



What we heard – Sept 2024:

In September, we spoke to a fabulous **129** 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's, mental health, dentistry 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 **30** people in September regarding their hospital care in Rotherham. We heard some positive comments about joined up working within the hospital but the most feedback we heard concerned the length of waiting times and the need for more staff. **14** people told us that waiting times were too long, with **3** of those specifically about A&E. **4** people told us they thought more staff were needed.



General Positive comments:

- "I was referred for an x ray appointment from my GP. Called the x ray department at the hospital and was offered an appointment the same day which I couldn't make. so was offered an alternative at 8am the next day. I arrived slightly early the next day for my appointment and was seen straight away. Great service"
- "I can't praise the hospital enough...the joined up care and treatment has been amazing"
- "Care is good, I have an Urdu interpreter to receive all the health information I need"

General Negative Comments:

- “I went to A&E following a recommendation from the reception staff at my GP surgery and waited over 7 hours to be seen. I had had a stroke. That’s such a worrying amount of time to be waiting and to find that this was the issue”
- “I have to travel to Doncaster for health appointments as [they’re] not available at Rotherham Hospital”
- “Not happy that you get told it will be a few months b4 you get appt, but it’s longer and you aren’t kept informed”
- “Long waiting times after referral”
- “I was referred to the hospital by my GP...They put me on a "Fast track" referral and was told that this could be up to 34 weeks wait. I was seen 2 years and 2 months later!”
- “A&E long waiting times 9 hours”
- “A&E long waiting times 7–8 hour”
- “Waiting times at the hospital are too long, they need more staff so that people can be seen quicker!”

GP Services:

We spoke to **59** people about GP services in Rotherham this month and heard from registered patients from several practices. We have provided more in-depth assistance to some around getting registered with a doctor. The biggest concerns raised this month are still about appointments, including **13** people feeding back about how long it takes to get an appointment, **4** people telling us it takes too long to get through and **2** raising concerns about the ease in which appointments can be made. We’re also beginning to hear complaints about the anima triage booking system again, with **4** people struggling to use it.



General Positive Comments:

- “GP listened to mental health issues I was having, immediately got me some help, talking therapies, medication and time off work. Great service, great doctor”
- “Got a same day GP appointment...and was referred to physio services. GP also recommended trying physio first...Called for a physio first appointment the same day and was offered one the next day...Brilliant, joined up service from all departments”
- “My GP is good but they send me to the pharmacy for treatment and then the pharmacy sends me back to the GP.”
- “Happy with my GP - can always get through”

- “Easy to book appointments”
- “I get a GP appt quickly every time! But I think there needs to be more GP’s”
- “[My] surgery has options to book at 3 other surgery’s so I can normally get appointments”
- “I have a lot of long-term conditions and I have just had a telephone appointment with my doctor. She was fantastic, she went through all of my health issues and wellness checks and checked on what support I was getting from the practice to manage these well. She organised me to get the additional checks I needed with the right clinics”

General Negative Comments:

- “At my surgery staff attitudes are poor. One of the Dr’s there asked me why I was in the UK...I’ve seen him 2 or 3 times and he makes me uncomfortable”
- “I...spoke with the receptionist [at my doctors] and asked if I would be able to see a doctor and explained [my symptoms]. Without asking about any other symptoms or traiging me as I expected to be, she told me to go to A&E. I felt very dismissed by her and she came across as uncaring. I was very unhappy with this”
- “It takes too long on the phone to get through to speak to someone and then the appointment can be weeks away. I have been number 30 in the queue”
- “Getting appointments at a time that suits me can be hard, or even getting through to them in the first place”
- “I wasn’t contacted by the GP to book covid booster this year although I am vulnerable. Luckily I rang the surgery and was offered the last appointment on the system”
- “[I would like] an MOT appt regularly to make sure everything is ok. [I’ve] not had an over 60’s MOT”
- “I used 111 to get my medication because the doctor didn’t complete my prescription. I need a review but they can’t offer me an appointment for 3 weeks. NHS 111 didn’t contact me and I had to argue with my GP surgery to get the medication”
- “GP’s need more call back options & to be able to see the same GP everytime”
- “Hard to see GP. My surgery’s triage system means you get passed around & still can’t get appt. [I] think because I’m elderly I always end up speaking to a nurse who can’t help but can’t refer her to a GP, so I have to go through the triage again”
- “It’s virtually impossible to get a simple doctors appointment within 2 weeks sometimes “AT ALL” at my surgery. The medical care is excellent (when you can get it!)”
- “My old doctor knew me so well. I felt listened to and he always gave me a double appt without me asking. I never felt rushed. Now I see a different doctor everytime and I don’t think this helps me at all”
- “I don’t think a 10 minute appointment is enough to get to the route of the issue”
- “My elderly relative is finding the doctors appointment system very frustrating. Trying to make early morning calls to the surgery for an appointment or waiting for a call back is very upsetting for [them]...couldn’t there be any provisions [or] alternative methods for the elderly”
- “I struggle with my mental health. The GP put me on [medication] after a few visits to him. It seems to have helped a little but they didn’t offer anything else”

- “Waiting times are a problem. I wish we didn't have to wait so long on the phone to speak to someone”
- “I'm constantly battling with my GP and pharmacy to get my medication before I run out but this is proving difficult. I can never get an appointment unless it's a month down the road”
- “NHS App : test results posted with lots of medical jargon, difficult to understand, would prefer if I could speak to a GP so info can be explained”
- “I tried calling three times to arrange a routine...appointment...and was hung up on several times”
- “Honestly the only thing that went well was the ability to get the appointment in the first place. It all went downhill from there”
- “I'm not on the internet so I can't use anima”
- “My surgery never looks busy inside but yet you can't get an appointment easily!”
- “The lady on reception had to show me how to use [anima] but the system closes down at certain times so you can't access it anyway! It's far easier just to walk-in and ask for an appointment”
- “I hate anima. It's so time consuming even to just log on”

Pharmacies:

We heard from **28** people about pharmacy services in Rotherham during September. We heard mixed feedback, with some people really valuing the service provided and feeling that it works well, whereas others were concerned about the length of time it takes to get prescriptions and the availability of medication.



- “Pharmacy services seem to work well”
- “Lack of medication”
- “Some meds are hard to get hold of, so I have to wait. I like prepayment certificates”
- “[They] help more than GP.
- “Very busy, long waits”
- “Pharmacy used as I can't get in to see the GP. Pharmacist diagnosed shingles and contacted GP for me”
- “5 day approx turn around time for repeat prescriptions”
- “I'm Bi-Polar and I regularly go without my meds as it's never in stock when I need it. I start reducing my meds to make it last”
- “Long waiting times”
- “Very unhelpful”
- “My pharmacy is horrible and my meds are never on time”
- “My prescription is always late”
- “My pharmacy is fantastic! Never any issues or delays in there!”
- “Quick and easy, I go in with my prescription and I'm straight out”
- “Very good, very friendly”

- “I was an inpatient in the hospital...a consultant wrote me a prescription and when I went to collect it the pharmacist wouldn't give it to me and didn't explain why”
- “My pharmacy is brilliant - I always get my meds on time”

Mental Health Services:

We spoke to **27** people this month regarding the care they have received from mental health services. Although we heard a couple of positive experiences, most feedback was about the length of waiting times for assessment and treatment, and staff being unhelpful once they'd been seen.



- “Mental health support, crisis team - shown real care and empathy”
- “I saw a Mental Health Practitioner at my GP surgery and felt that they lacked knowledge and empathy and felt "Fobbed off". No offer of advice on coping strategies, or signposting, just a referral for Talking Therapies”
- “ASD assessment declined. Poor access to help and support”
- “I waited 2 years for an ADHD assessment and then contacted the service to be told there was at least another year to wait”
- “I have requested an assessment several times for Autism and ADHD [but I have been] knocked back each time”
- “The GP referred me for an assessment with the mental health person at the practice and he said he didn't know what more they could do for me and made me feel helpless and like I was burdening them”
- “Mental Health support is terrible!! I've waited 18 months to get an appt with Talking Therapies/IAPT”
- “I had mental Health support from "With Me In Mind" ...a few months ago and that has helped me with some understanding and coping strategies”
- “I hate CAMHS! I'm on a waiting list for an autism/ADHD assessment and it's taking forever. I also contacted CAMHS about my mental health. They saw me once and told me I was fine and didn't need their help. I'm not fine and I think I still need mental health support”
- “There are very poor services for people with mental health issues especially when you're in crisis. I'd like to see more drop-in services in Rotherham”
- “Mental Health services are bad! I don't know how to get the help I need!”
- “Mental Health services are terrible!!”
- “CAMHS waiting lists are too long!!”
- “It's a vicious circle when it comes to getting help for your mental health when you're an addict. You have to be clean to get mental health support but the reasons people can't get clean is because there is a mental health issue...a lot of us just want help”

Dental services:

We heard from **10** people this month about dental services, **5** of whom were struggling to register with an NHS dentist and wanted our assistance in finding one. Other feedback we received was:



- “I use dental services every 6 months. I have good care there and am seen quickly”
- “My family were removed from our dentist for living too far away. We only lived 20 mins away. We now travel 2 and half hours to get to a new dentist”
- “My dentist wouldn't treat me due to my addiction. I now have no dentist”
- “I go to Darnall dentist because Rotherham don't have any dentists if you are an NHS patient only them that pay get one. It takes me 1 1/2 hours to get there but they are great. I get free prescriptions and they gave me a prescription for toothpaste to help me look after my remaining teeth. I like the dentist but wish it wasn't so far”

General comments about other local services:

We also heard feedback about some other local services this month, including concern over a service being stopped and access to weight management services.



- “Healthwave is a fabulous service that I was recommended following a stroke. I've been recommended the badminton and table tennis classes and they've been great for my recovery”
- “Need better access to weightloss services in Rotherham. Healthwave [is] hard to access, Get Healthy Rotherham was easier”
- “Healthwave weight management & other services (stop Smoking) [are] not advertised well and hard to access”
- “The outreach community team at the alcohol liaison service at Rotherham Hospital... [provided] bespoke support...at home to a remarkable high standard of care...funding for the service is not being extended...will now be left without support”
- “Early Help (Social care RMBC) were amazing with my family. Our worker was brilliant, she helped us so much”

General comments regarding the NHS:

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

- “I'd like to see people using the hospitals for the right reason”
- “I'd like to see an improvement in support and care for those with Mental Health issues”
- “There should be more workers and better pay for health workers”

- "Sometimes it's difficult to know where to get access and continuity of care is a problem"
- "There should definitely be better communication between services...it just feels all over the place and then you don't really feel cared for"
- "NHS needs to improve Autism and ADHD care and assessment and other long term health conditions"
- "NHS to much reliance on Digital info/contact"
- "NHS need more staff"
- "I feel like we're treated like shit just because we're addicts...I don't think healthcare professionals give us enough time in appointments, they don't get to know us as individuals and consider the best form of treatment...I really do feel ignored a lot of the time"
- "Long delays to basic routine care which is very frustrating"
- "Need more mental health support for 13-25's"
- "Need more support for elderly to access online care"
- "NHS needs better elderly care"
- "The NHS website is poor for the ordering of repeat prescriptions, as it has suddenly changed from it's previous format and now no longer lists medication which is not due unless you go searching for it on other pages"
- "Gender & Health Care need improving"
- "I would like to see gender care improved"
- "I think communication to us should be better and also between services. If those providing care could just explain things, processes, referrals, reasons why decisions have been made, it would feel so much better"
- "Reduce waiting times and [improve] Mental Health support"
- "NHS needs to improve waiting times"
- "I think everything needs improving in the NHS. I've been yelled at for not knowing what something feels like and trying to explain my symptoms and staff should have better manners"
- "The NHS overall could use more budget to ensure the services are of a good quality!"

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

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