

# Quarterly report

July–September 2024

Heard from **383** people about their views and experiences of health and care



Welcomed a new **community partner**, who we will work with to help more people have their views heard



Helped **213** people with enquiries about health and social care services



Produced **7 news articles** for our website to give people information about health and social care topics



Were successful in winning a new, **10-year contract** to deliver Healthwatch in Sheffield



Published a #SpeakUp Report from **Sheffield Association for the Voluntary Teaching of English**



# 1. Introduction

During this quarter we went through a tender process for the Healthwatch Sheffield contract. Unavoidably, this took a significant amount of time and focus from the staff team, and waiting for the outcome meant that we had to place some things (such as recruitment) on hold.



The good news is that Voluntary Action Sheffield (VAS), who have held the Healthwatch contract since it began in 2013, were successful in their bid. The new contract gives stability for up to 10 years, enabling us to build and develop the ways in which we work with people in Sheffield to have their say in health and social care, and drive positive change in services. In giving VAS this longer contract, Sheffield City Council have recognised the importance of local connections, and the value of trust and relationships that can only be built over time.

Lack of capacity in the staff team has made it harder to progress against our work plan during this period, but we were able to use the summer as a chance to connect with people at a wide range of events. Our information stall was out and about in a wide range of places – from the Moor Market, to the English Institute of Sport.

We published the last of our reports from the 2023-24 round of SpeakUp grants, from Sheffield Association for the Voluntary Teaching of English (SAVTE) – as part of this project, SAVTE staff were able to develop language resources about health, enabling their learners to have more confidence in seeking the healthcare they need.

We are looking forward to next quarter – the new contract starts in October 2024, and our new Community Outreach staff should be in post soon after. This will enable us to be able to move forward with our existing workplan, as well as starting work to involve people in shaping our new strategy. In collaboration with partners, we will set out our approach to working together, to ensure that people's voices can shape services in Sheffield.

## 2. Enquiries, Information and Advice

Members of the public can tell us about their experiences of health and social care services in Sheffield so that we can then share their views and opinions with decision-makers. We also offer specific information and advice about their care. Giving information about health and social care services is one of our statutory duties.

Enquiries we receive may include finding out about people's rights to treatment, what services may be available to them, or how to raise a concern about a negative experience they have had. We help people to find the right information as well as signposting them to further support if needed. Sometimes we can help people with their question immediately, whilst other situations may be more complex and may involve supporting the individual for a longer period of time.

Between July- September 2024, we gave information and advice to 213 people – this ranged from brief pieces of information given out at community stalls, to more in-depth conversations through email or over the phone.

Issues were raised about some home care providers; this was largely around the quality of care provided. Some people felt their carers lacked the training necessary to be able to carry out the role effectively. We also heard about requests for carers of a specific gender that were not fulfilled, despite being agreed when initial care plans were produced.

We heard from individuals struggling to afford their regular prescription costs and paying to travel to healthcare appointments, especially when using public transport to visit their GP. Additionally, some people shared that the cost of paying for home carers was a strain and a significant source of worry.

This period we have participated in several events, including the annual summer festival organised by the Sheffield Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (SHASBAH). At the event, we gathered feedback from individuals living with spina bifida and hydrocephalus, along with their families and carers. A significant concern raised was the absence of a specialist hydrocephalus nurse at Sheffield Teaching Hospitals. Many highlighted the value of the support and guidance they had received from the former nurse and hoped another specialist would be reinstated.

# Where have we signposted people this quarter?



## Case Study

### System issues when claiming replacement prescription glasses

Graham\* got in touch as he had recently lost a new pair of prescription glasses, and had been charged for a replacement pair by his optician. Graham has a learning disability and received optical vouchers, which could have made him eligible for a free replacement under the General Optical Service (GOS) scheme.

We contacted the optician to understand why he had been charged. The optician explained all adult claims needed to be submitted to the NHS Business Authority for review before a refund could be processed. They hadn't submitted a claim in this case as their previous attempts with other patients had been unsuccessful. The optician stated this was due to the extensive evidence required to support a claim but agreed to put in a new claim request for this case.

\*names have been changed

### 3. Website

Between July and September we had 3,745 visitors to our website, and 20,339 individual page views. This is a fairly typical number of visitors for us, but a much higher than usual number of page views – people spent longer than normal on our website this quarter and browsed multiple reports and articles.

We are still seeing high levels of interest in [Paul's blog](#) about getting an ADHD diagnosis in Sheffield. Lots of people also explored our [Annual Report 2023-24](#), and read our information article on the [Pharmacy First scheme](#) (published earlier this year).

#### Information and advice

The information and advice section of our website is an area we are concentrating on growing at the moment. This quarter we published several information and news articles about updates in primary care, to help keep patients informed of the latest changes and events that might impact them:

- An update on global IT outages and the impact on GP services
- Who are Physician Associates and what do they do?
- What is GP collective action and what does it mean for patients?
- Annual GP patient survey: results published

We also published information and advice articles on:

- Changing Places and accessible toilets near you
- What is adult social care?
- How to make cervical screening (a smear test) work for you

You can find our [information and advice page here](#).

This section of the website – which contains topical articles like those above, and longer-standing pages about finding local services, or making a complaint about health or social care services – received over **900** views between July and September.

### 4. CQC / Sharing intelligence

**Healthwatch England:** We have been sharing data with Healthwatch England monthly, via their new digital platform. This connection with Healthwatch England helps us influence policy at a national level.

**CQC:** This quarter we shared feedback about 2 services with the CQC. In total, we shared feedback from 35 people about these services.

**What have we been hearing?:** This quarter we have shared 1 roundup report with statutory partners, commissioners and service providers to highlight the issues that



people are talking to us about. These are picked up in different ways, and have become a regular item for discussion at the Health and Wellbeing Board.

As well as sharing the headlines of what we hear in this briefing, we also share more detailed feedback with health and social care providers directly where appropriate and where we have the appropriate consent from the people we have spoken with.

## 5. Children and Young people

### Taking our Healthwatch Stand to events for children and young people

In August we took part in 2 events for Children and Young people, sharing information about health and care services, and hearing people's views on services in Sheffield. These were:

**SAYit Sheffield Youth Pride Fayre** at Star House where our information stall was alongside brilliant arts and craft activities run by young people and...

**International Youth Day** at the English Institute of Sport where we spoke to young people about what was important to them and had fun with badge making.



## 6. Community Partnerships

In September we welcomed [Sheffield Mencap and Gateway](#) as new Community Partners – we look forward to working together to ensure that people with learning disabilities, and their carers, have their voices heard within Sheffield health and care services.

Next quarter we will have new Community Outreach staff in post which will enable us to become more active in working with our existing [Community Partners](#), as well as making new connections.



## 7. #SpeakUp Grants

### 2023–24 grants

#### SAVTE (Sheffield Association for the Voluntary Teaching of English)

In August we published the final SpeakUp report from the latest round of grants. SAVTE learners shared their views on healthcare in Sheffield. They also talked about what kinds of language support could help them to build confidence, access services more independently, and manage their own wellbeing.

The other element to this project was producing English language learning resources, which would help future learners to access health services. These include words about the body and symptoms of ill health, as well as understanding how different services in the UK work. SAVTE is already using these resources to help their learning groups.

You can read the report on our website [here](#).

#### Future rounds of #SpeakUp Grants

We have been doing #SpeakUp grants for a number of years, and the success of these projects has grown as we have developed and refined the way we run the programme. We believe this had improved the outcomes and impact from the work, and we know from feedback that the grants have been valued by the groups that have received them.

Unfortunately each year it has become more challenging for us to find the money in our budget – inflation has seen rising costs, and the money we receive has been at

the same level for the past 7 years. This means that at the start of 2024/2025 we had to make the difficult decision not to launch a new round of grants as we would normally do.

However, following our recent successful tender process, we are pleased to report that we are now in a position to plan future rounds of SpeakUp grants. Watch this space!

## 8. Projects, Involvement and Engagement

### Out and about

Over the summer period we have been out and about with stalls at different events. This includes:

#### **Sheffield Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus ([SHASBAH](#))**

SHASBAH held their annual summer festival at Manor Lodge Discovery Centre on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2024. They celebrated 60 years of SHASBAH with the people they support – those living with spina bifida and hydrocephalus, their families and carers.

We had an information and feedback stall at the event; it was a fabulous day.

As well as gathering views on specific health and social care services we asked people **'If you could change one thing about the NHS, what would it be?'**

People wrote their answers on paper chains to form our feedback snake.





## SACMHA first anniversary event

In July we joined SACMHA in celebrating one year of their campus at Breinburg court – this campus has enabled them to broaden out the way in



which they can support people with living their lives in the community. Because it was a celebration event, we asked people if they had positive stories of health and care services they would like to share to help show what good care looks like.



## A Neighbourhood Focus on Health and Care – Tinsley

In the last quarterly report we described how we began the first stage of our neighbourhood priority, looking at a specific neighbourhood's access to health and social care services. Based on the work done by our student interns in March 2024, we chose Tinsley. This is a neighbourhood on the Sheffield-Rotherham border, isolated geographically by ring roads, motorways and industrial estates.

This quarter we focussed on trying to connect with people using social care within Tinsley, and met with social care staff to share information on our project.

Due to lack of community outreach capacity during this quarter, we were unable to progress the project further, but will refresh and restart when our new staff join us in November.

## 9. Reports

### Older people from African, Caribbean and South Asian heritage – their views on support, information and advice

In August we published a report aiming to help health, social care, and voluntary sector services to understand how to develop more inclusive and accessible city-wide support for older people in Sheffield's ethnically diverse communities.

The findings are based on interviews with 31 people from African, Caribbean and South Asian heritage. They told us what types of support they already use, what the barriers are to them, and what a good service would look like.

You can find the report on our website [here](#).

### What have we been hearing?

This quarter we published one of our regular intelligence briefings, from [June – July 2024](#).

We continued to build intelligence about known themes, such as access to GP appointments and NHS dentists. We also shared some new themes, including some around young people's access to healthcare information and to CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services), and issues with adult social care assessments and home care providers.

The briefing covering feedback from August – September 2024 will be published in October.

### Using voice for influence



Our briefings now include responses from providers, sharing actions they've taken in response to people's feedback. In this briefing, we were able to share that:

- The Integrated Care Board (ICB) agreed to explore **new phone options for people who regularly use patient transport services** to save them repeating information.
- Sheffield Teaching Hospitals agreed to **review the information and support they provide for people waiting**

## 10. Quality Accounts

Last quarter we responded to the 2023–24 Quality Accounts of local NHS services. This quarter those accounts, including our responses, have been published. They are linked below:

[Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust](#)

[Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust](#)

[Sheffield Children's NHS Foundation Trust](#)

[Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust](#)

[St Luke's Hospice](#)

## 11. Health & Care Public Forum (Sheffield)

This quarter our regular Health and Care Public Forum met 3 times. This forum is a public and patient forum which we run on behalf of Sheffield Health and Care Partnership to help inform their work.

In **July**, forum members helped shape the design of our information drop-in service and shared some personal experiences of health and care services. They also gained a better understanding of the CQC's inspections of local authorities, following a presentation by a student intern doing a placement with us.

There was a discussion about the local authority's out of hours social work service in **August**, and the forum reviewed a draft of the Healthwatch Sheffield paper feedback form. They then shared their views and experiences around their GP practice's online triage systems.

In **September**, the group gave their views on a Health and care partnership branding idea, were informed about the current GP collective action and whether it had affected their experiences of care.

## 12. Local decision making

The Health and Care Bill made changes to the way the NHS is organised – on 1st July 2022 new **Integrated Care Boards** (ICBs) were set up across the country in each sub-region. These boards will work with partnerships of local organisations such as voluntary sector organisations and local authorities, as part of an **Integrated Care System (ICS)**. Sheffield is now part of the **South Yorkshire ICS**.

This is important to the work of Healthwatch because our role is to influence and improve the way services are run. Some decisions about Sheffield services are now

made at a South Yorkshire level – this means we need to have routes to influence decisions in this new structure.

**During this quarter we have:**

- Continued to work with other Healthwatch in South Yorkshire to promote the importance of public involvement and citizen voice in the new structure
- Continued meeting regularly with Engagement and Involvement leaders at the ICB, to ensure that our work at Healthwatch is connected to work taking place at a South Yorkshire level
- Continued attending the Quality, Performance and Patient Experience sub-committee of the ICB

Healthwatch has a non-voting place on the South Yorkshire ICB where we have the opportunity to bring insight from our work, and constructive challenge to the system in our role as a critical friend. As an interim measure, the Healthwatch Sheffield Chief Officer has taken this place while we develop a longer-term plan to ensure we can be fully effective in our work with the board.

Locally, our Chair has been attending the **Sheffield Health and Care Partnership Board** meetings, and has been active in contributing to discussion around the future of how services will work together as Sheffield Place. This also links to the role that we have currently facilitating the Health and Care Public Forum, giving people and patients an opportunity to directly hear about and comment on locally developed plans.

**We will continue to advocate for the importance of involving people in decision making, wherever those decisions are made.**

## 13. Supporting services to involve people

### **Porter Valley Primary Care Network – Patient Voice Event**

In July, our staff team supported an online Patient Voice session with the Porter Valley Primary Care Network (PCN). We worked alongside staff from the network, as well as patients from individual Patient Participation Groups (PPGs), to plan this session. The purpose of the event was to bring together patients from across the network and share information about how practices worked together, and what that meant for patients. Practices also wanted to explore whether patients might be interested in having a network wide patient forum or PPG. Some practices within the PCN have strong existing groups, and were interested in working collaboratively to strengthen patient voice across the PCN. There was good attendance, with lots of enthusiasm from patients who wanted to get more involved. A follow up, in-person event is planned for January.

## 14. Volunteers and Placements

This quarter, volunteers gave up at least 187 hours of their time to help support our work. This includes being part of our Strategic Advisory Group, and the Health and Care Public Forum (Sheffield).

Over the summer volunteers helped us attend summer events and fun days, running stalls and activities for attendees. They also represented us at boards and committees, like the Primary Care Commissioning Committee. Having volunteer representation at boards like this helps us learn more about changes in the health and social care system, and gives us more opportunities to amplify people's views wherever decisions are made.

We had some volunteer admin support over the summer, helping us to make flyers and posters. We also have a new volunteer researcher who started work on a GP website project, looking at online appointment triage systems.



## 15. Healthwatch Team

This quarter, Sarah Fowler (our Community Outreach lead) moved into her seconded role at VAS full time. Following the good news of our successful tender in August, we were able to start the recruitment process for this role, and we anticipate that we will have someone new in post by the end of October / early November.

## 16. Coming up next

We will be starting our Information and Advice Drop in sessions in the Healthwatch Hub at The Circle

We will start work to develop a new strategy for Healthwatch Sheffield, enabling others to work with us in shaping the delivery of Healthwatch under our new contract

We publish our report on Long Covid support in Sheffield

We will re-start work on our Tinsley project, when our new staff members have joined the team



## Using Voice for Influence

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As well as sharing our intelligence in our written round ups, staff and volunteers regularly raise feedback and share experiences in the meetings they attend. Taking part in meetings helps us stay informed about developments in services, and enables us to promote the importance of listening to, and involving people, in shaping those developments. This quarter, we have attended the following meetings, boards and committees:

- Health and Wellbeing Board
- Lived Experience and Co-production Assurance Group (Sheffield Health and Social Care Trust)
- Integrated Care Board (NHS South Yorkshire)
- Quality, Performance, Patient Involvement and Experience Committee (NHS South Yorkshire)
- Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee – Sheffield City Council
- Area Prescribing Group
- Primary Care Commissioning
- Integrated Medicines' Optimisation Committee (IMOC)
- Community Mental Health Team Programme Board
- VAS weekly network meetings
- Sheffield Health and Care Partnership Board
- South Yorkshire Local Dental Network
- Oral Health Advisory Group (Sheffield)
- STH Quality Objective Steering Group
- Patient Engagement and Experience Committee – Sheffield Teaching Hospitals
- Health Workstream of the Refugee Asylum and Migration Strategic Partnership
- Collaborating for Health working group

**Representatives from other Healthwatch in South Yorkshire also attend a range of meetings on behalf of our region, giving us an opportunity to feed into other areas of work including:**

- South Yorkshire Integrated Care Partnership
- South Yorkshire Mental Health/Crisis care meetings
- South Yorkshire System Quality Group