



What we heard – November 2024:

In November, we spoke to **80** 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, Mental health and pharmacy 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 **26** people in November regarding their hospital care in Rotherham. We heard some lovely praise for a couple of individual departments, but concerns were raised again about parking as well as poor communication.



General Positive comments:

- "The fracture clinic at Rotherham are brilliant!!"
- "I'm under Rotherham Hospital for my heart and also Oncology - it has been wonderful, really caring services"

General Negative Comments:

- "The parking at the hospital is just ridiculous - it's so stressful. I hate going there!"
- "I had a gastroscopy procedure where polyps were found but not removed as I was told they didn't have time. So I had to go back and go through everything again. Feels a waste of NHS time & resources"

- “Staff don’t ask the right questions & don’t communicate to the right people leading to patients waiting hours to be sent home.”
- “Patients left to feed themselves when relatives have informed staff that they need help / food just been left out / patients not eating / family asked to come in at meal times to help- but not always possible (work etc..)
- “Need better communication between the hospital & GP e.g, using the same IT system – details of my blood test were not transferred to my GP”
- “I’d like the waiting times for procedures and operation to be less and more feedback given – generally better communication all round”
- “A&E at Rotherham needs sorting out – waiting times to be seen are far too long!”
- “Car parking is horrendous at the hospital”
- “My son has Crohns disease and was under Rotherham Hospital. From what I gather there is only 1 full time member of staff that could treat and monitor him and he wasn't getting the care and attention that his condition needed. We transferred to a different hospital and the care has felt much better”
- “I think there should be better communication with carers when it comes to operations and procedures. When my wife went into surgery, I felt I knew very little about what was going on and I wanted to be able to go into the room with her whilst she had the anaesthetic prior to the procedure as she was scared and was around unfamiliar people”

GP Services:

We spoke to **16** people about GP services in Rotherham this month and heard from registered patients from several practices. We have heard of some positive practices at some GP surgeries, where the provision of new triage services and convenient appointment times have made things easier for patients. However, for others appointment availability continues to be an issue and communication with patients could be improved.



We also heard some specific feedback surrounding language barriers and interpreters. We heard of patients only having been offered telephone appointments since they arrived in Rotherham and which can be difficult with the language barriers trying to tell the receptionist what the issue is and awkward when it's very personal. Although we heard that people were mostly being offered interpreters, it can take time at the appointment and sometimes online services are used which can be unreliable.

- “I think GP’s should have a walk-in service. There should be interpreters available within the practice for the different languages spoken in Rotherham”

General Positive Comments:

- “I had my COVID and flu vaccines at an extra weekend clinic run by my GP. They sent me a reminder to book. Quick and easy”
- “My GP’s have a patient participation group which allows patients to see both sides of issues. Practice manager attends. They listen. The practice has also cleaned up the entrance to surgery and are using a new system on reception where they answer the phone straightway then arrange to call back or triage”
- “I used the anima system for the first time for a non urgent condition that I’ve put off going to the doctors for as I didn’t want to take up an urgent appointment. The system allowed me to quickly put in what my concerns were, along with photos and then submit and forget about it. One working day later I got a call from my GP surgery and they arranged for me to have an appointment 2 days later. I feel like this has been great for me because I don’t think I’d have got round to calling about it”
- “My GP’s practice seems to have got a bit better. I rang for an appointment after a fall, and I got seen the morning after!”

General Negative Comments:

- “I was told my GP couldn't take my blood pressure when I was at the surgery. I was sent away and later received a letter saying he'd been taken off the books”
- “GP’s need to check notes – I was asked why I was at an appointment when practice had asked me to come in to discuss my health issues”
- “Hard to get GP appointments e.g. out of work times. NHS access in general should be improved”
- “I’d like to see more feedback regarding blood test results etc, a better explanation of results”
- “There should be more GP appointments available and more availability of coordinated services”
- “There should be less waiting times for appointments and make more appointments available and friendlier staff”
- “I had an appointment at 8.10 in the morning, when I arrived at reception I was told the appointment had been cancelled. They sent the text at 8.01 when I was already there. I understand staff call in sick, but they should make sure this is in time for messages to get to patients to prevent unnecessary journeys”

- “It is frustrating that you can only discuss one problem during the appointment [especially when] there aren’t enough appointments available”

Pharmacies:

We heard from **4** people about pharmacy services in Rotherham during November. The feedback centres around processing errors this month and missing medication..



- “I’ve had a few episodes of a mix up with my meds”
- “The pharmacy at Rotherham Hospital doesn’t offer a delivery service but I struggle to collect my medication due to illness and limited public transport services”
- “There seem to be too many processing issues with prescriptions; delays and shortages”
- “I ordered my repeat prescription on the NHS app. Quite a few times there has been medication missing and they are my heart tablets which are important. I’m going to go to my GP to speak with them about the problem. I also had to wait 3 months recently for my allergy medication”

Mental Health Services:

We spoke to **9** people this month regarding the care they have received from mental health services. The feedback was generally negative this month, with people feeling there is not enough support and waiting times being too long.



- “There isn’t enough mental health support in Rotherham. We need a service that is open for drop-ins 24-7 not just 5 evenings a week. Although mental Health Matters service seems to work well when they’re open. I’ve used them”
- “I’ve used the crisis service but it’s not a crisis service at all as you don’t get immediate help!”
- “My mental health is bad, I don’t get any help and I can’t drive and don’t have money to get to town”
- “Due to my child having autism, they are unable to get mental health support because all of their difficulties are put down to them being autistic”
- “I wasn’t impressed with the Mental Health Matters service. I called them one evening as I wasn’t feeling great at all and was desperate to speak to someone,

I really needed a safe space and they told me I couldn't go down there as they were full that evening. I also tried another time and asked if there was any chance of having a taxi there and back as they had helped me before, as I am struggling for money at the minute and they said they could only do this on someone's first visit, so I feel very dismissed by them"

- "I don't know enough about what mental health support is available in Rotherham"
- "Mental Health issues need recognising more! My son tried to take his own life, he was then sent home in a taxi"
- "I am worried about the potential wait time for my ASD assessment. I'm worried that I will soon transfer to adult services and slip through the net"
- "My son was referred to Ryegate in Sheffield by our Rotherham GP, for an Autism assessment. He was waiting almost a year, when they contacted us and said that they wouldn't be assessing him as he should have been referred to CAMHS. He's now on a waiting list there and goodness knows how long it will be until he's seen!"

Audiology services:

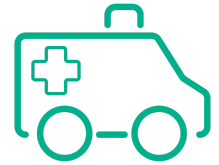
We heard from 5 people this month about audiology services and the problems they are facing with waiting times and access to hearing aid batteries: People have also questioned how many staff/audiologists are available at the walk-in centre at Rotherham Community Health Centre (RCHC) as there is a waiting list of 1 year to have a full hearing test.



- "I've been waiting 9 months for an appointment just to have my hearing aids adjusted" - Walk in Centre RCHC
- "I was told there was a 6 month waiting list - after 6 months I rang & was told it was another 6 months. However, if I was ok to have the same hearing prescription, they could see me in 1 week. I did this as it is better than nothing" - Walk in Centre RCHC
- "I had an appointment but was told they couldn't give out batteries. I was told I needed to ring from home & they'd post them out" - Walk in Centre RCHC
- "I've been told I should be getting my hearing aid batteries from Worksop as that's where I got my hearing aid from many years ago and not from Dinnington Resource Centre where I've been going, due to funding"

Ambulance and paramedics:

We heard from **2** people about ambulance, paramedic and transport services in Rotherham during November. All the feedback we received was very positive and the care provided was excellent.



- “I called the ambulance as my husband was having chest pains. The ambulance arrived quickly and the paramedics were very efficient and reassuring. Could not have asked for a better team. very easy to access service , good care”
- “The Firefly service is excellent! It's completely stress free unlike trying to park at many hospitals. The staff are kind, the vans are lovely and clean. I was referred for this service by my oncologist! Brilliant!”

General comments about other local services:

We also heard feedback about some other local services this month, including hearing about some brilliant care being provided by some services but also poor communication at others.



- “NHS staff don't care about me, they're not bothered. I've been told I have a brain tumour and that's it. I don't know what's happening next or if it's serious!”
- “ I feel let down by social care. My child has autism and has been let down all throughout their life by social workers promising support and then not staying around”
- “My opticians made an urgent referral to ophthalmology for me but the appointment I was given was a few weeks away. My opticians told me to go to the eye clinic and tell them I needed an earlier appointment but the receptionist told me that they couldn't do anything. As I was walking down the stairs I burst into tears and a nurse took me into a room and asked me what the problem was. She was so lovely and understanding and she told me she'd make sure I got seen this week. I had my appointment yesterday. I was so grateful to this lady who took time to find out why I was upset and got me seen quickly”
- “The care at my relative's care home is very bad - it really upsets me to visit. It's a waste of time complaining as it won't change anything”
- “Admiral Nurses are excellent”
- “Rotherham Hospice provides an excellent service - talked about new service options for out patients long term illness - hair dressing/ bathing”

- “Long Covid service at Breathing space has been brilliant – I can't imagine where I'd be if I hadn't used it. However, going forward Staff don't know what's going to happen with this clinic”
- “I wish services would stick to the day and time that you're given for an appointment and not keep changing it last minute”

General comments regarding the NHS:

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

- “I don't think the NHS app is very user friendly. You're expected to just learn how to use it yourself and it can be quite confusing. A user step by step guide would be really helpful for those who struggle with anything technical”
- “I feel like services and care for the elderly is getting less and less. They seem to be reducing services across the community and everyone seems to just be referred for physio despite the symptoms”
- “I struggle to access services due to not being able to use a PC”
- “Services don't seem to communicate. Hospitals don't access the same patient info. Information doesn't get through”
- “I feel there could be more services for the elderly”
- “The NHS should take better care of people with drug abuse issues/homeless”
- “Bring back the old fashioned matrons! They ran a tight ship!”
- “I feel care for the elderly is good”

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

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