

Healthwatch Cheshire West Enter and View Report - NHS	
Enter and View Visit to	Countess of Chester Hospital (COCH) Countess of Chester NHS Foundation Trust Liverpool Road ChesterCH1 1UL Public areas including Reception, Walkways and Parking
Date	15 th January 2014 arriving at 10.10 am
Authorised Representatives	Betty Shepherd, Rhiannon Wilson, Margaret Yorke assisted by Neil Garbett from the Healthwatch Team.
Authorized Representatives would like to thank all members of staff and members of the public including patients who were kind enough to engage with them during the visit.	
Background	The Countess is a Foundation Trust Hospital covering the Chester and Ellesmere Port areas. The hospital also caters for certain admissions and elective surgery for patients from North Wales and the Wirral. Parts of the hospital viewed by representatives on this visit included main reception, main corridors, other waiting areas, gardens and grounds. In addition representatives were able to interact with members of the public, staff and service users.
Overall Impression	All corridors were clean. Signposting in and around the hospital was generally good although representatives did feel that in certain areas this could be made clearer. Waiting areas were fit for purpose and at time of visit not overcrowded. Representatives have made a number of comments on door furniture in the main body of this report those referring to the accessible toilets located either side of main reception should be given a high priority.
Any ideas or suggestions for improving service?	Accessible toilets throughout the building should be assessed and fitted with appropriate door furniture to comply with Building Regulations part M 2004 'Access to and use of buildings.' Representatives feel that the Trust should set the highest possible standard on this. The Trust should give the provision of parking improvements very high priority as well as the movement of vehicles on the site itself.

Welcoming

Main reception is a fairly welcoming environment. It was pleasing to see volunteers available to help with requests from public.

The reception area has a small café serving drinks and a variety of snacks. Staff were pleasant and welcoming.

Arrangements of chairs and tables were adequate and the area was clean.

Other waiting areas were clean and calm.

Visiting times - It was felt that these could be more clearly displayed in the reception area. When asked about visiting times were directed to an A4 Perspex stand with this information on.

Located along the corridor of the hospital were a number of information displays. Representatives were particularly impressed with the information available in the MacMillan centre.

Safety

Toilets around the reception area were clean and supplied with toilet roll.

Representatives were concerned that the door furniture on both accessible toilets either side of the reception area are inadequate in that they are both difficult to lock with a clenched fist -

Extract from Building Regulations part M 2004 'Access to and use of buildings.' -

- *Powered door solution preferred option - preferably sliding to avoid accidental collision.*
- *Doors to have maximum opening force at leading edge of 20N and to be held shut.*
- *Door furniture to be easily operated by a closed fist, visually apparent i.e. contrasting with door surface and not cold to touch.*

Representatives feel that as these toilets serve a main reception area; these doors should be looked at with urgency. In addition all other accessible toilets on site should be assessed to check compliance.

These faults were reported to reception at time of visit and members of hospital staff on reception were asked by Representatives to pass on comments to estates managers.

Corridor areas were clean and uncluttered. Although in one or two areas the corridor area was being used for unused trolley beds these did not impede movement. One unused bed had been flagged "Checked Safe by (NAME)" on a white piece of A4 paper (attached by blu-tac). Representatives felt that a more appropriate way of labelling might be considered e.g. tied luggage label.

Representatives noted that a number of pleasant courtyard garden areas were accessible from the corridor areas and that these were extremely well maintained. However, it was noted that the doors to access these locations were not powered and would cause some difficulty of access to a wheelchair user. **It was noted that on the one set of doors (to the sensory garden) that were fitted with a powered door system, the electronic system was not working.**

Caring and involving

Over the period of the visit representatives were able to interact with 35 - 40 members of staff and public. All service users commented that they were very happy with the services provided by the hospital. When asked if they had any difficulty navigating around the hospital most said they had no problem but nearly all commented on car parking issues.

One service user commented that on a previous visit they had planned in a timeframe of 30 minutes to allow for parking, they had waited over 45 minutes to get a space and had as a result missed their appointment.

Another commented that they had followed signs and directions in literature provided by the hospital only to find that parking was now designated blue badge only in that area.

Representatives themselves had experienced difficulty parking at 10.00 am and one representative had queued to get onto the site.

A number of staff members spoken to also commented on the parking problems reporting that this issue was compounded by building developments.

It was noted that one parking payment machine was out of order with a notice on it directing service users to A and E.

One couple who had arrived on foot commented on a footpath leading off the Countess Way Roundabout onto the site was, "Flooded and now very narrow requiring maintenance."

Site observations by representatives indicated that a number of temporary changes have been made recently with paper notices taped to existing signs.

On one area of the car park deep tyre tracks across a grass verge indicated that a number of vehicles had experienced some difficulty turning in one location near the A and E department. A number of vehicles were observed drawing up to car park barriers, reversing and then dropping off, this caused some confusion and delay for drivers behind them.

One service user commented that they, "Used Morrison's Car park across the road because it was free and you could always find a space."

A member of staff felt that at certain times of the year e.g. Christmas, some shoppers were using the car park as it was cheaper than the car parking in the City Centre and the busses ran very regularly to the hospital. She actually used the phrase, "A lot of people use the car park like 'Park-and Ride'."

One service user commented that they found the system of paying for the car park confusing.

Another service user who attended for weekly appointments told representatives that they could not understand why you could not get a season ticket for parking.

"Most of the time I am only here for an hour and a half, yet have to pay three quid for five hours."

Well organised and calm

All public areas were calm and well organized. There seemed adequate provision of seats in all waiting areas visited.

Additional Comments - Notes

Action Points - Following the action of representatives raising the issue of the accessible toilet door furniture, estates management at the hospital have contacted the Healthwatch Team (16/01/14) to confirm that they are to rectify this point.