

Healthwatch Blackpool

Blackpool Victoria Hospital
Outpatients Consumer Review, August 2015

www.healthwatchblackpool.co.uk



Introduction - Why did we do this?

Healthwatch Blackpool ran a 'concerns' survey in May-June 2015 to collect data and views of people who use Blackpool's health and social care services. Among the results and feedback we received were a number of issues that were raised about Blackpool Victoria Hospital outpatients. Healthwatch Blackpool felt it was important to visit the outpatients department at Blackpool Victoria Hospital to talk to patients in more detail about their views and experiences of the service they receive.

Our aim:

Develop a semi structured interview questionnaire that would enable us to gather quantitative and qualitative feedback from patients in the hospital outpatients waiting areas over the course of two days.

What we did:

We took into account the fact that people may be waiting to be called for an appointment and may have limited time to talk, may be quite anxious about their pending appointment, and also may not feel comfortable talking in a public area and personal experiences. We ensured that the questions were not personal in nature i.e. asking about specific conditions, and could be answered quickly with a choice of responses and/or rating system but also allowed the opportunity for patients to qualify their responses if they felt they had an opinion or experience they wanted to voice. The questions were around referral processes, choose and book, waiting times and accessibility.

The review took place in the following areas: Ear, Nose & Throat, Orthopaedics, Maxillofacial, Ophthalmic, Neurology outpatient's clinics and spoke to people waiting for patient transport on the morning of 17th and afternoon of 18th of August 2015. We spoke with 64 people and collected 47 fully completed responses (partially or incomplete surveys have been omitted). Those who were called in to their appointment while they were speaking to us or those who did not wish to speak at that time, were supplied with self-addressed envelopes for them to return their survey to us once completed.

Thank you to:

Sr Elaine Fishwick, Outpatients Manager and all the staff within the outpatient's clinics in Blackpool Victoria Hospital. Valerie Pemberton for her input during the planning session. Andrew Heath, Patient Experience and Engagement manager at Blackpool Victoria Hospital.

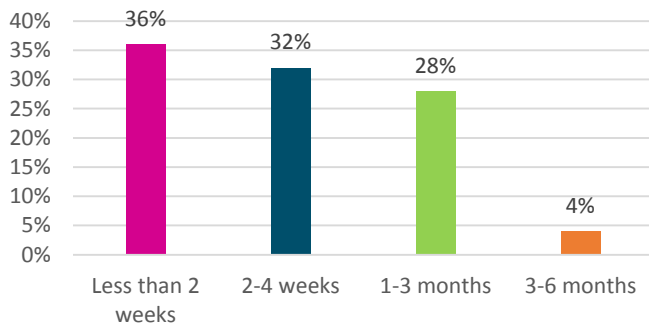
Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to views collected during the specific dates 17th - 18th of August 2015. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experience of *all* members of the community just the sample who agreed to complete our survey.

Blackpool Victoria Hospital Outpatients Consumer Review

Of the 47 people we spoke to 26% were attending their first appointment and 74% were attending a follow up/subsequent appointment. We were interested in finding out who had referred them to the hospital and how long they had to wait for an appointment.

How long did you wait for an appointment?



Referral Source

59%	General Practitioner
24%	Other Sources
17%	Accident and Emergency

41% of the people we spoke to said their referral for a hospital appointment was classed as urgent

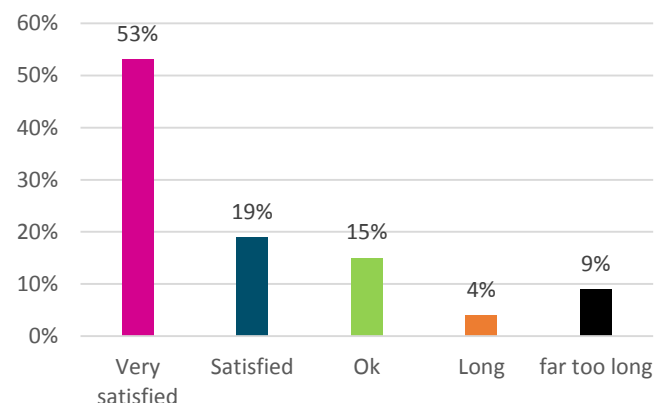
36%	got an appointment within 2 weeks
68%	got an appointment within 4 weeks
32%	had to wait over a month

According to the NHS's e-referral service¹:

"You have the right to think about your choices, compare different options and book your appointment at a later stage."

52% of the people we spoke to were not given choices and options with regard to their appointment and 68% were unaware of NHS choices. Many reported that they just got an appointment through the post, however this was deemed acceptable protocol to the majority of the people we spoke to. As we were primarily speaking with Blackpool residents they reported that Victoria Hospital would be their first choice anyway for convenience and were happy to accept the first available appointment they were given.

How satisfied are you with the wait for an appointment?



90% of the people we spoke with felt it was easy or very easy to get an appointment.

"I would have picked Blackpool hospital anyway as I live in Blackpool."

The NHS e-referral service replaced choose and book in June 2015.¹

72% of people were either satisfied/very satisfied with the time it took to get an appointment

¹ <http://www.nhs.uk/choiceintheNHS/Yourchoices/appointment-booking/Pages/about-the-referral-system.aspx>

Appointments being cancelled or rescheduled

28% of the people we spoke to told us that they had had their appointment cancelled or rescheduled. And over 36% told us that this had happened on more than one occasion.

“Not good as I was prepared then it got cancelled.”

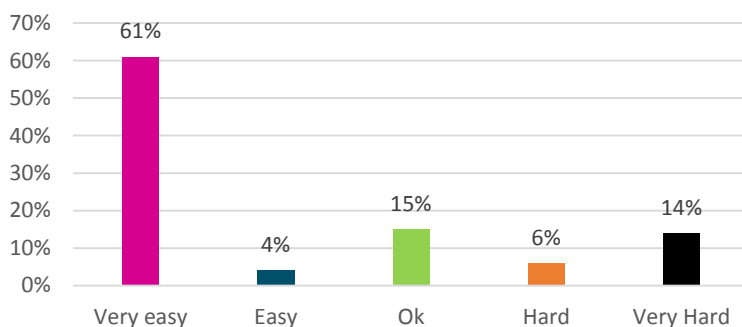
“It was easy to reschedule but took a while”

Finding the clinic & checking in

Of the people we spoke to **61%** told us that it was easy to find the correct department because they were familiar with the hospital and layout or that the **navigators at the entrance helped** them. People who were unfamiliar with the hospital told us that they found it hard/very hard (20%) to find their way around because the **signage was unclear**.

One person told us: *“A map would have been helpful especially when it came to where to park.”* The distance to the outpatients from the main entrance and car park was highlighted as a concern *“they could do with a shuttle bus, it’s a long way when you are unwell”* and it was suggested by a number of people that the outpatients letter should direct people to the closer car parks on Whinney Heys Road rather than the main entrance.

How easy was it to find the clinic/department?



Once at the clinics **74%** of patients reported that checking in was **easy or very easy**. **Almost 3 quarters (72%)** didn't use the electronic check in.

“It was broken, I don’t feel like I trust it to work.”

“The department doesn’t have one.”

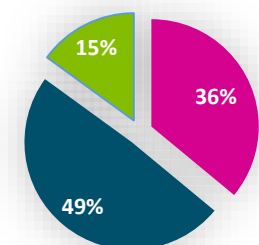
36% of appointments were running late.

People seemed accepting of the fact that appointments were or might run late and said that they understood and didn't mind waiting as long as they were kept informed.

41% were kept informed when clinics were running late

59% were **NOT** kept informed

Is your appointment running late?



■ Yes ■ No ■ I'm early

“I’ve not got a problem waiting, I just wish they told me when I checked in”

Out of 5, how would you rate the following?

Attitude and helpfulness of staff:

“Everything was done in one visit which was brilliant”



3.5 out of 5

Accessibility of outpatients?

“I’d like to be able to get prescriptions from hospital pharmacist. We have to walk somewhere else before going home.”



3.4 out of 5

Comfort of the waiting room?

“It’s nice and clean and doesn’t smell”



3.4 out of 5

Availability of relevant information?

“They need more people who can speak other languages”



2.7 out of 5

Overall how happy are you?

“The system’s pretty good. For the volume of people half an hour isn’t long.”



3.5 out of 5

Findings

1. **68%** of patients got an initial appointment within 4 weeks.
2. **90%** of people felt that the current system for booking, re-arranging appointments and cancelling them was very easy to use.
3. **36%** of appointments were running late but the majority of people were not kept informed of the reasons why this was or how long they were expected to wait. Many people we spoke to accepted having to wait as long as they were kept informed.
4. Even though most people reported they would prefer to be seen in Blackpool Victoria, over half (53%) told us they **had not** been given a choice.
5. There is a lack of relevant information in clinics waiting rooms. It was also noted that the eye clinic does not have information on display in large print.
6. People feel the staff work hard and are respectful and treat them with dignity.
7. Electronic check in screens need to be better situated and working if they want patients to use them. People tend to favour checking in with the receptionist as they either don’t see the electronic check in or don’t have the confidence that it would work properly.
8. The distance from the main entrance to the outpatients is an issue for those with poor mobility and can cause difficulties for those unfamiliar with the hospital layout. Outpatient appointments should direct people to closer car parks and enclose a map with the appointment letter.
9. **28%** of appointments had been cancelled and over **36%** of people have had appointments cancelled on more than one occasion by the hospital.