



What we heard – August 2024:

In August, we spoke to **77** 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 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 **14** people in August regarding their hospital care in Rotherham. We heard some lovely praise about individual departments within the hospital but concerns were raised about the length of waiting times and communication between departments and patients.



General Positive comments:

- "Rotherham hospital staff are amazing with me. Very kind and caring and they love to welcome in my guide dog!"
- "Rotherham General Hospital pre operation assessment centre was great. Called in on time. Treated with care and respect"
- "Dermatology at Rotherham Foundation Trust are very good"
- "The ambulance liaison team at Rotherham hospital are brilliant. They're so helpful, friendly and have a great sense of humour"

General Negative Comments:

- “I’ve had surgery and I need monitoring and check-ups on my meds etc but for some reason the hospital don’t communicate with my GP and they aren’t aware of the medication I have to take. I’ve had to chase this up recently to be able to get the prescription I need”
- “Parking at Rotherham Hospital is dreadful and it should also be free of charge”
- “Long waiting times. [Also] need better communication and more staff”
- “Hospital staff take time to answer buzzer & long wait for appointments”
- “Hospital waiting time to long”
- “Hospital needs better communication”
- “My friend recently had to go to A&E and she was waiting multiple hours to be seen. She also had to give out her personal information 4 times, surely there is a way to sync this information to save time and resources”
- “We were sent an ambulance for an outpatient appointment at the hospital, even though we hadn’t been made aware of an appointment. When we got there, the appointment was for the following week”
- “It’s hard to book appointments e.g. Xray as no one answers the phone”
- “I’ve been referred from my dentist to Rotherham Foundation Trust for an extraction but I’ve been waiting a long time and the pain is affecting my sleep and mental health”
- “I’m concerned about how long I’m waiting for surgery [because] my issue is causing problems on a day to day basis”

GP Services:

We spoke to **18** 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 who have spoken to us, helping some of them to raise concerns with their practices. The biggest concern raised this month is being able to get appointments.



General Positive Comments:

- “My GP practice is excellent! I have never had any concerns, they provide a great service”
- “My surgery is so good. I feel lucky to have such a good service from them. I’m diabetic and they monitor me really closely. I have tried several different types of medications which haven’t suited me and they’re still trying to get this right for me. My doctor is just fabulous. My prescriptions are also distributed very quickly”
- “My GP service switched to an online system. I find getting answers to queries and getting appointments much easier”
- “My practice is very good - appointment on time - Patients feel they are looked after”
- “I was very impressed by the service and support [we received] and would like to feed that back to the out of hours GP service”

General Negative Comments:

- “My parents can be waiting a week or more for an emergency prescription at their surgery!”
- “Staff are good. But not enough of them”
- “I can’t get through even if I call as they open”
- “GP never have appointments & reception staff say my health conditions aren’t emergencies and ask for private info”
- “The receptionist is like a gatekeeper – makes you feel bad for asking for an appointment”
- “GP’s not helpful towards weight gain & need ways to help with diagnosing autism”
- “I find it hard getting an appointment”
- “Phoning my GP to get an appointment is impossible! I feel in the case I become really ill, I won’t be able to be seen. I would like to be able to book my appointments online and in advance”
- “Diet given, told off by nurse for having things included in the diet. Club only available around her working hours not mine”
- “I’ve been transferred between surgeries, but no one has told me why”

Pharmacies:

We heard from **7** people about pharmacy services in Rotherham during August. The comments mainly regarded concerns around the length of time it takes to get prescriptions as well as insufficient availability which affects how busy the pharmacies are.



- “I often receive broken tablets from my pharmacy”
- “Our pharmacy is always far too busy”
- “Pharmacies have delays with medication”
- “Even though my GP and pharmacy know me well, page 2 of my prescription states when my meds review is, but I can’t read this! (person who is visually impaired)”
- “I am visually impaired and have a Nomad as I take quite a lot of medication. Recently I have had too many tablets in the compartments and I’ve no idea why. No one has communicated with me about any change to my prescription”
- “I had to wait 30 mins at the Hospital pharmacy”
- “We need more pharmacies in my area”

General comments about other local services:

We also heard feedback about some other local services this month, including fantastic feedback for the new Mental Health Matters service!



- “The new Mental Health Matters service is fantastic. I called them up and was offered a 45 minutes appointment and could go down straight away. They were lenient on their timescales which was helpful. The staff are fabulous, with really good listening skills and were very reassuring. They asked my opinion on the decor and environment which was really nice and I know they are planning some workshops and again seem to be asking service users about what they feel they'd like. Fantastic service and if anything I could suggest that would be better, is that they open every night, but I know this would be a funding issue”
- “There should be more awareness in Rotherham on Mental Health support and Neurodiversity”
- “Sometimes healthcare professionals talk really quietly to me or they speak while they're looking at the computer, which doesn't help me as I have a hearing impairment and rely on lip reading”
- “We have a referral to CDC/CAMHS for an assessment for ADHD and the process seems to be moving quickly which is great as we didn't expect it to, as we know that generally waiting lists are long for assessments”
- “It is hard to get through to the CAMHS service”
- “My practice keeps referring me to Healthwaves weightLoss which offered very little support”
- “Pleased with GP & Hospital. However, I feel better communication is needed between services, to make processes smoother”
- “I find it very difficult getting the help and care that I need [for my] mental health. I would like to see a little more compassion from healthcare workers, and more empathy”
- “Communication is poor by staff that I have seen regarding my mental health”
- “I have health issues and I accessed a couple of the Healthwave sessions, however my car is now broken and I can't get to any of their sessions easily”
- “My relative has an eating disorder was discharged from hospital when they turned 18 and transferred to adult services but they weren't offered any on-going/further support apart from by their GP”
- “Communication between services is appalling and this can cause disjointed care”
- “I'm not happy at all with RDaSH. I feel I'm being dismissed by them. I've been told that I have a condition I've never heard of but not how I may be helped/supported with this condition. I've received a discharge letter which didn't state any next steps”
- “I'm still waiting for an ADHD assessment after a year and I have been told it is a three year wait”
- “Lots of exercise available but mainly in central Rotherham. No good for people who have to rely on unreliable bus services. Also unable to support people with weight loss medication who are gaining weight and don't fit into the usual criteria (thyroid,

diabetes) but left with try harder. No one

believes that you do actually eat healthy and there is an underlying problem that yet again will not be investigated unless it fits into the 'norm' and not rarer causes."

- "Mental Health support is not good at all. What would make a difference to the service is to have more workers with lived experience"

General comments regarding the NHS:

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

- "Overall I think the NHS service is good"
- "I have family that work in the NHS and there seems to be so many barriers and hoops to jump through to make things happen and to improve services"
- "NHS Staff salaries need increasing. Care staff need a pay increase"
- "Carers should be recognised and paid more. Better community care [means] less people in hospital"
- "NHS needed quicker waiting times"
- "GP's needs to have a more holistic approach rather than pushing medication"
- "Doctors and Nurses and NHS workers generally should be paid better"
- "I feel there should be more focus on health topics such as women's health and contraception"
- "I think there needs to be improvements with the waiting lists to be seen by consultants and for operations/procedures"
- "For people with learning difficulties and/or autism, there seems to be no support for their mental health as this is always put down to their autism"
- "I would like to see all healthcare professionals completing vital training that informs them of how to support and provide care for someone who is visually impaired"
- "Many professionals including healthcare professionals, police and other services do not have enough awareness and training of autism. I would like to see more people and organisations completing the Oliver McGowan training"

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

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