



**Never
Heard**

Giving a voice to people who need it most

What is Never Heard and why are we doing it?

In 2022 our team reviewed public feedback from the past 24 months. Topics like dentistry, access to services and mental health were repeated, but more local themes and feedback from people who might have talked to us 3-4 years ago was missing.

The intelligence highlighted certain groups of people we never hear from or haven't heard from in the last 2 years. We set out a plan to reach those people to hear their voices so their experiences could be shared with providers and commissioners of health and care services.

“I have wasted a lot of time and energy in travel, and experienced considerable emotional frustration in finding the limits of patient support available once a diagnosis and prescription have been delivered. Essentially I have felt that I was on my own.”

Spotlight on Disabilities

Throughout November 2022, our engagement team focused on speaking to people with disabilities across Kirklees and Calderdale about their experiences of health and care services.

We spoke to people face-to-face and online; we used a very simple survey as well as some more creative techniques to support our engagement with people with learning disabilities and those with autism spectrum conditions and neurodiversity.

75% of our feedback came from adults with disabilities or long-term conditions

We asked what was working well and what could be improved and questions like “How confident are you that health and care professionals understand your disability and needs” and “Do you face any barriers when seeking medical treatment or care?”

Insight and outcomes

Analysis from our engagement revealed six prominent themes:



Access and quality of care

Issues with GP's, doctors, nurses and particularly people stating they felt that reception staff created a barrier to care.



Frustrations with **breakdowns in communication** between the doctors and patients as well as disconnect between health services.



Insufficient or poor quality support. Many people and carers feeling they had to push to get the support they needed and the **lack of preventative support** was frustrating.



Poor staff attitude, **lack of care with regard to disability**. This was compounded by feelings that appointments and interactions felt rushed which is unsuitable for disabled people's needs.



Problems accessing mental health support and a lack of long term support versus crisis support. Once in support many people felt that the staff lacked compassion.



Issues with information being provided in clear and concise ways. Additionally a **lack of knowledge about some conditions** and requests for staff training were prominent in the data.

“Longer appointment times, I want to understand my needs myself but I need longer to think it all through and ask questions.”

“Realise that all people are different and have different needs.”

People's stories and experiences are vital to making changes in health and care services and their ideas include:

- A 'one stop shop' health centre for children with long-term conditions.
- Clinic times suitable for individuals as people with a long term health condition need to factor other appointments in.
- Use patient preferred communication methods, such as email or text messaging.

What's next

- We'll make sure feedback is seen by NHS and social care managers, ensuring the voice of people with a disability is heard by those with the power to make change happen.
- We'll challenge the system to make improvements to the way they deliver services to people with a disability so that these people have equal access to services.
- Show people that their voices have been heard by sharing our findings publicly.



Please get in touch to talk to us 01924 450 379 info@healthwatchkirklees.co.uk
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