



What we heard – March 2025:

In March, we spoke to **101** 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 **16** people in March regarding their hospital care in Rotherham. We have had some lovely positive feedback this month about a number of different departments who have all made patients feel well looked after. Negative feedback this month mostly centres around waiting times in UECC (A&E) and poor communication between departments as well as following diagnosis and discharge.



General Positive Comments:

- “I’m very happy with the Rotherham hospital services I have used over the last few years. I have ongoing medical issues and all the services and staff have been excellent in Day Surgery, Orthopaedics, Fracture Clinic & Breast Cancer Care Service”
- “I recently went to Rotherham hospital for a PICC Line to be fitted. Unfortunately it didn't go to plan, however I am very pleased with how the hospital dealt with the issue and happy with the care I have received”
- “Rotherham General Hospital efficiently, promptly dealt with diagnosing a heart defect despite me not having a heart attack & being relatively fit & active, I needed a triple heart bi pass. The diagnoses, operation & post op care was effective, focused, & fast”
- “I am especially impressed with the radiology department. Clear communication—even after treatment—and felt well looked after throughout”

General Negative Comments:

- “One thing that is terrible is A&E at Rotherham. It's really not right that an elderly person has to sit and wait for at least 5 hours to get the care they need. That's how long I waited and I know people who have waited much longer recently”
- “I had an appointment at Orthopaedics for some rockers for inside my shoes as I have plantar Fasciitis. Due to staffing changes, my full details and information hadn't been accurately passed on or written up and it turned out the appointment was a waste of time as I have to go back for a proper fitting of what I need”
- “I waited 24 hours in A&E at Rotherham Hospital before being seen. I am also concerned about the hospital's cleanliness”
- “I was advised by 111 to go to Urgent Care at Rotherham Hospital. Went there and waited 5 hours before being triaged. Then I was told I should have gone to the Eye Clinic walk in, which I was not told about by 111 or Receptionist! My eye rapidly deteriorated, and I asked for help as I couldn't see at all. When I was eventually seen by the eye doctor I was told due to not receiving rapid treatment there is a good chance there is now permanent damage to the eye. Total incompetence and lack of professionalism by staff”
- “I was an inpatient in Rotherham recently following an injury and shared a ward with other ladies, some who had dementia. I know these people get confused and their behaviour isn't their fault but it can be traumatising for non dementia patients and I got very little sleep...I do think dementia patients should be on separate wards to those who don't have dementia, where possible”

- “I had a terrible experience with Rotherham hospital. I was told I had a condition and then there was no further action or correspondence from anyone”
- “My child was admitted to hospital for two days due to severe gall bladder pain. However, they were discharged without the underlying issue being resolved. There was no communication provided to explain the reason for the discharge or any follow-up plan”
- “I had a CT scan...At a follow-up appointment, the discussion was based on a new diagnosis that I had not previously been made aware of. I was told to expect feedback within a certain timeframe, but I’m still waiting a week beyond that, with no further communication”

GP Services:

We spoke to **14** people about GP services this month and heard from registered patients from several practices. We have had some positive feedback about three GP surgeries, where patients feel their doctors provide excellent care. However, we have heard negative feedback this month regarding getting medication prescribed and getting appointments.



General Positive Comments:

- “I am writing to say about the excellent, quality patient centred care I have had at my surgery and in particular, my doctor....She has always listened, is prepared for my entering her room having read up on what is happening...The consistency of seeing one GP, saves so much time in me trying to go through my whole history every time, especially when my mental health has not been good...I would also like to thank another doctor for her care and service given to me on the odd occasion I have seen her, and is always my next GP I book appointments for and happy to see. I have recommended both GP's to my family members who[have] both received the same service from both GP's. I would like to pass on my sincere thanks to both”
- “I've had to change my medication because the one originally I was put on really did not suit, gave me more issues, my OCD is worse, anxiety is worse, and I have nausea on top of it. A different doctor at my GP practice rang me to go through a medication review, gave me plenty of time for talking, went away to look into alternative medication with a colleague and then rang me back to discuss further with me”

- “Superb friendly community focused GP service strong determined staff who strive to resolve problems promptly”

General Negative Comments:

- “Client was promised a phone call appointment from a GP but it didn't happen”
- “I'm having to chase sometimes every hour as missing my medication could cause me to be in hospital. The problems I've had have led to delays in my prescription risking my health and causing me anxiety. I have also found the staff to be very rude when I have asked for understanding of my situation”
- “I had respiratory issues. GP said no further treatment required. I kept chasing GP as issues persisted but got nowhere. Then I got a text informing me I had fractured ribs but no further information”
- “I want the RSV flu jab but have been told I will have to wait at least 2 months from now for it”
- “Trying to make a doctor's appointment for my child's ankle took 3 visits to the GP reception team and one visit to a hospital minor injuries unit. The GP constantly want to use a booking app and do not want to speak to patients”

Mental health services:

We heard from **8** people this month about mental health services, with mixed experiences reported.

- “I have support from the community mental health team who visit me at home but I'm not comfortable with them and the care that they provide”
- “I've been passed from pillar to post before finally being seen by a clinical psychologist and eventually commenced on a 8 session course of cognitive analytical therapy. Amazing therapist but not long enough to make any real progress. Now back on the waiting list for trauma focused CBT”



Dentists:

We heard from **7** people this month who've been unable to register with a dentist. We also heard some fantastic feedback from someone who provided insight into the importance of healthcare professionals having training on learning disabilities and providing care driven by individual need.



- “ I am a Carer for my relative who has a learning disability and cannot live independently. My relative did not attend a dentist until late 2023. His first visit at the dentist was extremely stressful for both him and me as his Carer. It was for a check up only but I managed to get him to sit in the chair and be examined by a Dentist for a few minutes. This visit was to get him used to the Dentist. It went OK but the interaction of the Dentist with my brother was lacking in an understanding of his needs. He was invited back for another check up 6 months later and again it was pretty much the same experience only a couple of mins in the chair. The following visit some months later he was examined by another dentist. The whole experience was completely different. This dentist and her assistant were totally at ease with my relative and his disability, treating him with utmost respect and understanding. I was completely at ease and stress free as my relative interacted with them both. The dentist moved to another practice and my relative was able to move there as well. The last visit was last week and the difference in him is remarkable. He looks forward to the visit and can comfortably stay in the chair for a good twenty mins or so. This is all down to the interaction of the dentist and colleague with my relative. Outstanding! I understand not all healthcare professionals are trained in dealing with Learning disabilities but the importance of having them cannot be underestimated”

General comments about other local services:

We also heard feedback about some other local services this month, most of which have been positive. We have had great feedback again about the services provided by Breathing Space and also by patient transport and ambulance services. A lack of exercise classes for those less mobile was highlighted, with suggestions that there should be more services like these available for people, spread out around the borough.



- “I wanted chair based exercise classes near to where we live for myself and my husband. Healthwave told me they have nothing in our area and the nearest one to us is at Rotherham Hospital. There aren't even any buses that could get us there. There are a lot of elderly people and services should cover all areas”
- “For people that were patients at Breathing Space, prior to Covid, there was a service that provided armchair exercises. The session started with around 6 people attending and then word spread and he ended up with about 200 so he put on extra sessions. There should be more services like that for people who need exercise but are limited with their breathing capacity or due to physical

health issues. You can use Breathing

Space gym after treatment or part of treatment but it's only available for around 6 weeks"

- "We cannot speak highly enough of the rehabilitation treatment that breathing space provides and the staff members"
- "Honestly it felt like a miracle I could not walk before joining breathing space"
- "We feel like we're really well taken care of during our treatment and time [at Breathing Space] - our only wish is that the rehabilitation facilities are more available post treatment finishing!"
- "I have a social worker who I feel doesn't treat me well"
- "I live in Brampton so I'm on the border of Barnsley and Rotherham. It's a nightmare because I've been told I have to access NHS services in Barnsley but my address is a Rotherham postcode so I fall under Rotherham for social care. There are certain services in Rotherham I can access but some that I can't and vice versa. I don't know what falls under the NHS and other services, it's very frustrating. Luckily I can attend the Making Space dementia cafes. But I was told I couldn't access Crossroads carer support as they're funded by the NHS??? It's just terrible"
- "I have an excellent local Pharmacy who goes the extra mile to meet community needs"
- "The ambulance & paramedic service provided prompt caring support and advice for my elderly relative who lived with us on several occasions"
- "I use patient transport for my hospital appointments - it's a great service. Also, the Door 2 door (Community transport) service is excellent, they have ramps to allow me to get on with my walking aid/stick and the staff are great, they even bring your shopping into the house if you've been to the supermarket. Really good service!"

General comments regarding the NHS:

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

- "The NHS are doing their best with the resources they have. The government really need to step in and sort out our health service - they need to do more"
- "I called NHS 111 prior to arranging a GP appointment in case the issue I was reporting didn't require further examination and to avoid wasting time. The call handler went through many questions about symptoms that weren't related and didn't fully give me the decisive advice. She then offered a GP appointment quickly which I accepted as I assumed they felt it needed looking into. After my GP appointment, I was advised it was just a normal reaction. Had I been told this on the call it would have saved plenty of time although it was pleasing to get a

quick appointment at my surgery (in hindsight I would have asked for a phone chat but that's my error)"

- "Unfortunately our mental health service in this country is a one size fits all approach. In other countries mental health support is very much tailored to the individual. Norway has a fabulous system that really treats people's individual needs and provides benefits so that many aren't under further pressure to go out and work when they're not well enough to work"

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

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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.