

Title page: 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”

Archive Sheffield issue 7 – ‘Sheffield is not place it is people’. www.archive-sheffield.org,
www.healthwatchsheffield.co.uk



Chelsea Saynor-Young

Chelsea’s picture shows her wearing a purple dress, standing in front of a hedgerow full of pink/purple flowers. She looks off to the side of the camera and smiles.

“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

Diane's picture shows her sat on a bench in front of a brick wall with a mural of trees and a sunshine painted on it. She wears a t-shirt with a dalek on it and looks past the camera, smiling.

"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 radiotherapy, 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

Vicky's picture shows her sitting in an armchair, in a room full of ornate mirrors. She twists to face the photographer and looks directly at the camera.

"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

Sharon's picture shows her wearing a floral top, standing in front of some palm plants. She has her hands clasped in front of her and smiles at the camera.

"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

Eunice's picture shows her standing in her living room. She wears all white and looks off to the side, smiling and clasping her hands in front of her. Around her we see a large rug, a sofa, an ornate lamp, a vase of flowers, and other personal effects.

"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."



Blake Williamson

Blake's picture is a close shot of his head and shoulders. He is outside in front of some trees, wearing a red striped polo shirt and smiling off to the side.

"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

Lee's picture shows him outside The Circle, the building where he does a lot of his volunteering. He is in his wheelchair in the road, The Circle on one side and blocks of flats on the other. He smiles at the camera.

"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

Caroline's picture shows her standing in a park. She is looking at something past the camera and laughing. Behind her, we see people on an adapted bicycle which allows two people to sit next to each other.

"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

Subeyr's picture shows him sitting on a wooden seat, with a bench and hedgerow full of purple flowers behind him. He is wearing a pink tshirt which says 'Asperger's Children & Carers Together'. He sits resting his elbows on his legs and smiles at the camera.

"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

Melissa's picture shows her standing in a clearing, with flowers and tall grasses in front of her and tall trees behind her. Her daughter stands on one side hugging her around the waist, while her son stands on the other side resting his head on her shoulder. They all look off into the distance.

"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 problemsolving 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."