

Healthwatch Sheffield at the **Zest Centre Babies and Toddler group**

[Healthwatch Sheffield](#) gathers people's views on health and social care in Sheffield and shares them with decision makers to inform improvements.






On 5 March 2026, we were invited to Zest's weekly babies and toddler group. As it was also World Book Day, we got to see some fantastic costumes from the little ones including two 'Batmans' (or should that be 'Batman'?) as well as a great range of toys and activities to get stuck into.


I managed to hear from some of the parents who attended that day. They told me some of their recent experiences of healthcare, particularly for parents and children, in the Sheffield area. We also gave out information and advice, as well as an up-to-date list of dentists currently accepting NHS patients.


Here's a summary of what we heard:


What was good about the NHS and social care services that you have used:

-  Parents and caregivers generally reported a good offer of support and activities in the local area catered for theirs and their children's needs.
-  The Zest Babies and Toddler group was a particular highlight of some parents' weeks. They described it as a social space where they and their children can connect and play, reducing risk of isolation.
-  Parents felt they had been able to access the services they needed during and after pregnancy, via GP surgeries, the Children's Hospital and health visitors.

What was bad about the NHS and social care services:

 Accessing appropriate foreign travel vaccinations for children was proving difficult, with private providers sometimes not offering the full range of vaccinations required for certain countries, and GP surgeries not supporting beyond signposting.

 Communications between GP practices and local hospitals with hospitals across the country providing specialist care were described as poor, resulting in the parent taking on an overwhelming administrative load as the 'middleman'.

 Some parents did not have access to NHS dentistry. Some had opted to go private out of necessity, whereas others remained without any dental care.

We will share this feedback with the appropriate service providers through our monthly briefings and quarterly reports.

If you want information and advice about accessing health or social care services in Sheffield, or want to share feedback about your experiences of using them, please contact us using the details below.

Healthwatch Sheffield

- Call: 0114 253 6688 between the hours of 09:00 – 16:30 Monday to Friday.
- Post: Healthwatch Sheffield, The Circle, 33 Rockingham Lane, Sheffield, S1 4FW
- Email: info@healthwatchsheffield.co.uk Text: 0741 524 9657

Thank you to **Zest Babies and Toddler group** for having us and for sharing their feedback. We look forward to our next visit! 😊