



## Healthwatch Sheffield **at a** **mental health friendly activity group**

### What we did

In December 2024, we talked to people at a mental health friendly activity group, run by Sheffield Flourish. We discussed sexual health education and services, as well as other services and support.

### What we learnt

#### **Sexual health**

Here is a summary of what people told us about sexual health access and education:

- There was a **lack of knowledge about where to go** for contraception and Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) testing
- It was thought that **word of mouth** is usually how people find out about access to sexual health services
- **Travel and expense are barriers** to accessing STI and pregnancy testing
- There is a **lack of sexual health education** for groups like the mental health friendly activity group

People would like to see:

- Sexual health **outreach events** with a wide range of groups
- More information **posters and leaflets** in general community areas
- Sexual health **education delivered at their group**
- **Older people being included**, not ignored.





## Mental health support

People shared their views on mental health support and what is needed to make it better for people. They told us:

- Mental health **access** is quite good, but **complicated terms** can exclude people
- **Being judgemental** means people are less likely to access services. Train staff to be less judgemental
- More **long-term support** is needed
- Mental health services are not **patient-centred care**
- Services should **see the person** more than the illness
- Mental health should be more **care based and empathy based** – just because people aren't a danger it doesn't mean they don't need help or shouldn't be prioritised
- People need help getting out of **bad environments**
- There is no mental health support for people fleeing from **domestic violence**
- There are lots of **hoops to jump through** when you have a history of drug use from years ago and need 'PRN' (when required) medication for anxiety.



## Other services

Some people talked about other services that are important to them. They said:

- **Social care** takes too long for things to happen, a lot of people don't know how to access it
- **Disability services** require lots of proof for support, this can be detrimental to mental health
- People need **support to work**, it helps mental health.

## What next?

We will share what we have learnt with those working to make health and care better for people and the relevant services, including Sexual Health Sheffield and Sheffield Health & Social Care NHS Foundation Trust, which provides mental health services. People's views and experiences inform the improvements they make.

**Thank you to everyone who spoke with us and our community partner Sheffield Flourish for inviting us to the group. 😊**