

St James University Hospital

Eye Clinic Report

May 2016

Introduction

This piece of work is part of our ongoing Outpatients project to gain people's views and experiences of attending outpatients' appointments at Leeds Teaching Hospital NHS Trust (LTHT) between May 2016 and December 2017. This report summarises the findings of our visit to the ophthalmology outpatient clinic (eye clinic) at St James' Hospital. This is the first in a series of visits we have planned over the next 18 months. The process we adopted will act as a pilot for future visits, and give us the learning we need to ensure the success of the longer term project.

Our focus for the outpatient project is to look at the quality of information and communication patients receive before and during their appointment, waiting time concerns and physical access including parking. Each outpatient department we visit will receive a brief report of the findings and any suggestions for improvements.

Why we did it?

Healthwatch Leeds has received feedback from members of the public relating to concerns at Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust's (LTHT) outpatient departments. In addition to this, LTHT has recently implemented several new systems which are available to outpatients. These include self-check-in machines, a text reminder service and an online appointment cancellation facility. As there has been no recent data relating to patient satisfaction with these services, LTHT agreed to work in partnership with us to review its outpatients' services across Leeds.

What we did?

During May 2016 we carried out 4 visits to the eye clinic at St James Hospital. We gathered views and experiences from patients, carers and/or relatives in the waiting areas. We also made observations about the environment. The questionnaire consisted of two parts;

Part 1 asked about before and arrival at the appointment and was completed on site.

Part 2: asked about during the patients wait and leaving the clinic.

The patient was given the option to return Part 2 either on their way out or by post in a pre-paid envelope. In total we spoke to 148 patients, and 96 patients completed both parts of the survey.

Findings

Overall, the response from patients and carers/relatives has been positive. Below is a summary of people's responses to the survey.

Question and response		Comments
Did you receive clear information to prepare you for your appointment?		Some patients found that the font style and size used in the letters they received was hard to read.
Yes 93%	No 7%	Patients found that all of the information included was relevant and informative.

Did you receive a text message reminder for your appointment?				Comments
Yes 47%	No 35%	Not Sure 8%	Opted out 10%	
				Patients said it was useful to be reminded. However, some patients commented that within the space of a week, they could receive up to 3 reminders for different appointments and the text didn't state which clinic it related to. "I get confused because I have other appointments at this hospital"

Was your appointment changed or rescheduled by the hospital?				Comments
Yes 29%	No 65%	Not sure 3%	N/A 3%	
				In most cases patients were given a reason as to why their appointment was being cancelled or rescheduled. Patients said they received a new appointment within 2-3 weeks, so the waiting time for an appointment was not long.

Was Cancelling/Rearranging your appointment easy?			Comments
Yes 16%	No 13%	N/A 68%	
			Phone lines are always very busy. When patients tried to contact the clinic they were waiting an average of 20 minutes to get through to a member of staff. No-one had tried to cancel their appointment online. Reasons given for this were because they did not have access to a computer or did not know how to use one.

How was your overall experience before the appointment?				
Excellent	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor
37%	33%	23%	4%	3%

Was the clinic easy to find?		The majority of patients we spoke with visited the clinic regularly. Some people commented on the signage just before the double doors into the clinic being too small, and hard to read for people with sight problems. Also some patients were unsure of where to sit as there are no waiting area signs in the clinic.
Yes 95%	No 5%	

Are staff welcoming and helpful?			Patients commented on all the staff being very helpful
Yes 94%	No 1%	N/A 5%	

Did you use the self-check-in machine?		21% of the patients used the self-check-in machine and said it was easy to use, although there was little or no privacy 79% of the patients did not use the self-check-in because they did not know it was there, or were afraid it would not work properly. Some said they would rather talk to a person, and would not be confident using a computer due to age, sight problems etc. Some patients who self-checked-in did not realise they had to be seen by a nurse for an eye test before seeing a consultant, which caused some confusion.
Yes 21%	No 79%	

How was your overall experience at arrival?				
Excellent	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor
36%	38%	26%	-%	-%

Did you wait over your allotted appointment time? If yes how long by?			
-15mins	16-30mins	31-45mins	46mins-1hr
32%	22%	11%	11%

Patients were seen fairly quickly by the nurse, but reported the wait to see the consultant was long with no explanation for the delay, or how long they would have to wait.

Did you know who to talk to if you had any concerns in clinic?	Yes 67%	No 33%
--	---------	--------

Did staff introduce themselves before providing treatment?	Yes 93%	No 7%
--	---------	-------

Did you feel there was enough privacy when being examined or treated?	Agree 96%	Neutral 2%	Disagree 2%
---	-----------	------------	-------------

Would you recommend the clinic to family and friends?	Yes 81%	No 8%
---	---------	-------

How would you rate your overall experience at the eye clinic?				
Excellent	Very Good	Don't Know	Good	Poor
34%	32%	26%	7%	1%

Were you given a number to contact if you needed to speak to someone?			The majority of patients we spoke to did not require a follow-up appointment. The patients were given the contact telephone number for the eye clinic reception.
Yes 32%	No 30%	N/A 38%	

How would you rate your overall experience of leaving the clinic?				
Excellent	Very Good	Don't know	Good	Poor
22%	38%	1%	31%	8%

Other comments and observations

Environment

We thought that the layout of the clinic could be confusing for patients to navigate. There are no signs within the clinic showing where the reception area is, where to sit, or how to exit the clinic.

Waiting areas

There were a number of comments from patients who felt there was a lack of space and not enough seats. It was described as 'cramped and claustrophobic'. There was very little room for wheelchairs or guide dogs to manoeuvre.

Parking

Parking spaces were limited outside Chancellor Wing where the eye clinic is located. We also noted that some people without blue badges were sitting and waiting in the disabled parking bays.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Based on our findings and suggestions from patients and their relatives/carers, we suggest the following areas can be improved to increase the level of patient satisfaction with the eye clinic.

Environment

- Review external and internal signage with a view to making it easier for patients to navigate. This includes considering signs to indicate the clinic's reception area, waiting areas and how to exit the clinic.
- Signs also need to be easier to see for those with visual impairments. Patients suggested that this could be done by reviewing size and colouring of signage (e.g. yellow background with black font).

- Relocate the self-check-in machine, or consider ways in which patient privacy and confidentiality can be maintained.

Communication

- Review written communication received by patients before appointments, to ensure it is accessible, particularly for those with visual impairments. Some patients said that the font used in the appointment letters could be changed to a style that was easier to read.
- All patients should be made aware in the pre-appointment communications that they will have to see a nurse for a vision test before their appointment with the consultant. This will help to make the process clearer and smoother for patients.
- Ensure that there more consistency about how the clinic informs patients about any delays during the clinic and the reasons for this.
- Work with the provider of the text reminder service to find a way to indicate which clinic or service each text reminder relates to.

Next steps

This report will be shared with the Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust and the ophthalmology outpatient department. The report will also be published on ([link to HWL website](#)).

Acknowledgments

This report has been written by Parveen Ayub Community Project Worker at Healthwatch Leeds, in collaboration with project support volunteer Claire Paylor.

We would like to thank our all our volunteers Claire Paylor, John Beale, Martin Kennard, Pat Nelthorpe, Pat Newdall, Melika Griffith, Lydia Woellwarth, Alison Potts, Betty Smithson, Linn Phipps, and Tessa Francis for carrying out the surveys. Healthwatch Leeds would like to also thank the staff at LTHT for all their help with arranging the visits, and the clinic staff for their welcoming and accommodating approach during the visits.