

SpeakUp report 2024- Parson Cross Community Development Forum

We would like to extend our thanks to HealthWatch and the Parson Cross Community Development Forum for running this engagement project to explore the state of care and support for the elderly in Parson Cross and sharing the results of this work with us. The findings of this report are very useful.

We note that this engagement project ran in summer 2023, and the findings presented in this report align with some of the issues which we are already aware of and undertaking work to address across the organisation, to ensure that those who are most vulnerable or who need it most can access care.

From the findings and the report's recommendations, we can provide feedback on the work being done in relation to the themes of travel/transport to services, improving the accessibility of information and support, and supporting carers, which emerged from the feedback from the groups with whom Healthwatch engaged. Please find below a detailed response to these areas, explaining the work that has been done in addressing these areas.

Enabling people to reach services; location of services and travel

From the feedback provided by the groups within this report, transport and travel was noted as a frequent barrier to care; including issues with public transport routes, cost of travel, and having to rely on lifts from other people or taxis to attend their healthcare services. These issues can be exacerbated significantly for people with mobility issues, on a low income, or without the right public transport links nearby.

The recommendations within the report suggest that health care settings should be located close to public transport. While it is recognised that the Integrated Care Board (ICB) should lead on working with transport providers to support the development of transport links to health services across the city, we are concerned that our patients, staff, and visitors experience issues with travel to our sites via Public Transport.

We provide information on Patient Travel options, via our website (selection below taken from our website): <https://www.sth.nhs.uk/our-hospitals/royal-hallamshire-hospital/how-to-get-here>. However, we recognised that there are not always convenient public transport options.

We have recently carried out a Staff Travel Survey and whilst analysis is still ongoing, we already know we have significant information to support our continued requests to improve public transport routes, times, and frequencies to our two main campuses which would also have a positive impact on our patients/visitors. We are hoping to meet with South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) soon to discuss this feedback.

We are also looking to host/carry out a Patient Travel Survey in the near future, to gather further intelligence to support improvements. We would welcome thoughts on how we can engage further with the patient groups to build our patient travel survey.

In addition, we have identified an underused car park that we would like to repurpose as a patient park and ride site. This will require some work to establish the feasibility, so is not an immediate solution but is something which the sustainable travel team are exploring. Sheffield Teaching Hospitals are also working on partnerships with local transport providers, but these are at a very early stage of development.

While the report identified that some people said they would like to see more services delivered locally, the focus of this was not on hospital-based services but support services. In terms of bereavement support and counselling, we have a Bereavement Services team within STH, who are

based at the main Sheffield Teaching Hospitals sites (Royal Hallamshire Hospital and Northern General Hospital) but conduct a lot of activity via telephone, so this can enable people to be supported within their own locality. However, our Bereavement Services team provide administrative support with the practicalities around a bereavement (e.g. registering the death, making funeral arrangements etc.), rather than a counselling service. We do provide information and signposting to the bereavement counselling/support services which are available if people ask for this. Therefore, in terms of the feedback within the report, the services identified as ones which should be delivered locally would therefore be bereavement counselling support services, which are not delivered by us.

The feedback in the report highlighted the costs for travelling to health care appointments can be a barrier and it has been recommended that information about claiming travel costs back should be readily available for patients and the public. The **'How to find us'** patient information leaflet which is sent out with first appointment letters signposts patients to the cashiers' office for advice about travel support costs. This section says "Help with your travel expenses: If you are entitled to certain low income support benefits you may be able to receive help with your train, car mileage and bus fares to and from hospital. Further information and advice is available from the hospital Cashiers on 0114 271 2060." There is also information on the STH website about the process for claiming reimbursement for travel costs for attending health care appointments; this information was previously quite generic but based on previous feedback about making information about travel reimbursement more accessible, this has been updated in September 2023 on the website to mirror the information provided within the outpatient guide patient information leaflet. This information can be found here: <https://www.sth.nhs.uk/patients/outpatient-guide/how-to-get-here>.

In addition, we shared the detailed information provided on the HealthWatch website about support with health costs (<https://www.healthwatchsheffield.co.uk/advice-and-information/2023-07-26/help-health-costs-sheffield>) across Trust social media channels on 14th August 2023 to help this information to reach patients.

Improving accessibility of information and support

We have noted comments regarding supporting people to access health care in ways that work for them. Whilst we offer our patients the opportunity to receive communications from the hospital electronically, hard copy letters will always be available. These comments have been shared with our Patient Communication Group who are looking at the range of communication methods available along the patient pathway.

To support this, we undertook a Quality Objective in 2023/24 focussed on implementing the accessible information standard, whereby we are actively recording and flagging patients' communication needs and preferences, so that we are able to respond to these proactively.

Supporting Carers

We value the role that carers and young carers play in the support and recovery of their loved ones. We also have a duty to identify and support unpaid carers in their own right. In 2022, we published our STH Carers and Young Carers Policy as well as a set of 'Guidelines for staff' which set out the staff obligations to identify and signpost carers for further support including a carers assessment. We have a prompt in our patient administration system to remind staff to ask if a patient has someone who supports them, and this also reminds staff to give carers a copy of our 'Do you look after someone?' leaflet, which includes signposting to support agencies including Sheffield Carers Centre and Sheffield Young Carers.

In 2024, we launched our Carer's Passport which again signposts people to support, as well as encouraging clinicians to involve carers in care planning discussions, where the patient has consented to this. We launched this alongside promoting resources from Sheffield Carers Centre, including a toolkit to help staff identify people who provide unpaid support to someone else, who may not currently identify themselves as carers. We also published a [new page on our website](#) with support and signposting for carers. We continue to strive to improve the ways we work in partnership with unpaid carers, and to ensure that we signpost carers to access the support they need both in caring for the person they look after, and for themselves.