

Archive Sheffield

In collaboration with

Healthwatch Sheffield

**Our job is not to speak for
people, but to contribute to
a culture where people
feel empowered to speak up for
themselves and be confident
that their views will be valued.**

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Sheffield

is not place

it is people

The vision of Healthwatch Sheffield is for health and social care services to be designed, commissioned and delivered using the views of Sheffield's people.

We do this by connecting people with lived experiences of health and social care with the people who deliver and run services.

As well as seeking the public's views ourselves, we encourage and advise services on how best to involve people in decisions that affect them. Our sole purpose is to help make care better for people.

Through this collaboration with Archive Sheffield, we celebrate the people who, inspired by their own experience, or the experience of someone close to them, are using their insights to make things better for others.



Chelsea Saynor-Young
Photo: Karina Lax

Diane Cairns
Photo: Gemma Thorpe



Vicky Laylor
Photo: Andy Brown



Sharon Hirshman
Photo: Nathan Gibson



Eunice Batty
Photo: Marcus Sarko

Blake Williamson
Photo: Nathan Gibson



Lee Harker
Photo: Marcus Sarko

Caroline Waugh
Photo: Andy Brown



Subeyr Abdi
Photo: Gemma Thorpe

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Chelsea Saynor-Young

As a young teenager I struggled with ill mental health, and my decade long battle with self harm began. I never felt good enough, like I fit in, had extremely low self-esteem and confidence. I became pregnant at 15 and threw myself into being the best mother I could, which also made me determined to do well for myself and prove people wrong. I have always felt that I have had to put more effort in than others to achieve what I set out to do, and so when I finally began studying for a degree in social sciences I worked harder than I ever had, often at the detriment of my family and social life.

During this time I became aware of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and how this manifests in girls. Everything clicked into place, but the battle to get a diagnosis was gruelling and at times I felt like I was being called a liar — all because I was intelligent and had a degree. The work I do is an attempt at healing myself and ensuring other girls and young women — as well as those who support them — feel heard, supported, believed and of worth.

Diane Cairns

Supporting people and campaigning to have their voices heard has always been important to me, even before I went through cancer last year.

Whilst I was being treated I had radio-therapy, chemotherapy, lost my hair and half my teeth, suffered from fatigue and depression. I felt I'd lost myself. Having cancer has made me more determined to fight for others and use my experiences to make cancer a more open topic.

At Manor and Castle Development Trust I lead on the Be Cancer SAFE campaign. In an area of Sheffield where people don't often go for screening, or take up the non-medical services available to them in Sheffield, it's so important to talk about cancer. I deliver 'Art and Conversation' sessions with community groups supported by Cancer Champion volunteers, using access to art as a media to enable people to pledge to go for screening or to talk more openly about cancer. I'm also starting a singing group for anyone who's been touched by cancer as part of the legacy after the *Be Cancer Safe* campaign finishes in September 2019. I want to promote the importance of self-care.

A message that got me through my journey: *"How you feel now is just the illness. You will be 'you' again, but you will be stronger."*

Vicky Laylor

As a trans woman myself, and also being pansexual (so it's more about the person), I've seen first-hand how hard it can be to come out and live your truth.

I was born to evangelical Christian parents and siblings that felt like a cult. Being any part of the LGBT+ community was forbidden, so I grew up in a very homophobic family environment. But as the saying goes; what doesn't kill you makes you stronger! I'm now using that strength and confidence to help others who may be struggling with who they are, as I was at one time.

Sharon Hirshman

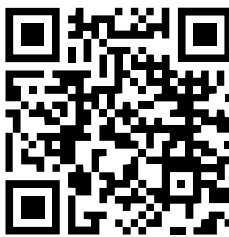
I am profoundly deaf and I am an advocate for the deaf community in Sheffield on a voluntary basis. I work to try and improve access for deaf people in Sheffield, including myself. As a deaf person I have always experienced barriers in accessing services, but this had a major impact on me when my son's health appointment was cancelled — as they couldn't get an interpreter for me. That was when I felt I had to take action, to stop this happening to deaf people. The lack of access to services increases the risk of people reaching crisis point and requiring emergency intervention later in life. As part of my campaigning I met with Healthwatch and together we have fought for access and set up workshops with health and social care services and stakeholders. I will not give up until deaf people have equal access to public services.

Eunice Batty

I left school at 14 and went to work sewing uniforms for the forces. At the weekends I took children from an orphanage out to tea. The children were taken from their parents after being cruelly treated. I've always wanted to help other people in need, especially children. When I retired something was missing, so in my later years I took my community work up. I saw the need for change in my local area and so for five years in Sharrow I developed wardens and policing, as well as a boxing gym to get boys off the streets. I joined our tenants association and have brought about a new playground and basketball area. I know our children are our next generation and need our guidance in a positive direction.

I now also volunteer for the Accountable Care Partnership and for Healthwatch as well as other health involvement groups. I also wrote to our local MP — to bring about changes with our GP practice. I believe we should all work together to make our areas positive, safe and happy to live in — it's essential in keeping our communities healthy.

www.archive-sheffield.org
www.healthwatchsheffield.co.uk



Blake Williamson

Sheffield is my city and I am passionate about making it better for everyone. It needs to be a place where we can all pass on knowledge. The work I do with Healthwatch and the Local Authority/NHS is about now, and the next generation.

Lee Harker

My twin sister and I were born in 1960. She weighed 2lb 2oz and I was just 2lb. Complications from my birth left me with cerebral palsy. Some people say that I got the rough end of the deal as I'm far more disabled than my sister, but I don't think of it like that. I believe you make of life what you want to.

I started having carers come into my home when I was 24. I believe staff often aren't trained well and think they're in charge. They assume too quickly that people don't have mental capacity and make decisions for them, which is wrong.

My experiences of home care drove me to make changes to help others. I started taking action at the age of about 20. I'm a founding member and director for Disability Sheffield. I volunteer for Healthwatch and sit on the Safeguarding Board at the Council. I talk to people commissioning care services, as well as the providers, about what a good service should look like. I also get involved with ensuring major buildings in the city, like the Winter Gardens and Town Hall, are accessible for disabled people.

Caroline Waugh

I have used my personal experience to help other people by sharing things that have worked for me. I am always respectful that everyone is different. Fortunately/unfortunately I have a variety of health experiences and so I now work with Social Work England — promoting coproduction. I love sharing my knowledge with others.

My passion is disability cycling which I have been doing for 10 years, since Disability Sheffield put me in touch with Steve Marsden of Cycling UK. I needed a way to take my children to school and nursery after becoming a single parent. I swapped my electric mobility scooter for a recumbent tricycle called Gretel. I then wanted to enable other disabled adults to try cycling. I helped start a drop in — Cycling 4 All, where people could use accessible cycles for exercise and fun, whilst also promoting mental wellbeing. You can ride a cycle with help from trained instructors and it's an opportunity to meet some lovely people, have a cuppa and make friends.

This work led to me carrying the Olympic Torch in 2012.

Subeyr Abdi

I have volunteered for Healthwatch, the Children's Hospital Youth Forum and ACCT (Asperger's Children and Carers Together) — an autism charity, as well as helping at an event for ADIRA about black people's mental health.

My friend's son has very acute autism so I wanted to learn more about how people live with autism and the effect it has on families. Engaging with the kids at ACCT has shown me all the different kinds and levels of support that might be needed. I've also seen how the network of support at the group really helps parents who might be worried or struggling with their child's needs.

A friend of mine suffers from epilepsy — I've seen how paramedics helped him. I wanted to see how health services worked and learn about mental health too. Through Healthwatch and the Youth Forum I've seen, by taking part in events like the Festival of Debate, how poor mental health can be detrimental to people's health. I feel more understanding to others' struggles with mental illness and, I hope, better equipped to engage and help.

Melissa Simmonds

I'm a born and bred Yorkshire lass and I'm old enough to remember 2p and 5p bus fares for kids and adults. I'm Black British (my people originate from Jamaica), and remember when it was acceptable to have Golliwogs on tv. I'm also autistic, recently diagnosed, and remember a time when few of us received diagnosis because the parameters for identification were so small that it was ring fenced to mainly non-verbal, mainly white children and mainly boys.

I'm part of several communities but my experiences make me feel displaced in them, so I decided to co-produce my own tribe, of like-minded people who acknowledge the intersectionality of women, black and brown people, disabled individuals and the working classes. I believe the key to birthing an autism aware city is through educating its youngest residents — children — as they are like sponges, they love to learn, they have more empathy and problem-solving skills than we give them credit for. I detest journals and scholars who write in elitist terms. All knowledge, especially around disability and ethnicity, must be disseminated because knowledge is power and the black, brown and disabled communities will continue to be oppressed until we have the knowledge to represent ourselves.

Melissa Simmonds
 Photo: Karina Lax

