



# SpeakUp Project

Newfield Green Library

**#SpeakUp**

July 2019

## Introduction

Reach South Sheffield (RSS) is a community regeneration organization working towards improving the lives of local people. Reach South Sheffield works primarily with the communities of Gleadless Valley, Lowedges, Batemoor and Jordanthorpe. RSS support people to gain qualifications and training, secure employment and live a lifestyle that impacts positively on physical and mental wellbeing.

Newfield Green library is a community hub (run by RSS) in the heart of the Gleadless Valley community. The library is much more than just books - it runs various groups for local people, training courses, offers free computer access and provides a safe space for local people to enjoy. One of the busiest and most diverse group is the weekly Kids Club at the library. The group is attended by an average of 20+ families and around 30 children.

## When the project took place

The Speak up project took place at Newfield Green library on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2019 at the weekly Kid's Club.

## Aims of the project

The aim of the project was to target a captive audience at the Kids Club by organizing an extended session for parents to take part in a survey about their experiences of accessing health services, in a comfortable and relaxed environment.

## What did you do

We organized a health event as an extension of the kids' club to ensure we'd have a group of people to engage with. We also advertised to the other library groups like the coffee morning and women's conversation club.

We devised a survey to act as a tool to instigate discussion points about personal experiences of health services. We provided a quiet space for people who wanted to speak in depth about their experiences. We used volunteers in the library to support us with the project.

For our clients with English as a second language, we used translated material to help them to participate in the survey.

Each person who took part in the project received a gift voucher as an incentive.

## Who did you speak to

In total, we reached 36 people through the SpeakUp project. We spoke to men and women ranging from the age of 21 to 56 years. We spoke to a very diverse group with people from a range of backgrounds and various languages.

Of all the total people we spoke to:

- 82% were female
- 18% were men
- 22% were aged 21 - 35 years, 56% were 35 - 50 years, 22% were 50 +
- 40% were from the BME community and 60% were White British
- 24% were refugees / asylum seekers

## Key findings

### GP Practice

- Many participants commented on the difficulty in obtaining appointments to see their GP. They described waiting a long time to get through to the surgery and often it being too late to receive an appointment.
- When calling their GP surgery some felt they were being questioned and 'put on the spot' by the receptionists. Some people said they were put off calling their GP practice due to the attitude of the receptionists.
- During consultation with their GP, many participants feel rushed and therefore don't have enough time to discuss their health issues. This is particularly difficult for patients with mental health problems and anxiety, as they often need more time to talk to their GP.
- Some participants said they never get seen on time by their GP. They feel like a 3 minute appointment with their GP can take up at least an hour due to the waiting times.
- A couple of participants said they didn't always feel listened to by their GP and that their symptoms were dismissed.
- Many participants with English as a second language said that there isn't always access to interpreters at GP practices. Even when interpreters are available, they are not familiar with medical terms which makes it difficult to communicate across to the patient.
- Some participants also said that the staff at their GP practice aren't culturally sensitive.
- Some participants shared positive comments about their GP practices saying they appreciated the call backs from GP's when appointments aren't available.

### Pharmacies

- Mainly positive feedback from participants. Most people said they appreciated the help and advice they receive from pharmacists. In particular, parents with young children said it was helpful for when their children required immediate medical assistance.
- Some participants said they weren't clear about what they could go to the pharmacy for and how they could be helped.

## Dentist

- Some participants (mainly parents) commented on the limited appointments available to see the dentist. Most appointments are offered during school time which can be difficult for parents to arrange.
- Many participants admitted to not attending the dentist as regularly as they should due to the lack of flexibility with appointments.

## Recommendations

Following on from our findings we recommend the following:

### GPs:

- 1) GP practices need to encourage more involvement by participants to help overcome the issues around appointments, and further training for receptionists.
- 2) GP's need to consider patients with additional support needs during consultations allowing extra time (if necessary).
- 3) More cultural sensitivity training for GPs.
- 4) Further consideration of the use of the use of adequate interpreting services, providing training on medical terms.

### Pharmacies:

- 5) Clear signposting of the services available at pharmacies, particularly for those for whom English is not their first language.

### Dentists:

- 6) More flexibility in appointments for children in order to avoid disruption to the school day.

### 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 2018/19 Healthwatch Sheffield ran a small grants programme called 'Speak Up'. Sheffield-based voluntary and community sector organisations were invited to apply for a small grant of up to £1,000 to run consultation and engagement activities. Organisations were asked to relate their projects to one of the aims and priorities in the 2018 - 2020 Healthwatch Sheffield ['Together for Good' Strategy](#).

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.



Reach South Sheffield  
187-189 Blackstock Road  
Sheffield  
S14 1FX

Telephone: (0114) 265 7093  
Email: [admin@gvcf.org.uk](mailto:admin@gvcf.org.uk)  
<http://reachsouthsheffield.org.uk>



The Circle  
33 Rockingham Lane  
Sheffield  
S1 4FW

Telephone: 0114 253 6688  
Email: [info@healthwatchsheffield.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchsheffield.co.uk)  
Text: 0741 524 9657  
[www.healthwatchsheffield.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchsheffield.co.uk)