

Experiences of health and social care in Sheffield

Key insights from June– July 2026

Between June and July 2026, we gathered insights from 368 people who had used health and social care services across Sheffield. Many people shared positive experiences of the care and support they received, including good-quality care from GP and hospital staff and positive experiences of children's services. However, we also heard concerns about accessing GP appointments, hospital waiting times and the quality of care received as well as access to appropriate mental health support. People also highlighted challenges accessing NHS dental services, particularly difficulties finding an NHS dentist and securing an appointment with their regular dentist.

GP services

Between June– July, 107 people shared their experiences of more than 30 GP practices across the city. Thirty-nine people (36%) provided positive feedback about their GP surgery. Of these, 24 people specifically reported receiving good-quality care, while a further 7 people highlighted timely access to appointments.

The majority of less positive feedback related to accessing GP appointments, with 33 people sharing concerns. Patients described difficulties getting through to their practice by telephone, challenges using online booking and triage systems, as well as long waits to see a clinician.

Some patients told us they didn't have the digital skills or confidence to use online services, making it harder for them to access care. Feedback suggested it would be helpful if GP practices could offer practical support, such as group sessions and practical guidance to help develop confidence and skills in using online systems.

Concerns were raised about the recent changes to the Friends of Foundry community drop-in sessions, with support now being provided monthly rather than weekly. Friends of Foundry is a community support service run by Foundry PCN (Primary Care Network) at Verdon Street Recreation Centre, offering access to support, social opportunities and activities such as chair- exercise and health checks. We heard people valued the weekly sessions as a welcoming and safe space to connect



"GP- very good. On time, personable, efficient, professional."

"Service is good when you get to see a GP it's just hard to access. "

"I don't go on the internet so I find it very difficult. "

"It used to be a friendly safe space to socialise, meet people, have activities to support our health. Monthly isn't good enough. "

with others, build friendships and take part in activities. There were concerns that reducing the sessions to monthly would limit these opportunities and affect wellbeing.



Hospital Care

A total of 76 patients, family members, and carers shared their experiences of hospital care. Of these, 41% (31 people) spoke positively about the good quality care and treatment they received from a range of services, including Haematology, Stonegrove Centre, Cystic Fibrosis Ward, Neurosurgery, Allergy Service, Surgery and Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, ENT, Jessops, MRI, A&E and Neuro-oncology.

We also received positive feedback about the Audiology service. Feedback highlighted the availability of same-day appointments for urgent hearing aid repairs, with patients appreciating being able to access support quickly. We also received positive feedback about the recent increase in the number of hearing aid batteries allocated, in response to concerns highlighted in our previous briefing. Patients told us they are now receiving two packs of batteries per hearing aid, rather than one and welcomed this improvement. However, some patients told us they had received information about community battery collection points a few years ago so were unsure whether they were still operating. We also heard that some collection points did not always have the replacement batteries people needed in stock.

Positive feedback was also shared about the Sexual Health Service, which was described as accessible, and staff praised for being friendly and non-judgemental. An issue that was raised about the service related to PrEP, (pre-exposure prophylaxis) which is a prescription medicine taken by people who do not have HIV, to prevent getting infected. When prescribed for event based treatment, feedback suggested confirming the medication's expiry date with patients at the time of prescribing and revisiting this at follow-up appointments to check whether the medication was still in date and if a new supply was needed. Some people were unaware that their medication had expired, leaving them without a supply. It was also suggested local pharmacies should be able to prescribe PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis), a medication that can be taken within 72 hours of potential exposure to HIV to prevent infection. Feedback suggested doing so could improve access and provide people with greater choice in how they obtain treatment.

"My condition is well explained and managed by the consultant."

"I was absolutely amazed by the outstanding, professional care I received in my recent in patient stay."

"I received four packs of batteries instead of two recently which was a lot better."



Most of the other less positive feedback we heard about related to concerns about quality of care, and issues relating to communication, such as treatment explanation or updates on care. Other feedback related to long waits for outpatient appointments, as well as delays in seeing a clinician once people had arrived for their appointment or had attended A&E.

Some patients raised concerns about the cleanliness of the hospital including the A&E department and felt that they were not always maintained to the standard they would expect. We also heard concerns about staffing levels across hospital departments. Some patients felt that staffing pressures may be contributing to issues with cleanliness, as well as affecting staff's ability to provide timely patient care and support.

People shared views about the quality and range of food available in hospital, particularly for those with specific dietary or nutritional needs. Some patients told us they brought their own food into hospital because the options provided did not meet their requirements. Others felt there was limited choice of healthier options, such as wholemeal bread, as well as a lack of vegan options.

Concerns were raised about the need for clearer information in advance of an MRI or other diagnostic scan to help patients understand what to expect. An example of this was shared where a patient was unable to lie flat and remain still for an extended period of time but stated clearer information would have helped them prepare and provide an opportunity to discuss any concerns, reasonable adjustments or additional support they may have needed.

Mental health support

Thirteen people shared positive experiences of mental health support received from a range of services, including Talking Therapies, Tabernacle Group and Community Mental Health Teams. Twenty-one people provided less positive feedback, highlighting a range of concerns. These were largely related to the quality of care received and difficulties accessing appropriate support. Some people also told us they would like to see more mental health services available within their local communities, making support easier to access.

"Nothing has gone well. I was told I had a 14 week wait for an appointment. It has been 10 months!"

"Throughout stay noticed lack of hygienic looking facilities with dust and dirt in most places."

"Meals were appalling and did not match the description."

"Had an MRI. Had to lie in it for an hour. Was unable to lie flat for that long due to difficulty breathing."



"I'm grateful for the support, care and kindness throughout."

"I felt neglected by the crisis service- they refused to help despite clear clinical need."

We've also heard from people who told us they did not feel supported when accessing crisis care, either through NHS 111 Option 2, the Decisions Unit, or A&E. They described difficulties accessing the help they needed while experiencing a mental health crisis and felt that their concerns were not fully understood or addressed.



Children's Hospital

During this period, we received 50 pieces of feedback about the Children's Hospital, largely provided from children and young people who had recently used services. 37 insights (74%) highlighted positive sentiments. Children and young people particularly valued staff taking the time to listen to them and communicate in a clear and accessible way. The availability of books and toys as well as reward stickers were also mentioned positively. Less positive feedback largely focused on waiting times, both when trying to access outpatient care and when patients were attending appointments or A&E.

"Something I felt was good is they had some books to read when I was in the waiting area."



NHS Dentistry

During this period, 43 people shared feedback related to NHS dentistry. Of these, 35 people shared positive sentiments about their dentist and the care and treatments they had received.

"They were really good kind and reassuring."

Less positive feedback mainly related to concerns about the quality of care received and difficulties accessing appointments with a regular dentist. Fifteen people told us they had experienced difficulties finding an NHS dentist. Some had contacted several dental practices but were unable to access NHS care because practices either had lengthy waiting lists or were not accepting new patients.

"We have difficulty with finding a dentist in Sheffield and around. We went everywhere but the answer always is sorry we are full."

We regularly contact dentists across Sheffield to get an accurate picture of which practices are accepting new NHS patients so we can signpost people to them. After we called round in July, we discovered eight practices across the city were able to offer appointments to new adult NHS patients. This was an increase compared to three practices from our previous our call round.

Our Community Insights highlights the groups and services we visit each week across Sheffield. During this period, we visited the Mosborough Dementia Carers Support Group, where we heard about the experiences and support available to local carers. You can read more about our Community Insights blogs [here](#).



Impact from our last briefing (April- May 2026)

Sheffield Teaching Hospitals (STH) and Sheffield Health Partnership University (SHPU) have responded to our [last briefing](#) outlining how they plan to address areas for improvement.

Response from Sheffield Teaching Hospitals

Long waiting times and patient prioritisation- Waiting times remain a challenge, but services are working to reduce them and improve communication with patients. Patients are prioritised based on clinical urgency and then waiting time, with clear processes in place for both planned and urgent care.

Positive feedback about buzzer systems- These are helping patients move freely while waiting for appointments in the areas they are being used. Good practice is being shared across the Trust so more services can consider introducing similar systems.

Long waits for collecting medication- Pharmacy performance is generally good, with most prescriptions dispensed within target times (15 mins or less). Delays can occur when clinical clarification is needed, but patients are kept informed and alternative options such as buzzer systems, text notifications and home delivery are available where appropriate.

Difficulty contacting the Patient Booking Hub- The Patient Booking Hub's average answer time is under eight minutes, although some patients may experience longer waits. If raising concerns about long telephone waiting times, please provide STH with the telephone number(s) called so this can help investigate specific concerns.

Quality of patient correspondence and letter templates- A review of letter templates has led to improvements in formatting, readability and accessibility. Feedback on specific letters is welcomed so any remaining issues can be addressed.

Staff name badges- The Trust is introducing a standard yellow name badge, which is easier to see. The change will be phased in over time to minimise costs.

Access to hearing aid batteries- Patients will now receive two packs of batteries per hearing aid at a time. Batteries can be requested by text, post or collected from a range of community locations as well as the hospital.

Quality of physiotherapy appointments- Physiotherapy services follow evidence-based approaches that emphasise exercise and self-management. Feedback has

highlighted the need for clearer explanations, reassurance and support, which will be shared with teams to improve patient experience.

We also included responses to two themes from the recent reports from LGBTQ+ community members' experiences of healthcare.

Updating gender and preferred name on patient records– The Trust recognises the importance of recording preferred names and gender identity. Following implementation of the Connect EPR (Electronic Patient Record) system, options to improve this are being explored through the Trans Inclusion Working Group.

LGBTQ+ inclusivity training– The Trust has developed guidance, training and awareness resources to improve LGBTQ+ inclusivity. This includes a dedicated guide and training supported by the LGBTQ+ Staff Network.

Response from Sheffield Health University Partnership

Talking Therapies– Thank you for the feedback. The Trust welcome comments about the care and support people receive from our Trust. Your feedback will help us to continue to improve our services. We have noted that accessing mental health support and what to expect from services, including the assessment and therapeutic approach may not always feel person-centred. The team work hard to ensure people receive the most appropriate support for their needs. Initial assessments help us to do this. Our Sheffield Talking Therapies online referral form is available for people to self-refer at a time that works best for them, or people can call the service if they prefer to speak to someone. The team recognise that no single approach is right for everyone and will continue to ensure people feel listened to, understood and have sufficient opportunity to share what is important to them.

Online referral form can be found here: [Referral Information](#)

Call the service: 0114 226 4380

Gender Clinic– Thank you for the feedback. The Trust welcome comments about the care and support people receive from our Trust. The Trust are working hard to ensure waiting times for the Gender Identity Clinic are managed. This has become a national issue, across all adult gender identity services. The Trust has been focussed on improving our position over the past 12 months, this has resulted in an increase in appointments. In addition, we provide the referral month for patients who were recently assessed as a broad indicator of how long people can expect to wait. You can find this and more information on our newly updated website. Going forward the service will continue improving the website to make it easier for people to access information and support.

Gender identity clinic website: [Gender Identity Clinic | Sheffield Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust](#)

This summary of key issues is a snapshot of what we are hearing about. We want to reflect the experiences of people who share their stories with us, and we hope that it can help services, and commissioners of services, by indicating potential areas of focus. It is based on:

- Experiences that members of the public share with us through our information and advice service
- Feedback shared with us through our outreach and engagement work. You can read more findings from our visits to local groups in our [Community Insights blogs](#)
- Feedback shared by voluntary sector partners who support clients in Sheffield
- Stories shared through Care Opinion

Want to share your own experience? Get in touch

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