

Shipshape #SpeakUp Project

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Introduction

Shipshape is a community health organisation based in the Sharrow area of Sheffield. We offer a range of one-to-one and group health and wellbeing services.

Shipshape received a #SpeakUp grant to gather the views and experiences from people who are supported by Shipshape's services.

What we did

We ran workshops with people who attend our existing services including our Women's Health Group, Moor Market Community Hub Group, Broomhall Peer Support Group and Man Friday Group. At these workshops we used a questionnaire and a creative mapping tool to gather feedback.

In total we reached 118 people through the SpeakUp project. We spoke to men and women ranging in age from 29 to 80 years. The majority of people we consulted are from Black and Minority Ethnic Communities (BME).

What we found out

It is important to note that we met some resistance from people who did not want to take part in the project. When we probed why they did not want to, we discovered that they have been consulted before but have not then been informed about what happened as a result of them sharing their views. The key findings are summarised below.

Communication

Members of the Women's Health Group as well as ladies from Ashiana's Women's Group¹, raised the fact that they find it difficult to communicate with healthcare professionals due to a lack of English language. They rely on relatives to support them. Some spoke of being dropped off at hospital for an appointment and not knowing where to go or why they are attending. One woman felt that this could be a reason for some people receiving diagnoses at a late stage.

People in all the groups talked about feeling that healthcare staff get frustrated if someone with complex health needs or barriers attends an appointment. People felt the vulnerable

¹ Ashiana is a Sheffield-based charity that supports and empowers Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee (BAMER) communities whose lives have been affected by violence and abuse to take control of their lives and move forward into healthy, stable and safer futures.



are usually ignored. They reported seeing things getting worse over time with all the changes happening. There was a question about how seriously healthcare professionals actually cared about the vulnerable. It is becoming more of a business approach.

Health literacy

We spoke to older people about their experiences. They felt isolated and struggled to understand the basics of what to do in an emergency when they are left on their own. Some said (mainly individuals from BME Communities) they didn't know where their GP practice was and how they would make an appointment. They depend on their grandchildren or children to do it for them. This makes them feel dependent on them and sometimes they feel guilty for having to ask them every time when they need to visit a healthcare service.

Experiences of GP practices

There was positive and negative feedback about experiences of GP practices. Some people we spoke to at the Moor Market Hub who were aged 50+, told us they felt it was slightly easier to get an appointment than before; the receptionists are a lot friendlier. They find out about other activities happening locally and have been referred to activities and health centres locally to access more support. However, others reported negative experiences that were the opposite of this.

Urgent Care

Many people we spoke to expressed worries about the Clinical Commissioning Group's proposed changes to urgent care services and how to access services.²

Men's health

We spoke to 18 men who attend our Man Friday group. This group is for men with mental health conditions. These men told us that they avoid attending health services as they worry about being told they are unwell or being diagnosed with a condition. Some men felt that mental health services were very poor and that they are just pushed from one service to the next.

² Proposed changes to services include closing the Minor Injuries Unit at the Hallamshire Hospital, closing the Walk-in Centre on Broad Lane and opening a new Urgent Treatment Centre at the Northern General Hospital.



Recommendations

We have three key recommendations:

1. To address low levels of understanding about health services and how to access support, we would like to run a workshop around 'Knowing your Healthcare Services.'
2. Provide information to local communities, especially to people who are vulnerable and isolated about the changes to urgent care services.
3. Enable local people to meet with health service providers, especially mental health services, to allow them to gain answers to their questions and concerns about services.



About Healthwatch Sheffield

Healthwatch Sheffield is the city's local consumer watchdog for health and social care services. The organisation exists to help adults, children and young people to influence and improve the way health and social care services are designed and run in the city. Healthwatch Sheffield is completely independent from the NHS and Sheffield City Council.

About the #SpeakUp grants

In 2017/18 Healthwatch Sheffield ran a small grants programme called 'Speak Up'. The programme was designed to enable local organisations and community groups to gather views and experiences of health and social care services from Sheffield residents, especially from those who do not traditionally have a voice. The aim is to ensure that health and social care decision makers in the city hear from a diverse range of people about their experiences of services.



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