



## What we heard – May 2024:

In May, we spoke to **61** 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 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 **14** people in May regarding their hospital care in Rotherham. We had a variety of concerns raised this month, with general issues such as parking, waiting times for prescriptions and in A&E being fed back. We also heard concerns around cancellations and follow up appointments. It was good to have a couple of positive experiences fed back to us as well, with those patients happy with the care that they have received.



### **General Positive comments:**

- "I'm under Rotherham Hospital and I'm happy, they're keeping a close eye on me"
- "The hospital are good. The staff are nice and I know what is happening"

### **General Negative Comments:**

- "My friend has been on the operating table 3 times now and it's been cancelled every time. That's very last minute and she's very stressed. Communication could be better"

- “Hospital outpatients appointments make me feel very nervous. I had a mixed experience”
- “I recently waited 7 hours in A&E. An ambulance brought me in and my GP rang ahead to say I was on my way. I don’t think this mattered as I still waited all that time. I contracted flu following my visit there and I can only put it down to waiting with lots of people in the waiting room for so long”
- “I had treatment at another hospital, they were seeing me every 6 months but I was transferred back to Rotherham Hospital and they haven’t asked to see me for a check up”
- “Hospital parking is awful! There aren’t enough spaces for the disabled and I’ve checked and sometimes they’re taken by non -blue badge holders! I checked with an attendant once and he said he couldn’t do anything about it. So why have a person working in the car parks??”
- “Last November my relative had scans after a fall. We were told nothing was showing up. Due to continued pain, they were rescanned in March, to be told they had 2 fractures - how could this be missed the first time round??”
- “Last month I was rushed to Rotherham Hospital A&E. I was triaged quickly and assessed but was let go after a night in, with no explanation as to what the issue might be, no information on what I should do to look after myself, absolutely nothing but was told there would be a referral to another department. After a couple of weeks I was concerned about the referral and called PALS to check out whether the referral had gone in. It turns out it hadn’t, so PALS told me they’d make sure that the referral was put through”
- “Why is it that your prescription isn’t made up when it’s been sent over by the GP? I can be waiting 20-30 minutes for them to make mine up. Rotherham hospital is the worst for this, the waiting time is terrible, you can wait 45 minutes and sometimes they tell you to go for a wander around the hospital!”

## GP Services:

We spoke to **19** people about GP services in Rotherham this month and heard from registered patients from several practices. As we have seen over the last few months, the attitude of staff towards patients continues to be an area of concern, with help for weight management also being raised as a problem. The challenges facing those requiring a British Sign Language interpreter show a sad reflection of the health inequalities that some people still face.



## General Positive Comments:

- “My GP surgery is good and I’m happy with my care there”
- “My doctor is wonderful! She’s so caring!”
- “There are about 11 doctors at my practice and they’re all great!”

- “I have been a patient at my surgery for 25 years and I’ve never had any concerns or anything to complain about. In fact the opposite. I had to have some staples taken out and the nurse was absolutely lovely. I barely felt a thing, she was so good!”

## General Negative Comments:

- “I’m not happy with my current GP practice”
- “I was with my GP for 23 years but have had to move as they will no longer provide a British Sign Language interpreter (when they have done in the past). When I try to book an appointment, they won’t give me one for at least 2 weeks as that is how long they say it takes to get an interpreter. Appointments get made and then cancelled at the last minute as they can’t get an interpreter. I rebook and the same happens again. Even when the appointment is important, I face delays and cancellation”
- “My doctor won’t help me with my concerns about my weight until I’ve been to something called Healthwave and done a programme? Why is this? There isn’t enough support or care for those with weight issues”
- “I can’t get an appointment at my GP practice. I’m in constant pain but I can’t get the right medication to help me. I have also been told by my doctor that I need to go to Healthwave to help me lose weight but I can’t get to this”
- “I am concerned about my name coming up in lights in the waiting room when the GP is ready to see me. I have previously asked for my NHS number to come up instead which worked until they got a new computer system and now they are saying they can’t do this anymore”
- “A nurse at my practice was very shirty with me on the phone. When I chased the results of an appointment, I was told that a text had been sent to me two days before but I hadn’t received one. Reception was insistent that one had been sent”
- “I’m unhappy with my GP surgery. I’ve had ongoing issues since 2022 and I’m not getting answers to my health concerns”
- “Struggling to get a face to face appointment. Last time was 57th in a queue and after 1 hour was told there were no available appointments”
- “I’m diabetic but I’m not happy with the medication my GP has prescribed. I feel like my GP isn’t listening”
- “I am a celiac and I used to get a prescription that contributed to my special foods but since moving to Rotherham, my practice hasn’t provided me with this prescription. I don’t understand how in different areas of the country, it is a different policy??”

## **Dental services:**

We only heard from **2** people this month about dental services. One struggling to register with an NHS dentist but one nice piece of positive feedback for a local dentist:

- “I have been going to the same dentist for years and they’re reyt nice. I see the same dentist all the time and he knows I get very nervous!”



## District nursing:

We had some feedback this month about district nursing services, with 3 people sharing their experiences with us:



- “I have a stoma nurse and she’s fantastic! I can always get in contact with her when I need her and she helps me communicate things with the hospital consultant”
- My relative was diagnosed with alzheimers a few years ago and we have seen an admiral nurse once only. They will do a home visit if you are worried about anything but you shouldn’t have to call to see them, they should visit at least once every 6 months”
- “I asked for the stoma nurse to come out and I was told that someone would be in touch to arrange a date and time. The nurse turned up when we were out and rang me and sounded really annoyed. This wasn’t our fault, no one had informed us she was coming!”

## Digital technology:

We had a lot of negative feedback this month about digital technology and in particular, the Anima system that some GP practices are now using. The move towards using digital technology continues to cause problems and worry for parts of our community. These are some of the experiences we heard about.



- “Technology!! The NHS [app] is not reliable. It never works for me. I have tried ordering my prescriptions on this but I end up having to put long codes in, for it then to tell me I need to go back to my GP!”
- “I get a text message about my outpatients appointments and it asks if you still need the appointment and then takes you to another screen. I pressed the wrong thing by mistake and messed everything up and so had to try and get hold of them on the phone which wasn’t easy and very time consuming. I worry about technology and my health”
- “The Anima system is not easy to use at all. There are too many screens asking too many things and getting set up is very hard with passwords etc. I have memory issues and I can’t remember what passwords I’ve set and things like that. There is a time limit on it and you can only use it at certain times. So sometimes after 1pm I’ve not been able to get on it?”
- “The Anima system is terrible. It’s really hard to use. I really don’t want to have to use it. It puts me off trying to make an appointment”
- “I have found it difficult to get through to the GP surgery so I tried the Anima system. I literally spent hours trying to work it all out. Then there was an issue as the system was mixing up me and my husband because we share the same email. I found it really hard to use and spoke with the receptionist about it, who said that the system is good and that there aren’t any issues with it. Not helpful at all”

- "I had a skin problem recently and the Anima system didn't work for me, as I needed to put in several options about where on my body the issue was, but it would only let me tick one option, so I didn't find this efficient enough."
- "I don't agree with sending photos to the GP. How can a photograph be a true representation of a problem? Sometimes lighting can be wrong, the photo might not be clear, certain things need seeing in person"

## Praise for individual services:

We heard some really positive feedback about some services providing excellent care to those who need it.



- "Crossroads Rotherham provided 3 months worth of support to us, they were fantastic!"
- "Broom Lane Care Home is fabulous. The staff are so caring and personal with each person living in the home that I came away in tears last week, feeling so reassured for my friend who is in there. Fantastic!!"
- "If I hadn't been attending the Making Space dementia cafes then I wouldn't be aware of the "Herbert Protocol"

## General comments regarding the NHS:

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

- "There are too many Managers in hospitals and not enough staff on the ground"
- "I had breast cancer a few years ago and had to have my breast removed. There should be some support to pay for special bras. I use Ameona but it's expensive"
- "My dad has recently died. He was a hearing person but I was his carer. No one would provide a BSL interpreter for me so I could be informed of what was happening, as they would only provide one for the patient [who didn't need one]. I attended all the appointments with my dad but I was unable to communicate or understand what was being said. My dad, who was dying, had to let me know what was happening when it shouldn't be up to him to have to do it and he was too poorly"
- "Waiting lists are too long! It's one definite area of the NHS that needs sorting!"
- "The NHS is crap. No one does anything to help me"

Other:

- "The Young Dementia Clinic at Ferham clinic only provides support up to the age of 65 and then this immediately stops, which is such a shame"
- "We could really do with a Nomad for my partner as she's on so much medication but when I asked my pharmacy who are normally really good, I was told "We don't have the capacity to offer that"

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>



