doctors and nurses. They do the best they can”

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

**E-mail:** [info@healthwatchrotherham.org.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchrotherham.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 01709 717130

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



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