

Experiences of health and social care in Sheffield

Key insights from December 2025– January 2026

Between December 2025 and January 2026, we gathered insights from 224 people who use health and social care services across Sheffield. We heard many positive experiences, as well as some less positive examples of care. Feedback covered a range of services, including experiences of NHS 111, Sheffield Children’s Hospital, and services accessed through Sheffield Health Partnership University. We also heard about a recent increase in waiting times to access Right to Choose child ADHD assessments.

GP services

Between December 2025 and January 2026, 111 people shared their experiences of 31 GP practices across the city. Of these, 42 individuals (38%) provided positive feedback about their GP practice, particularly praising the quality of treatment and care received. Many patients reported feeling listened to and well supported during consultations, and described staff as professional and polite.

39 people reported experiencing a range of difficulties when trying to access GP appointments. Some were unable to secure urgent care appointments or described long waits for non-urgent appointments, which delayed access to care. We also heard from patients who experienced difficulties using online services such as online triage forms or had no internet access. In addition, some patients said they were unable to access appointments because of problems arranging interpreter support, creating barriers to accessing timely care.

Right to Choose

Insights were shared about a recent increase in Right to Choose waiting times with some providers in relation to child and adult ADHD and autism assessments. We heard the rise seems to have happened within recent months, particularly with ADHD child assessments. As a result, some people who were already on waiting lists and were initially given a shorter estimated wait time have since experienced longer waits. According to waiting-time data published on the [ADHD UK](#) website, the shortest current waiting period for child ADHD assessments under the Right to Choose is between 36 and 52 weeks.



“The GP I saw was very kind and did his up most to help.”

“Friendly staff, listened to my problems, prescribed medication when needed.”

“Hard getting an appointment but helpful when there.”

“It’s all for tech people. I don’t use online booking, I don’t have the app.”



Hospital Care

A total of 66 patients, family members, and carers shared their experiences of hospital care. Of these, 42% (28 people) spoke positively about the good quality care and treatment they received, with many people describing caring and friendly staff and feeling well looked after. Positive experiences were shared across a wide range of services, including Podiatry, Charles Clifford, Jessops, Cardiology, A&E, Orthopaedics, Ophthalmology, Surgery, Audiology, SDEC, Minor Injuries, and Urology.

Most of the less positive feedback centred around reoccurring themes. Some individuals were unhappy with the quality of care or treatment they had received or reported long waiting times to access consultants, scans, or surgery.

We also heard that patients' health passports were sometimes not fully referred to when patients were admitted to a ward. Whilst it was acknowledged medical needs were met, sometimes personal care needs were not fully considered, such as washing, showering and continence care, particularly for people with learning disabilities or mental health conditions.

Feedback was shared about the hand clinic, noting that it can be unhelpful when there is no receptionist present and patients are instead directed to use a self-check-in screen. It was suggested, it would be helpful if patients had an option of either checking in with a receptionist or using the check in screen, as some people may need assistance to use the screen system.

NHS 111

We heard when contacting NHS 111, some patients received call-backs in the early hours of the morning. Whilst patients appreciated the follow-up call, some said that for non-urgent cases, they would have much preferred to be called the following day. Patients also reported long delays when waiting for a doctor to call them back. Although they were initially told the wait would be around two hours, some waited between six and twelve hours, and in some cases, they had to contact the service again to receive an update. These experiences suggest a need for personal choice and being able to share preferences in their initial interaction of how they'd like to be contacted.



"The staff in A&E were extremely kind and accommodating to my specific problems."

"An excellent service and all the staff who have treated me have been polite, courteous, professional and delightful."

"The only thing I am not happy about is I had to wait more than 12 months to get the surgery."



"I have (...) in severe pain waited 6 hours for 111 to phone back."

We also heard some patients who had contacted NHS 111 (option 2) for mental health support were advised to go A&E. However, some reported being unable to attend A&E due to anticipating long waiting times which they felt wouldn't have helped their situation.

"(...) has ASD and cannot wait in a &e for 12 hours."

Sheffield Children's Hospital

Eleven people shared feedback about Sheffield Children's Hospital. Of these, 8 people (73%) provided positive and mixed feedback, stating staff were caring and polite and delivered good quality care and treatment.



The small amount of less positive feedback, related to long wait times/difficulties accessing services. Feedback was also shared about the challenges children can sometimes face when experiencing Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA) and attending different hospital services. It was noted staff often made considerable efforts to try and meet individual needs, but sometimes interactions were less helpful due to limited understanding or training in supporting children with PDA.

"Ryegate Helena care team - excellent critical care staff."

Sheffield Health Partnership University

In September 2025, the Sheffield Health and Social Care Trust changed their name and are now called Sheffield Health Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (services they provide hasn't changed). 12 people shared their experiences of Sheffield Health Partnership University services. Seven people (58%) shared positive examples of good quality care and treatments received at various services including Beech, Stange Ward, the Decisions Unit, Eastglade and Northlands. Less positive feedback mainly highlighted difficulties when trying to access the right mental health support.

"Beech is a great place. I always felt supported by the friendly staff."

NHS Dentistry

During this period, 21 people contacted us about NHS dentistry. Ten people required support to find an NHS dentist. Four different people shared positive feedback about their dentist and the treatment they had received. Other patients reported experiencing long waiting times to get an appointment for routine care or difficulties trying to get through to their dentist on the phone.



"We found a surgery which takes NHS patients! Hoorah!"

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 January, we discovered nine practices across the city were able to offer appointments to new adult NHS patients which was a slightly better news in comparison to our previous call rounds.



Impact from our last briefing (Oct- Nov 2025)

South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (SYICB), 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. Their comments are in black.

Response from South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board

Dental- The Government is prioritising urgent unscheduled dental care and recently launched a new national Urgent Dental Care Incentive Scheme, which is likely to have an impact on routine access at those practices participating in the new national scheme. In Sheffield 32 Practices are participating in this scheme, with 2 new ones due to join, details of practices are available on the ICB website, <https://southyorkshire.icb.nhs.uk/your-health/nhs-dental-services>

Long waiting times for appointments and limited availability of urgent slots-

Practice capacity is augmented by enhanced access appointments offered in the evening and on Saturdays by Primary Care Networks and, in Sheffield, South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board provides additional urgent capacity through our Urgent Same Day GP Service and through GP bookable appointments at the Walk in Centre. As well as significantly increasing capacity in the Urgent Same Day service over the winter period, the ICB also provides additional funding to general practices to increase capacity over the winter period when demand is highest.

SYICB has also supported the development of GP premises, increasing the number of consultation rooms in a number of practices in Sheffield including Dovercourt Surgery, Porter Brook Medical Centre, and Firth Park Surgery. We have also helped bring brand-new GP buildings to Sheffield with the new St Mary's surgery for Steel City Practice and a new primary care centre due to open shortly in Foundry Primary Care Network that will provide accommodation for two GP surgeries as well as other health services and social care staff.

Response from Sheffield Teaching Hospitals

Long waiting times to access treatment or surgery, and long waiting times in A&E-

We recognise the impact of long waits and continue to take action to reduce them, with progress being made across services. We have also reminded services of the need to provide a clear contact point and regular updates to patients while they are waiting for care.

Errors with appointment times- Temporary administrative issues arose following the introduction of a new electronic patient record system. Many of these issues have already been resolved, and work is continuing to address those remaining.

Difficulty accessing care at home after discharge- Patients who may need support after discharge are assessed during their hospital stay. Where required, reablement support is planned in advance, with a home assessment on the day of discharge and care put in place promptly based on individual needs.

Inconsistent breastfeeding support information from different staff- We value the positive feedback about staff support and acknowledge concerns about inconsistent advice. All midwives receive mandatory annual infant feeding training, updated this year in line with national guidance and audit learning, and we are working more closely with local peer support services to improve consistency and access to specialist support where needed.

Response from Sheffield Health Partnership University

Substance misuse- We recognise these concerns and are taking action to strengthen joint working across services. A meeting is scheduled in January with colleagues from Likewise to agree clearer pathways and practical arrangements to improve how our services work together to support adults with co-existing mental health and substance use needs. In parallel, SHPU is reviewing and updating its Dual Diagnosis policy to reflect commissioning changes, clarify roles and responsibilities, and further strengthen integrated working, with the aim of reducing gaps in care and improving access to timely support for vulnerable individuals

Homelessness- We recognise the significant impact that housing-related issues can have on people's mental health and wellbeing. While SHPU is not responsible for housing repairs or decisions relating to priority rehousing, our Homeless Assessment Support Team (HAST) provides targeted support to people experiencing homelessness in Sheffield, including facilitating access to mental health assessments and helping

individuals to navigate appropriate mental health services. We also work with partner agencies where possible to support a coordinated response for this population.

Dissociative identity disorder- Dissociative disorders cover a range of conditions, which can vary in duration and severity and can often overlap with other mental health conditions e.g. PTSD, depression, self harm, OCD, anxiety. The NHS does not currently have a specialist treatment pathway for 'dissociative identity disorder'. Locally, Sheffield Health Partnership University Trust offer a range of trauma informed treatments, including psychological therapy, to support people experiencing dissociative type difficulties. We are also currently working on improving our therapeutic offer and training our staff to better meet the needs of people experiencing such difficulties.

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 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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