



**Salisbury District Hospital:
A snapshot of patient
experiences**

October 2018



Healthwatch Wiltshire Engagement Lead Julie Brown, right, with volunteers Sue and Chas at Salisbury District Hospital in October 2018

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Introduction

Salisbury District Hospital were doing some work aimed at improving their understanding of the experience of patients being discharged. They invited Healthwatch Wiltshire to support this work by spending some time talking to patients at the hospital about their experiences. This was a relatively short project which aimed to get a snapshot of people's experiences of using the hospital.

What we did

We had an information stand in Springs Café at the hospital in the morning and afternoon of two different days during early October 2018. In the café, we talked to people about the role of Healthwatch Wiltshire and asked them if they would be happy to answer some questions about their experience of using the hospital.

We found that most people were happy to share their experiences of using the hospital with us. The work was supported by two of our trained volunteers who contributed four hours of their time interviewing patients and writing up their findings. Over the two days, we carried out 34 face to face interviews.

During our interviews we asked these questions:

1. How are you and/or your relative getting on in hospital?
2. Do you know about any plans that have been made for discharge?
3. What do you think about these plans?
4. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about health and care services in Wiltshire?

Who we spoke to

We spoke to 34 people:

17 commented on their experience of their discharge process

17 gave general feedback about their treatment at Salisbury Hospital



What people told us

We collected views and experiences of the process of being discharged from hospital and of treatment and care at the hospital more generally.

What people said about the process of being discharged from hospital

Most comments from patients about plans for, or experience of, discharge were positive. They highlighted the following:

- Plans for discharge were clearly explained.
- Information was given about what the patient should and shouldn't do.
- Patients were involved in discussing the support they would need and who would provide it.
- Physiotherapy and speech therapy follow-ups were arranged at home.
- Arrangements went as planned.
- Patients received a post discharge phone call.

I thought my discharge was managed well. Very supportive – nothing was missed.

We were given an information sheet about what would be needed when she came home.

They told me I wouldn't be able to stay on my own. I went to stay with my friend. It was explained to me what I could and couldn't do.

We did receive a few negative comments from some patients about the plans for, and/or experience of discharge. These comments included:

- There was a lack of information.
- There were delays collecting medication.
- Discharge seemed rushed.
- Some patients stayed in hospital longer than they needed to because of complications arranging care.

Two people said that they felt their relative's discharge was rushed and said that this meant that the person had to be readmitted.

Upon discharge, there is often a long delay between being discharged and collecting medication.
Frustrating!

Difficult getting information from staff.

It seemed they couldn't get her out quick enough, they were very busy. We had care workers coming in and out and one of them reported that she wasn't right. She was readmitted.

What people said about their treatment and care at the hospital

Most comments about people's experience of services at the hospital were positive. Such comments included:

- Staff were helpful, pleasant and kind.
- People were happy with their treatment and it was explained to them.
- Outpatient appointments were on time.
- Relatives appreciated the family room in the Intensive Care Unit.
- The food was good.

I think the nurses are very nice. Food is good. The care has been good here.

Surgical outpatients very good. On time. Everybody was friendly. Doctor thorough – very good.

Family room in ICU was really useful. If a member of staff saw we were upset they would always ask if I was ok, this was good.



What people told us

(continued)

A minority of people identified things they thought could be improved at the hospital. These included:

- Signage to the breast clinic was inaccurate and the clinic was hard to find.
- Nurses and care staff on the wards were rushed at times.
- The area around the entrance to the Day Surgery Unit appeared sparse.
- Information about waiting times for day surgery could be explained when people arrive.

I think the entrance to that section is really scruffy – bare concrete floors, not nice, looks really industrial.

When I came to the breast clinic here the signs take you to the old place, so they're wrong. It's hard to find the new place but when you do find it, it was really nice, and they made me feel at ease – it just needs better signage.



Patient story #1

We spoke to a patient and their partner who were attending a follow-up outpatients' appointment.

They told us that they had spent time in the Intensive Care Unit and then on one of the wards following a medical emergency. They told us that overall their experience of the hospital was good.

The patient could not remember much about their initial treatment. However, their partner told us that they were really impressed with the staff, and that staff were caring and compassionate towards all of them.

The patient and their partner said that when something had gone wrong with their emergency treatment, this was clearly explained to them and their family and that they had received an apology. They said that they were satisfied with this and had not made a complaint. However, they would like to have known if the hospital had taken any action to prevent this happening again.

The patient said that they were desperate to leave hospital as soon as they were well enough. They told us that the plans for discharge were discussed with them and their family and that physiotherapy and speech therapy follow up was arranged for when they returned home.

They said the arrangement for leaving hospital went as planned and they thought that it was well managed.



Patient story #2

We spoke to someone who was an inpatient. They were being supported by volunteers from ENGAGE at the hospital to go for a coffee and chat at the Springs Café. They told us that they had been in hospital for some time.

They said that they thought they had been very well treated and had got all the care that they needed. They said that the food was nice, they were given a choice, and they got plenty of tea. They said that they felt the staff put themselves out and that the hospital did very well for people.

They said that they didn't yet know about their plans for leaving hospital and that they had asked a couple of times when they could go home but had not got a satisfactory answer. They were desperate to leave hospital as soon as they were well enough. They told us that the plans for discharge were discussed with them and their family and that physiotherapy and speech therapy follow-up was arranged for when they returned home.

They said the arrangement for leaving hospital went as planned and they thought that it was well managed.



Recommendations

Overall, most comments we received from patients and their families were positive. Caring and helpful staff attitudes, good food, the quality of treatment, the standard of most information provision, and the way situations were handled when things went wrong all deserve recognition.

We suggest that Salisbury District Hospital consider the following recommendations:

- See how signage to the breast clinic can be improved.
- Improve the environment near the Day Surgery Unit entrance.
- Evaluate recent readmissions to see if lessons can be learned about the original discharge to help prevent readmissions.
- Look at ways to improve the consistency of information given to patients and their families about the plans for discharge.
- Inform patients and their families of preventative actions that have been put in place following situations where things have gone wrong.



Salisbury District Hospital.

Photo courtesy of Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust.



Response

Salisbury District Hospital said:

Salisbury District Hospital are very grateful that Healthwatch Wiltshire's volunteers gave us their time to speak to a wide range of patients and visitors about their experiences with the discharge processes at our hospital.

We were delighted that the experiences they heard about were generally positive. The few negative comments highlight additional work is needed to:

- **Improve information** – plans are well in place for a new patient information app which will make it much easier to find patient information and for ward nurses to signpost patients and their visitors to up-to-date and relevant information.
- **Reduce delays in collecting medication** – there is ongoing work to ensure that medication for patients to take home is prescribed in good time so that waiting for medication does not delay patients leaving hospital.
- **Prevent patients staying in hospital longer than necessary** – multidisciplinary staff working from within and outside of the hospital have met regularly this winter to ensure that barriers to discharging patients in time are reduced. This work is ongoing.
- **Discharge from hospital seeming rushed** – work is ongoing to ensure that plans for discharge from hospital are considered as early as possible so that plans are smooth and unrushed.
- **Improve our environment** – site development changes are currently being considered and patient feedback will be incorporated into our plans and patients will be involved in any changes we make.
- **Evaluate readmissions** – all readmissions to hospital are audited and we will continue to monitor them and make changes to our discharge processes as necessary.
- **Where things have gone wrong** – we will continue to inform patients and their families of preventative actions that have been put in place to prevent whatever happened from happening again.

The work that we do around discharge planning will be reported in our quarterly Patient Experience Report.



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