



## What we heard - March 2024:

In March, we spoke to 58 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, Dental services, Pharmacies 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 12 people in March regarding their hospital care in Rotherham, covering a range of topics including A&E, parking and communication issues. We had two really positive comments this month regarding end of life care and the fantastic service that had been received.



### General Positive comments:

- “The care and attention we received in one of the Purple Butterfly rooms was wonderful. Staff couldn’t have done any more”
- “My relative was given end of life care by Rotherham Hospital in conjunction with Rotherham Hospice. We couldn’t have asked for a better service, the nurses and doctors all showed him empathy and dignity throughout. It was a very good experience for our family”

### General Negative Comments:

- “Rotherham Hospital has an awful car park, there’s never anywhere to park”
- “I had a problem at the hospital with the different departments communicating with each other regarding taking me for a scan that I’d waited a long time for whilst I was an inpatient”
- “It is good that the hospital are offering Sunday appointments to reduce wait times but those who rely on hospital transport cannot take them as it doesn’t run on a Sunday so they are having to wait longer for appointments”

- “When I went to the hospital a few weeks ago, there were 8 ambulances lined up waiting to get to the emergency department. It was quite concerning seeing this and it doesn’t fill you with confidence”
- “I would like my local hospital (Mexborough Montague) to be more accessible for all types of treatment”
- “Communication during labour was very poor in the maternity department and treatment was given that wasn’t agreed to”

### General A&E Comments:

- “My GP referred my relative to A&E and gave a letter to say that she shouldn’t have to wait. When we got there the letter was ignored and we had to wait with everyone else”
- “My husband was left alone in an A&E bay after staff failed to tell me I could go in and be with him. He suffered severe chest pain and it took 3 requests to get staff to come and treat him”
- “A&E gave my child 2 paracetamols and sent us home following a fit. Later the fit caused her to bang her head to which we were blamed. It took lots of persistence before we were able to get her a CT scan to find out what was wrong”

### **GP Services:**

We spoke to 12 people about GP services in Rotherham this month and heard from registered patients from several practices. All our feedback this month was negative, with the biggest area of concern remaining the ability to get appointments. 7 people we spoke to raised this as an issue.



### General Negative Comments:

- “It’s very hard to get a GP appointment and when you finally get through on the phone, very often appointments can’t be made for that day even if you feel it’s urgent”
- “Phoning for an appointment can be very stressful. You can be on the phone for up to 40 minutes just to speak to someone”
- “I attended an appointment with a friend and the reception staff were very rude. The doctor was also very unsympathetic and patronising and didn’t carry out the referral that they said they would”
- “I don’t like having to tell the reception staff what my issue is. The whole waiting room can hear and it can be extremely embarrassing”
- “I have waited a long time on the phone for an appointment and when I get through they’re all gone. I find this really frustrating”
- “The receptionists don’t listen and hang up halfway through calls at my practice”
- “GP’s are too quick to just give out tablets for mental health issues. They need to take time to hear issues and listen properly”
- “Despite calling at 8 in the morning or going down in person, I am unable to get an appointment”
- “Waiting rooms are difficult for me to manage due to my autism and appointment times are too short. There should be a separate waiting room for those with social difficulties and longer appointments. The lack of GP consistency is also an issue”
- “I wanted to change my medication due to side effects but I needed an appointment with a GP. It’s impossible to get an appointment so I stopped my medication”
- “5 times in the last year I’ve been unable to get a prescription as my surgery won’t take requests over the phone but I’m not able to attend in person”

- “My relative had an operation privately but now their GP won’t prescribe the medication that has been recommended”

## Dental services:

Dental services came up on several occasions this month, with 5 people commenting on the lack of access to services, whether it be the result of non attendance during lockdown, not currently being registered or the refusal of other health professionals to refer them to dental services. Concerns were also raised about the cost of treatment for those who may not be entitled to free treatment, but who struggle to afford the charges.



## Mental Health Services:

We spoke to 9 people this month regarding the care they have received from mental health services. Concerns were raised about treatment plans being too short and not always appropriate, as well as a general lack of information and support.



- “I had some support for my mental health but once you’ve had your block of 6/8 sessions, you’re just dropped off and left with no signposting or support. Your mental health isn’t just fixed in a few weeks”
- “I’ve had nothing but a bad experience with mental health services. From being made fun of to being abused and gaslighted”
- “I think mental health services should have a tier of support before people hit crisis point. Also mental health workers aren’t always the most empathetic, I think there should be more training and a better understanding of mental health in all healthcare jobs”
- “There should be better help and advice when it comes to mental health”
- “I’ve had telephone therapy with MIND, it’s been ok but it’s not what I need. We’re in 2024 and still in the dark ages as far as mental health treatment goes”
- “There is not enough support in Rotherham to support men’s mental health”
- “ I keep being passed from pillar to post between RDaSH and GP services”

## Pharmacies:

4 people spoke to us about pharmacies this month, with some receiving an excellent service, whilst others have had issues with prescriptions being ready.



- “Great delivery service, although it would be useful if they could put a card through the door to let you know if they’ve been unable to deliver your prescription”
- “Very good access to help and support”
- “Prescriptions are expensive and when treatment doesn’t work then it’s a waste of money”
- “I’ve had to wait for my prescriptions from my pharmacy. Even when I’ve called to make sure it will be ready for when I need it, I don’t always get it in time and have had to go several days without medication. Why can’t it be ready for when I need it?”

## General comments regarding the

### NHS:

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

- “There is not enough information about general health that targets men’s problems”
- “I would like to see a gym specifically for people with disabilities”
- “The strikes should now have been sorted and staffing levels and working conditions for staff sorted. More money should be put into the NHS generally and incentives given for those who want this as a career”
- “I feel that age can be a barrier to accessing health services and treatment that could potentially be available to others who are younger. It sometimes feels like the elderly don’t matter”
- “I have anxiety, depression and mental health issues and I find it really difficult talking on the phone. This means making appointments is really difficult. I wish there was another way of making appointments”
- “Waiting times for operations and procedures needs reducing”
- “I have a substance addiction and mental health issues. As soon as professionals/healthcare staff read my notes I feel very judged and their attitude towards me changes. I just want to be treated like everyone else”
- “It would be nice to see doctors who aren’t burnt out. I think there should be more focus on healthy lifestyles and promoting this and alternative therapies, better diets and nutrition”
- “I would like the option to end my life should I be in a situation of terminal illness that means lasting pain and suffering with no hope of survival”

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

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