

# Better Care, Better Health

The Link Community

June 2018



## Introduction

The Link Community is a community hubbased in South East Sheffield. The Link Community runs a nearly new shop and delivers other activities and services to support local people.

We used a #SpeakUp grant to talk to local residents about their experiences of health and social care services.

## What we did

We spoke to 30 local people in total. They were aged 18-92 years. A questionnaire was used in an informal way to gather views at first and then we spoke more in-depth to people who showed an interest and we held group discussions. We also filmed the interviews.

## What we found out

Below is a summary of what people told us.

### GP practices

In general people said that they were happy with the service they received although the older age group felt as though GPs and nurses didn't always give them the time and help they needed because of their age.

All the older group said if their GP had not shown concern or interest in their ailment/illness they would not have returned with complaints of the same illness/ailment as they felt they were being a nuisance.

All have had experience of not going to the GPs as they felt that their condition was not serious enough to warrant a visit and they felt as though they were being a burden.

All our older group said they were reluctant to ask the GP questions as they felt that the GP did not have the time to answer them.

Sadly they all felt the services grew poorer as you grew older.

### Hospitals

All age groups had experienced either being in hospital themselves or knewan older person who had been in hospital. They felt they were not treated as well as they should be because of their age.

Many felt older people were not treated with respect and did not have their dignity taken into consideration.



### Mental health services

Some of people we spoke to suffered with mental health conditions and felt that their issues were not taken seriously by their GP.

Many raised concern about the cut backs to mental health services and the impact this had on them with support being harder to find.

Two young people who took part in the project had experiences of Child and Adult Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and the transition to adult services. Both said that they found this transition very difficult. Neither felt well supported when they made the transition and they did not feel old enough to move to adult services. They felt that the age should be raised. Both young people thought mental health issues in young people should be picked up on earlier with no waiting times, immediate referrals and that schools should take a lot greater role in any care package.

### Importance of community

Everyone said what a difference having a support network around them made, whether it be family, friends or community organisations such as ours. They all said that on many occasions if they did not have this support they would not bother looking after their health as much.

They also said if they did not have the local support of The Link to offer them advice on how to access benefits, treatments and support they would not know how to get this information and help.

### What next

Below is a summary of what we would like to see as a result of this project.

1. We would like to go on to do further research and to develop as many case studies as possible to show how valuable support networks are in people's lives.
2. The project has shown the important role our little community hub has in our community. It is becoming ever more needed as services get cut.



### **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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