

Healthwatch Sheffield at The Parson Cross Community Development Forum Memory Cafe

Healthwatch Sheffield gathers people's views on health and social care in Sheffield and shares them with decision makers, to inform improvements.

On Friday 16th January 2026, we went to **the Memory Café at Parson Cross Community Development Forum** - a welcoming supportive space and



social group in Sheffield for people living with any form of dementia, their families, friends, and carers, offering breakfast, companionship, and activities like singing, dancing, bingo or arts and crafts. At our visit, we

met with over 45 people that were in attendance and spoke with them about their experiences with **health and social care services** in Sheffield. We also provided people with tailored information on dental access including the Community and Special Care Dentistry Service, contact details for PALS, as well as other support services

All attendees were in high spirits, enjoying a lovely breakfast and engaging in conversation with one another. It was encouraging to see staff attentively responding to individual needs and the strong connection and level of trust established between the staff and attendees. Live music was provided, and the excitement when the musician arrived was absolutely heart-warming, with many attendees singing along and some even getting up to dance. These engagements play a significant role in promoting inclusion, reducing isolation, and supporting overall mental wellbeing.

Here's a summary of what we learnt:

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

-  There was very positive feedback on hospital services, with staff described as kind, caring, and professional once patients were admitted.
-  Medical treatment and clinical care was said to be generally of a high standard, including effective medication management, regular reviews, and reassurance from clinicians.
-  Mental health services provided reliable support, with staff available when needed and responsive to concerns.
-  GP services, once accessed, were described as supportive and person-centred, with clinicians listening and acting quickly on concerns.
-  Early diagnosis and prompt referrals for scans, tests, and specialist care helped identify and manage health conditions effectively.
-  Advice and guidance around carers' support and accessing additional services was helpful.
-  Community pharmacies provided reliable and timely access to medication.
-  Many carers were kind, friendly, and supportive, helping people manage day-to-day needs.

What was bad about the NHS and social care services:

-  Difficulty accessing GP appointments, with long waits and limited availability, despite good care once seen.
-  Frequent changes in carers which caused frustration and a lack of continuity of care.
-  Hospital delays, including lack of available beds and repeated moves between wards, caused distress and frustration.

-  Personal care needs were sometimes not met in hospital settings, particularly for people with learning disabilities or mental health needs.
-  Care passports sent with patients were not always used or acknowledged by hospital staff.
-  Poor communication in hospital led to uncertainty about diagnoses, treatment decisions, and care plans.
-  Some patients felt they were not listened to, especially regarding long-term conditions and medication management.
-  Long waiting times for referrals, specialist appointments, and treatments caused anxiety and uncertainty.
-  Difficulty accessing NHS dental services, including for people with additional or special needs.
-  Transport to some hospital sites was challenging and expensive, creating barriers to attending appointments.

While we were there, we also heard some very positive feedback about the memory cafe from the people that attended the group saying:

 **My son struggles with mental health, and other health problems including learning disabilities and also has mobility issues, that he never wants to get out of the house. The only time he will be excited to go anywhere is when we come to the groups here because everyone loves him. So, we come here every week even when he doesn't feel like it because everyone is friendly to him and he's made to feel welcome - he talks to everyone here and he enjoys all the activities** 

 **It is great coming to the memory café. I have been coming here for a few months, it gives me something to do and gets me out of the house. The people are friendly and we all know each other. The staff are brilliant and there is something on in here most days with different**



groups. You can get a good breakfast as well, you have to pay but it's good for what you get and saves me cooking 🍌

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 the memory clinic at Parson Cross Community Development Forum and everyone who shared their feedback 😊