

Details of visit

Princess Royal Hospital, Haywards Heath
Announced visited : 25 January 2017

Authorised Representatives:

Team of trained representatives from Healthwatch West Sussex: Viv Nuttall, Denise Waller and Sue Morton

Local Healthwatch contact details:

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Acknowledgements

Healthwatch West Sussex would like to thank the hospital's management, its patients, visitors and staff for their contribution to this Enter and View visit.

Disclaimer

Please note this report relates to findings observed on the specific dates set out above. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all patients, visitors and staff, only an account of what was observed and was contributed during the visit.



What is Enter and View?

Part of the local Healthwatch programme is to carry out Enter and View activities. Local Healthwatch representatives undertake these visits to health and social care services to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement. The Health and Social Care Act allows local Healthwatch authorised representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies. Enter and View visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service but, equally, they can occur when services have a good reputation - so we can learn about and share examples of what they do well from the perspective of people who experience the service first hand.

Healthwatch Enter and Views are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if a safeguarding concern arises during a visit it will be reported in accordance with Healthwatch safeguarding policy. If at any time an authorised representative observes anything they feel uncomfortable about, they are required to inform their lead who will inform the service manager and the visit will be ended.

In addition, if any member of staff wishes to raise a safeguarding issue about their employer they will be directed to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) where they are protected by legislation if they raise a concern.



Purpose of the visits

As part of our programme of engaging with local people we have a schedule of visits to hospitals across West Sussex. The purpose of this visiting programme is to:

- Speak to patients and their families to gain insight into their experiences
- Make general lay observations of staff and patient interactions, the care environment and how health and care is being provided locally.

Strategic drivers

Experience of care, clinical effectiveness and patient safety together make the three key components of quality in the NHS. Good care is linked to positive outcomes for the patient and is also associated with high levels of staff satisfaction.

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/pe/>

As the independent watchdog for health and care in West Sussex we want to gather personal accounts from people who are currently receiving treatment, care and support. This in turn will enable us to help local NHS organisations to better understand their patients lived experiences to improve the health and wellbeing outcome for future patients.

Methodology

We have created a co-ordinated, announced programme of independent hospital visits. Each visit involves a team of training authorised representatives. Our representatives are tasked with approaching patients; visitors and staff member, to introduce Healthwatch and our role in supporting health and social care organisations to deliver the right quality of care, and to invite people to share their personal experiences, good and bad. These are captured using our standard feedback form and then entered on our secure database.

Representatives are required to note their observations and to complete a summary sheet together, immediately after completing the visiting activity.

Where we have insight from engaging with local people this may inform the areas we visited.

We spoke to people in the hospital's outpatient department, fracture clinic, rehabilitation area, A&E and the Critical Decisions Unit. We spoke to over 40 people during the visit and captured 34 personal accounts.

Our sharing of anonymised information here contains examples and/or quotes to amplify peoples' voices. The names used are ones we have given and not an actual names.



Summary of findings

- Patients were very positive about their experiences at the hospital and we observed staff being involved and giving time to patients.
- Long waits in the Clinical Decisions Unit and for some a lack of involvement in decisions
- Parking is an issue for many people, both in getting a space and the cost of parking
- Examples of poor administrative processes
- Cleanliness of the toilets
- Mixed experiences of patients who received care at Royal Sussex Hospital, as well as this hospital

Results of Visit

Our representatives were made very welcome in each area and given access to patients.

All departments visited seemed relatively quiet. We were told that the hospital was operating in code green, having been black (meaning no beds available) during the Christmas and the New Year period.

Overall experience

Over 65% of the patients, or their relatives we spoke too, gave very positive accounts of their experience at the hospital and notably the caring attitude of staffs. Our representatives observed this in practice and noted that staff seemed really focused and involved in making time and effort to communicate with patients. For example: staff calmly supporting a distress patient and making sure they had a quite space and refreshments.

Really pleased with aftercare from operation in December. 'Wicked'.

Never any problems with care.

Princess Royal Hospital is an asset to the community with very good staff.

Reception and nursing staff very friendly.

Patients in Outpatients Department

People spoke positively about other hospital areas and recognise the pressure the hospital is under, either through acceptance of waiting times, provided staff communicated the wait to them and in A&E.

Good experience of A&E but felt very sorry for staff. Ambulance after ambulance but the staff stayed calm. 'Was like a war zone' with at least five ambulances here at 9pm and the 'place was full'

Patients in A&E

Waiting times

3 in 10 people made comment about the waiting times.

We heard a few examples of people waiting in the Clinical Decisions Unit and how this was not a particularly pleasant area to wait and the patients did not understand what the reasons for the wait. This was also a services where people told us they did not feel involved in decisions about their care.

Parking

1 in 3 people spoke negatively about the parking at the hospital, having experienced difficulties in getting a parking space and also of the cost.

I had to arrive 30 minutes early to get a space and arrived very stressed.

Car parking is a nightmare. I had an hour's drive round to find somewhere to park.

As the car park is pay and display and you don't know how long you are going to be, and its too far to top up, you over pay.

Parking is very difficult even with a blue badge. Also very difficult to drop off a patient who is in a wheelchair - not much room in drop off area.

Due to the demand for parking space patients are using all parking areas and one of the challenges when using the lower car parks in the lack of pavement and patients in wheelchair and with young children are walking in the road.

Some patients' put forward some suggestions or questions on the parking. For example: to consider a park and ride scheme, and a question on where does the parking income get spent?

A member of the hospital's management has told us that the Trust is looking at improving the drop off zone and short term parking charges and we will follow this up with the Trust.

Administration

A number of patients made reference to the difficulties they had experience due to booking or administrative processes. We heard some examples where the system did not appear to be working as it should, for example: someone had been waiting two years for their yearly appointment and was only there (on day of visit) due to a cancellation. Others described difficulties in either getting into the system to see someone, or when transferring to other areas of the hospital or for physio.

Communication with administration over annual eye appointment was not good. Didn't get notification of an appointment. Then everyone was very vague.

Cleanliness of the toilets and resources

The cleanliness of the toilets were not as we would expect and was also something that patients noted both during our visit and through other insight. This issue was immediately brought to the attention of the hospital management team, who took prompt action. We have also been assured that this will be monitored. We will be revisiting the hospital in a few months as part of the annual, national Patient-Led Assessment of the Care Environment programme and will be expecting to see a sustained improvement.

One patient commented there was not anywhere to dry their hands in the toilet they used.

We noted some of the anti-bacterial dispensers were empty and again we raised this.

Patient Information

A patient told us how they had been able to show the bus driver their hospital letter and because of this got on the bus free. We were told that this used to be included in the hospital letter but is no longer.

Royal Sussex Hospital

The Royal Sussex Hospital and Princess Royal Hospital are run by the Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals Foundation Trust. We spoke to patients who had experiences treatment and care at both hospitals.

We heard from patients who lived close to the Royal Sussex Hospital but due to either lack of staff or the refurbishment were having to go to this hospital in Haywards Heath. The patients all felt this was a difficult journey for them. One person said the journey had taken them hours.

There was a mix of comments from people about their experience at the Royal Sussex Hospital.

Excellent oncology treatment last year. Had operation at Brighton and transferred to Princess Royal Hospital for rehab.

I was in hospital for two months and not given a choice. Care was very poor at Royal Sussex and they made conflicting comments. Nurses didn't explain procedures in a way I could understand... I'm happy today as I'm getting some treatment.

Additional findings

Ambulance Service

During our visit we heard a couple of accounts relating to the ambulance service which we will share with South East Coastal Ambulance Service.

Felt ambulance service bedside conduct left a lot to be desired. Very rude and unsympathetic to my needs was in pain but no help was given. I didn't raise a complaint because I was in too much pain.

Ambulance crew didn't know the route very well.

Our representatives tried to engage with a team of 4 ambulance staff in the public restaurant. One of the team appeared keen to talk to us but we were promptly told by the driving instructor that they were on a break and would not be talking to us.

Recommendations

From our findings we would make the following recommendations:

- Trust shares the overall positive way patients are feeling about their current treatment and care with staff teams, so they can benefit from this feedback
- Revisit the out-patient letters, or information leaflets, to see if there is an opportunity to encourage people to use public transport, e.g. there is free travel, easy routes, etc.
- Use insight relating to parking to inform the Trust's current work in this area.
- Share feedback from Clinical Decisions Unit to support the staff team to look at how patient communication could be improved to make sure all patients are involved in decision making and understand why some waiting is necessary.

Service Provider response

The trust has reviewed this document and suggested amendments have been made.

