

Foxhill Speaks Up Project Report

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healthwatch
Sheffield



The aim

The aim of the Foxhill Speaks Up Project was to deliver a range of engagement events and community 'get togethers' to provide local residents with a comfortable and relaxed environment in which to feed back about their views and experiences of health and social care in Sheffield.

We hoped to have reached and gathered the thoughts of over 100 local residents during the project period by engaging them in activities such as crafts or chairrobics.

In terms of what we were hoping to learn, we hoped to find out if local residents were experiencing similar issues when accessing health and social care provision, and to get a feeling of how health and social care was rated locally.

What we did

We started by advertising taster sessions for craft taster sessions and chairrobics taster sessions, as a 'hook' to bring local residents together. Both of these sessions ran for a six week period. We had 12 individuals in total attend the craft taster sessions and 11 individuals in total attend the chairrobics taster sessions. The sessions provided a comfortable and enjoyable space for local residents to meet up and participate in activities they collectively enjoyed. Every other week, a Forum staff member or volunteer also participated in the taster sessions to speak with the participants about their experiences of health and social care.

In addition to the taster sessions, we also visited local venues such as Foxhill Medical Centre, the local food bank and the local library to speak to local residents in attendance. These were operated as mini engagement events. A student from Sheffield Hallam University who was with us completing a work placement supported us to deliver this outreach work.

We also advertised within the In-volve Community Hub that we were collecting feedback from local residents about their experiences. We placed a flipchart board in Reception where visitors and local residents attending activities could note down their experiences, thoughts and opinions.

Throughout all engagement opportunities, in addition to verbal or written feedback, we also asked local residents to score health and social care provision in Sheffield from Poor to Excellent.



What we found out

In total we reached and gathered feedback from 67 residents from Foxhill and Parson Cross. This is lower than we were aiming to reach, however when speaking to people we did find a reluctance to contribute or get involved in the project which was disappointing.

Demographics

Of the 67 residents that we spoke to:

- 81% were women and 19% were men.
- 98% were White British
- 9% were aged 0-25, 59% were aged 26-64 and 32% were over 65.

Of those who participated, 16% rated health & social care in Sheffield as Excellent, 40% said Good, 21% said Neither Good or Not Good, 13% said Not Good and 9% thought it was Poor.

Feedback from local residents is summarised below:

GP practice appointments

- Many residents commented on the difficulty in obtaining an appointment with their GP. Residents describe regularly waiting a few minutes to have their call answered, and some didn't believe they get appointments as soon as they need.
- When calling their GP surgery, some residents felt they were being 'quizzed' or 'diagnosed' by the receptionist trying to ascertain the priority of the appointment. Residents felt like they would prefer to speak to the doctor.
- Some residents felt they had to justify why they needed an appointment and a few commented that they had been made to feel that their reason for booking an appointment wasn't valid or urgent enough.
- During a consultation with a doctor, many local residents felt as though they were only able to talk about one condition per appointment. Some felt rushed.
- A couple of residents felt like a lot of GP work was guesswork.

Residents commented on their local medical centre always being busy.

Hospital appointments

- Many residents felt as though hospital appointments were not convenient for them, however were worried to try and rearrange appointments in case they were seen as not being urgent or important.
- Parking is difficult around the Northern General Hospital.



- Residents who travel by public transport are finding it more difficult to attend appointments due to changes and reductions in bus timetables.

Pharmacies

- Feedback regarding pharmacy provision was generally positive, and many valued the help and advice they could receive from a pharmacist.

Dentists

- A few residents commented that the cost for NHS treatment at the dentist was too expensive and put them off from attending.
- Some residents didn't understand why some dentists they saw polished their teeth during a consultation, whilst another might not, therefore querying a consistent service.

Overall local residents do have a positive opinion of health and social care provision in Sheffield, but they do have some issues or concerns especially about appointments at GP practices and hospital. It is worth noting that people did feedback that they had positive experiences with their GP when they managed to get an appointment.

Recommendations

As a result of this consultation, we recommend the following:

1. There is a need to encourage greater involvement and participation by patients in GP medical centres/practices to help overcome the issues around appointments.
2. GP practices need to provide clarity/guidance for patients about wait times for appointments and what they can expect.
3. To address the reluctance of residents to get involved in this project, it would be helpful to run awareness campaigns around the role of Healthwatch in the local community.



About Healthwatch Sheffield

Healthwatch Sheffield is the city's local consumer watchdog for health and social care services. The organisation exists to help adults, children and young people to influence and improve the way health and social care services are designed and run in the city. Healthwatch Sheffield is completely independent from the NHS and Sheffield City Council.

About the #SpeakUp grants

In 2017/18 Healthwatch Sheffield ran a small grants programme called 'Speak Up'. The programme was designed to enable local organisations and community groups to gather views and experiences of health and social care services from Sheffield residents, especially from those who do not traditionally have a voice. The aim is to ensure that health and social care decision makers in the city hear from a diverse range of people about their experiences of services.

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