

# St Helens & Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust



**Whiston Hospital**  
**Ward Visits**  
**14 May 2019**

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## About Healthwatch

Healthwatch is the independent national champion for people who use health and social care services. We're here to find out what matters to people and help make sure their views shape the support they need.

There is a local Healthwatch in every area of England. We find out what people like about services, and what could be improved, and we share these views with those with the power to make change happen. Healthwatch also help people find the information they need about services in their area. As well as seeking the public's views ourselves, we also encourage health and social care services to involve people in decisions that affect them. One of our main purposes is to understand the needs, experiences and concerns of people who use health and social care services and to speak out on their behalf.



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# St Helens & Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

Note: The information below has been taken from the St Helens & Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust website.

St Helens and Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, provide acute in-patient, out-patient, day case and emergency services to St Helens, Knowsley, parts of Halton and Liverpool.

The new Whiston Hospital opened in 2010, boasting state-of-the-art facilities, as part of a £338 million redevelopment, which also included the opening of the new St Helens Hospital.

As well as providing all acute healthcare services including medical, surgical and diagnostic services, Whiston Hospital also provides:

- Maternity Services
- Accident and Emergency Department
- Regional Mersey Burns and Plastic Surgery Unit
- Department of Medicine for Older People
- Stroke Unit
- Children and Young People's Services

The hospital has been specifically designed with one centralised building consisting of six colour coded floor levels. The central corridor on each level allows easy access to all wards and departments.

## Introduction

Healthwatch Halton, Healthwatch Knowsley and Healthwatch St Helens each cover Whiston Hospital. Each Healthwatch has a representative on the Trust's Patient Experience Council and also meet quarterly with the Trust's Assistant Director of Governance and Patient Experience Team.

As local Healthwatch we carry out regular monthly outreach sessions at the Trust to gather the views of patients and visitors. To gain further insight on the experiences of patients at the hospital we approached the Trust with a request to visit and view the day to day running of wards and to gather the views of patients and visitors.

On 14 May 2019, volunteers and staff from Healthwatch Halton, Healthwatch Knowsley and Healthwatch St Helens visited Whiston Hospital to visit a number of wards.

We would like to extend our thanks to staff and patients at Whiston Hospital for their help during our visit.

As part of our visits we used a survey questionnaire to capture people's feedback - See Appendix A

During our visit we spoke with a total of 43 patients and visitors.

### Lower Ground Red Floor

- 1 Radiology (X-Ray, MRI, CT Scan, Ultrasound)
- 2 Observation Ward
- 3 Accident and Emergency

Central Corridor

Children's Outpatient Dept, Reception & Temporary Delivery Suite Entrance

Accident & Emergency Entrances

Key to symbols

- Lifts
- Stairs
- Toilets
- Payphone

### Level 1 Yellow Floor

- 1A Ward 1A (Acute Stroke Unit)
- 1B Ward 1B (Acute Medical Unit)
- 1C Ward 1C (Acute Medical Unit)
- 1D Ward 1D (Cardiology)
- 1E Ward 1E (Coronary Care Unit)
- 2 Cardio Diagnostic Centre
- 3 Neurophysiology
- 4 Pharmacy
- 5 General Office
- 6 The Sanctuary
- 7 Cardio Respiratory (ECG)
- 8 Endoscopy Suite
- 9 Outpatients and Blood Tests
- 10 Operational Services
- 11 Ambulance Liaison
- 12 PALS
- 13 Shops
- 14 Therapy Suite

Central Corridor

MAIN ENTRANCE and access to Multi Storey Car Park

### Level 2 Purple Floor

- 2A Ward 2A (Haematology and Oncology)
- 2B Ward 2B (Respiratory)
- 2C Ward 2C (Respiratory)
- 2D Ward 2D (General Medicine)
- 2E Ward 2E (Women's Ward)
- 3 Children's and Young People's Outpatient Department
- 4 Delivery Suite
- 5 Women's Theatres
- 6 Relatives Accommodation
- 7 Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU)
- 8 Women's Outpatient Suite

Central Corridor

### Level 3 Green Floor

- 3 ALPHA Ward 3 ALPHA (Trauma and Orthopaedics)
- 3A Ward 3A (Trauma and Orthopaedics)
- 3B Ward 3B (Trauma and Orthopaedics)
- 3C Ward 3C (Trauma and Orthopaedics)
- 3D Ward 3D (gastroenterology)
- 3E Ward 3E (Gynaecology Suite)
- 3F Ward 3F (Children & Young People)
- 4 Gynaecology Pre-Operative Clinic
- 5 BEP Clinic
- 6 Relatives Accommodation
- 7 Holbrook Unit
- 8 Burns Dressing Clinic
- 9 Prosthetics
- 10 Medical Photography

Central Corridor

### Level 4 Orange Floor

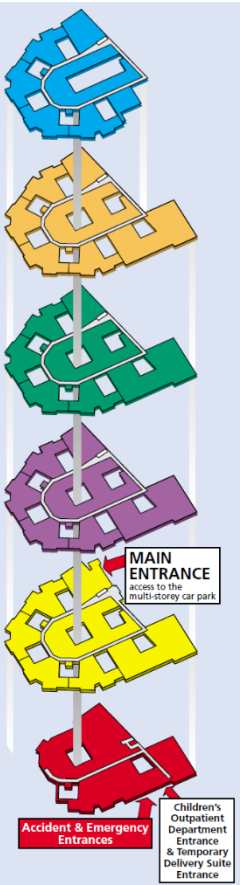
- 4A Ward 4A (General Surgery)
- 4B Ward 4B (General Surgery)
- 4C Ward 4C (General Surgery)
- 4D Ward 4D (Regional Burns Unit)
- 4E Ward 4E (Critical Care Unit)
- 4F Ward 4F (Children & Young People)
- 5 Operating Theatres

Central Corridor

### Level 5 Blue Floor

- 5A Ward 5A (Department of Medicine for Older People)
- 5B Ward 5B (Department of Medicine for Older People)
- 5C Ward 5C (Department of Medicine for Older People)
- 5D Ward 5D (Department of Medicine for Older People)
- 6 Cold Decontamination
- 7 EBME/Equipment Pool
- 8 Executive Offices
- 9 Boardroom Suite
- 10 Restaurant

Central Corridor



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# Maternity Services

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We visited the Maternity services at Whiston hospital guided by the Maternity Matron, Nicola Jones. We visited the Feto-Maternal Assessment Unit (FMAU), Maternity Triage, Delivery suite and ward 2E (Maternity).

The Healthwatch Enter and View Team were;

- Jude Burrows – Healthwatch Halton
- Jen Casey – Healthwatch Knowsley
- Gail Hughes - Healthwatch St. Helens

The Maternity areas of Whiston Hospital are located on Level 2 and are colour coded purple. Patient display boards are mounted in the corridors displaying visiting times and other patient information. Large displays of the Trusts '5 star patient care' are displayed around the Maternity units. These show the Trusts values such as compassionate, open and considerate. Staff information boards are displayed in the wards. These show the staffing levels and names of the staff on duty. A wall of 'Thank You' cards received was also displayed.

## Overview

### **Feto-Maternal Assessment Unit - FMAU**

We entered the FMAU and found the corridors and waiting area to be clean and uncluttered. Comfortable chairs and water were available for the women in the waiting area. Information leaflets were available for patients. We spoke to patients in the waiting area who told us "I have had a few visits here and it is all positive so far"

Nicola explained that women coming to the Maternity services at Whiston come from several different areas including Widnes, Runcorn, Liverpool, St. Helens and Knowsley. Different aspects of care are carried out in the hospital depending on which area the women are coming from. Patients may have their routine scans performed in the community but come to the hospital for checks and to deliver their babies.

### **Maternity Triage**

During our visit we were shown the triage area. This area is for woman who need additional checks due to concerns during pregnancy. The triage rooms contain several curtained bays where they can be examined and assessed by staff. From this area women will be sent on to the most appropriate care according to their need. This area was not being used at the time of our visit. It was clean and uncluttered with a variety of equipment ready to use.

### **Delivery Suite**

The Delivery Suite has a Reception desk/ nurses' station in the centre of the ward. A member of staff welcomed us to the ward and Nicola explained the reason for our visit. At the time of our tour a



patient had a query and was attended to promptly at the desk, by a passing member of staff. The Staff Information Board in the Delivery Suite was out of date, by one day.

There are 14 rooms including pool rooms in the Delivery Suite. Women who do not need medical intervention, to give birth, can deliver on the Sapphire Suite, which is the Midwife Led Unit. We were showed around an empty patient room and the pool room. (The pool can be used for pain relief or to give birth in, if there are no complications.) This area of the hospital was bright, clean and clutter free. Large, modern baby pictures were displayed on the walls. Nicola told us that homely touches such as fairy lights, and bubble lamps used to be available but had been removed at the request of infection control. The unit hopes to get appropriate replacements, when funding allows. Birthing balls were available in the rooms for the patient's comfort and use. The atmosphere on this ward was calm and organised.

Two bereavement rooms are available to families who have suffered the loss of a baby. These are private rooms at the end of the Delivery ward corridor. These rooms can be accessed via a different entrance in consideration for the patients and their family's needs. Mothers and their visitors can use these rooms for as long as they chose. Some families stay for several days whilst others prefer to leave right away. It is left up to the Mother, partners and families to decide.

Due to the nature of the ward we were not able to speak to any of the patients in this area. Women who have uncomplicated births are usually discharged, from the delivery Suite, to their Community Midwife within 24 hours.

## **Ward 2E**

Ward 2E is used by both Antenatal and Postnatal women. This ward has 37 beds, which includes some private side rooms. Several beds were available for new patients at the time of our visit.

Many women giving birth at Whiston Hospital will be discharged straight from the Delivery Suite, so not all maternity patients have need to use this ward.

The corridors and rooms within ward 2E are clean and bright, with large windows. The notice board displaying staffing levels was up to date with that day's information displayed. Posters with 'Check the grow before they go' were dotted around this ward to encourage baby's growth to be checked at each encounter with patients. Information posters encouraging breast feeding and skin to skin contact were displayed near to the patient's beds. These posters explained the health and bonding benefits to mothers and babies, highlighting how even one breast feed can help babies' immune systems. Nicola explained that formula milk is no longer routinely offered to Mums anymore and this is in line with most Trusts around the country. Milk can be provided in some circumstances but will usually be brought in by the families if needed. A food menu was available on the bed side tables and one Mum told us *"The food is good, they had delivery problems this week but have sorted it out"* Birthing partners or family support can stay overnight with mother's if they are using a side room. People are not permitted to stay on the ward if they are in a bay with other mums. In the past people staying overnight have caused a disruption by bringing in bedding or disturbing other patients stay. Due to this, overnight stays are limited to private rooms only. However, visiting hours are extended for partners to 8am-10pm.

Nicola checked with staff and the patients themselves if we could ask them some questions. Patients who had drawn their curtains were left undisturbed to respect their privacy. We spoke to ante and post-natal patients and visitors staying on ward 2E.

Patients over all spoke highly of the staff on Maternity, *“Really friendly staff, really knowledgeable”* and *“It’s good, nothing to complain about. The staff are really nice”*

One patient was due to move to the delivery suite and may return to her side room. She had been kept well informed about any moves that could happen and understood the reasons for them.

A Father told us *“The Maternity ward staff and the Delivery Suite Staff were amazing”* and added *“There was probably too few Docs on the ward last night, but they did an amazing job”*

## **Patient Feedback**

We spoke with 11 people, (10 patients and 1 relative). Everyone we spoke with felt that they had been treated with dignity and respect by staff at the hospital.

9 people felt that staff had enough time to spend with patients.

- *There was probably 1 too few Doctors on the ward last night but they do an amazing job.*
- *They do what they can. they need more staff at night.*
- *Excellent - no problems*
- *nothing is rushed*
- *Not so much in the day but the healthcare assistants at night are happy to have a chat.*
- *The night staff are great - Emma is so attentive and so lovely.*

9 people rated the care and treatment they received as excellent with the remaining 2 people rating the care as good.

10 people said they had been given enough information about their treatment by the hospital.

- *I was due to go home on Sunday but after a scan I needed to stay in. The midwives have explained everything to me, and I know they are doing a procedure on me on Friday. They have explained that I may come back to this room after delivery or go on to a ward depending on how me and baby are. They have kept me well informed.*
- *A mum-to-be told us, “The midwives are dead good. Doctors however say different things to me and give me inconsistent information.”*
- *The patient who felt they’d not been given enough information said, “I think when I was told about being induced, I was told it would only be a day. They should explain it can be a week.”*

## **What was good about this hospital/ward?**

- *It’s excellent, great facilities, staff I can’t really place any fair criticism.*
- *I have been in since last Wednesday, the staff are dead nice. The food is good.*



- *Everything. It is a good service. I have been in since this morning and have had a good experience. My baby's heart is being monitored. Antenatal service has been perfect too. I had 2 scans in Widnes HCRC which were very good too.*
- *You ring up and you get seen that day, even out of hours, this is excellent, providing peace of mind. The staff are very friendly.*
- *Everything has been good, no problems*
- *Its good, nothing to complain about. The staff are really nice.*
- *Really friendly staff, really knowledgeable. I have had reduced movements at times with the baby and they have been brilliant.*
- *The staff are excellent, and the service has been good*
- *My sister has been seen really quick and is being monitored as she has had sepsis, so they want to keep an eye on the baby. They have been good.*
- *They are friendly and it is a good service - they always make sure you are alright.*
- *The staff are lovely, and it is great that there is a restaurant and cafe here.*

### **What would you like to see improved?**

- *The department closes at 5pm and last time I was here there was no doctor available to discharge people. We were waiting simply to be told by the doctor we could go home. It would be better if a nurse clinician could just give us the all clear.*
- *One member of staff, their bedside manner was not as I expected it to be.*
- *Parental classes. Make them deal with things that are not 'perfect'.*
- *Ringling through to the wards - the phone always rings out.*
- *More staff are needed. They seem to be short staffed. Staff seem stressed.*

### **Summary**

The Maternity wards and clinics of Whiston Hospital are bright, clean and welcoming areas. The patient and visitors we talked to were happy overall with the care they were receiving. They gave positive comments about the Midwives but did mention how busy they are, especially during the night. The staff we met were friendly and welcoming and we would like to thank Nicola for taking the time to show us Maternity services at Whiston Hospital.

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## Ward 2D

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The visit to Ward 2D at Whiston Hospital took place on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2019, between 2.15pm and 3pm.

The Healthwatch Team were:

- Jude Burrows - Healthwatch Halton
- Jen Casey - Healthwatch Knowsley
- Gail Hughes- Healthwatch St. Helens

### Overview

Ward 2D is on the second level of Whiston hospital, in the purple area. The corridors leading to the ward are clean and accessible. The staffing levels board was displayed and up to date. A useful permanent poster was also displayed to explain what each staff uniform represents, in terms of their job role and seniority. Staff explained that this information is also displayed on meal place mats for patients to view. Visiting times were available near to the ward entrance.

Ward 2D is a busy general medicine ward at Whiston Hospital. The ward has 27 beds that are a mix of bays and single rooms. The ward matron explained that the ward specialises in diabetes and some patients using the ward can have dementia. Entrance to the ward is via a locked door and buzzer system. On entering the ward there is a reception desk but this is not manned. Signs direct visitors to the nursing stations further down the ward. Credit card sized information cards are available on the desk with the wards phone numbers. No staff were in sight when we entered the ward. Nicola (Maternity matron) went further into the ward to explain our visit. A number of Health Care Assistants were available at the nurse's station.

We were welcomed by the ward matron who gave us a tour of the ward.

The ward was clean and clutter free. Toilets and shower rooms were clearly labelled with dementia friendly signs. Patient experience boards were on display with thank you cards and feedback information. The FFT (friends and family test) information was on display. It showed the latest results from April 2019. A safety information board was also mounted on the ward wall with information on infections, clots, falls etc. The matron explained that visiting times are 12pm - 8pm, a change from the information mentioned on the hospital's website, but they are flexible with this according to the needs of the families. She added that family support is very helpful when managing the ward, as they can help with drinks and mealtimes.

The ward has been extended, with a new bay added, to allow for more beds. As this area does not have a window an artificial sky light has been added to give the impression of a sky view. This can be turned on and off. Patients around the ward had jugs of water, near to their beds, and some had been given adapted cups to drinks from. Walking aids, such as Zimmer frames, were stored neatly in the corridor.

The ward matron found patients who were happy to complete our survey. One patient was walking around the ward shouting out and singing. The staff explained that she had dementia and likes to walk about. Staff spoke to her kindly and advised us to close the ward entrance promptly as she would not be safe to leave the ward.

## **Patient Feedback**

We spoke with 5 patients on the ward. Four of the patients felt that they had been treated with dignity and respect by staff at the hospital.

The fifth patient said, *'Yes, by most of the staff, but not when I was left in the treatment room.'*

3 patients felt that staff had enough time to spend with them.

- *They are very busy - I don't have to call much as they come around often.*
- *They sit and listen and speak to you - very understanding*
- *It is very difficult to get a jug of water or extra pillow. I know these things seem trivial, but when you are ill, they matter. But I also understand that the staff are really busy.*
- *Nurses do day and night.*
- *Hard to get water or help generally.*

3 patients rated the care and treatment they received as excellent with one person rating it as good and one rating the care and treatment as terrible.

3 patients said they had been given enough information about their treatment by the hospital.

- *Plenty - the doctor has kept me informed even around medication*
- *Fully aware of what is going to happen*

2 patients felt they hadn't been given enough information about their treatment by the hospital.

- *I came in on a Sunday and have not seen a Doctor yet. I do not know what is wrong or happening next.*
- *Not given blood test results until I asked and told white blood cells high.*

Patients on ward 2D told us *"Care is good"* and *"Staff very good overall"*. However, several concerns were raised about certain parts of the patients stay.

One patient said *"I would like to see a Doctor. I am left without knowing what is wrong with me and what will happen next, since Sunday"*.

The patient explained that in the 3 days they had been on the ward they had not had a consultation and so did not know what to expect from their care or length of stay. Lack of clear communication was also mentioned by another patient, *"I was only told blood results when I asked, I would like more information"*.

When asked if staff have enough time to spend with patients we were told:

*"It is very difficult to get a jug of water or extra pillow. I know these things seem trivial, but when you are ill, they matter. But I also understand that the staff are really busy",*

*“Hard to get water or help generally”, but also, “The staff are very good, ... Nothing is too much trouble.”*

A serious issue was raised during our visit. A patient had been moved from a side room to the treatment room (room 17). She found that this was not a suitable environment to stay in and had no buzzer, window or drink available to her for 4 hours. Another patient had been using the treatment room as a bed before her. This incident was passed on to the NHS Complaint Advocate at Healthwatch St. Helens, as the patient was from the WA10 area. (The patient had already been moved to an appropriate bed in one of the bays at the time of our visit). Another patient also commented on the use of room 17, *“I was admitted to room 17 last week, there were no facilities in there, it should not be used as a room at all”* further highlighting problems with the use of this room.

A further concern was raised around infection control. A patient who had previously had a drip administered at home was worried that the same cleaning process did not take place when she was given a drip within hospital. They were used to the skin being sterilised before the needle was inserted but this had not been done on the ward. When the patient discussed this with staff, they did start using the wipes before inserting the drip.

### **What was good about this hospital/ward?**

- *Staff overall are very good.*
- *Nurses good*
- *The staff are very good, food is good. Nothing is too much trouble.*
- *They've looked after me, the staff have been excellent, I can't fault them*
- *You go home better; the staff have been great and look after you well*

### **What would you like to see improved?**

- *Infection control. When I was on a drip at home the Community nurse would always antiseptic wipe my arm and rinse before putting the line in. In the hospital they did not do this, which made me very worried as I have already had Sepsis. I asked the staff and they then started using wipes. I moved from a side room into the treatment room. This room was not suitable for someone to stay in at all. it was red hot; I had no water and no buzzer. I was left alone in there for 4 hours. I became very dehydrated and my lips cracked. I had to text a friend to come. A gentleman had been in there before me and he was given my room to watch the football. Someone told me it was because he had a bad tummy, but the Doctor said this was not the case. No one should be staying in the treatment room. I wanted to go home but I was moved to a ward bed and stayed as I needed more care. (Referred to St. Helens HW as patient a St. Helens resident and wants to raise a formal complaint)*
- *Food. There needs to be more variety especially for people who stay a long time.*

- *I was admitted to room 17 last week, there were no facilities in there, it should not be used as a room at all. I have seen 7 different consultants in one week. It would be nice to have some continuity to develop a relationship.*

## **Summary**

Ward 2D is a busy general ward. The ward was clean and clutter free with good signage to facilities. Patients and visitors were generally satisfied with the care received; however, several issues were raised at the time of our visit.

Lack of communication between staff and patients was highlighted as well as the use of a treatment room as a bed, which has led to a possible formal complaint. Staff being very busy also meant patients can find it hard to get prompt access to water and extra pillows when needed.

We would like to thank the staff on ward 2D for taking the time to welcome us.

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## Ward 1A Frailty Assessment Unit

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Ward 1A is the Frailty and Assessment unit based within Whiston Hospital providing treatment and care for older people with complex long-term health conditions.

The Healthwatch Enter & View Team were:

- Irene Bramwell - Healthwatch Halton
- Roy Davies - Healthwatch Knowsley
- Janet Roberts - Healthwatch St Helens

### Overview

On entering the ward, we were greeted by a member of staff who was warm, friendly and welcoming. We noticed several information boards were displayed to provide help and information and support for patients and their families, in relation to the care provided this included, visiting times, information on protected mealtimes and the reasoning behind this decision. The access corridor appeared clean and tidy. Hand hygiene signs and hand gel dispensers were located throughout the ward for staff, patients and visitors to avoid cross infection.

Throughout the visit we noted that there appeared to be adequate levels of staff on duty and the ward environment appeared calm, quiet, organised and relaxing.

There were several bays in the ward each accommodating four beds with patients of the same gender, additionally there were also single occupancy rooms for patients with more complex needs. Patients appeared relaxed comfortable and safe and were dressed appropriately. The layout and logistics of the ward were excellent, and we noted that walkways, rooms, bays and corridors were bright clean and clutter free.

We were given the opportunity to speak to a number of patients, visitors and family members during the visit. Patients told us that they appreciated the efforts of staff although they felt there were times when staff appear to be over stretched. One patient told us *'The staff are very busy and pushed, they do not stop during the day or night, they all work really hard and will always speak to you'*.

Patients and their visitors told us they were treated with dignity and respect at all times. The majority of patients we spoke with were happy with the care they received. We noticed that, in the male only bay, curtains were drawn around a patient to maintain dignity and privacy.

The team also observed a nursing staff member supporting an older patient to take fluids and her interaction with the patient was respectful and very caring.

Based on our observations and speaking to patients and their visitors the overall impression was that the ward is a safe and well managed environment.



## **Patient Feedback**

We spoke with 7 people on the ward, (5 patients and 2 relatives). Everyone we spoke with felt that they had been treated with dignity and respect by staff at the hospital.

5 people felt that staff had enough time to spend with patients.

- *'They take their time to explain things to you they don't hang around chatting but are sociable when they are delivering care'*
- *'The staff are very busy and pushed they do not stop during the day and night. They all work really hard and will always speak to you'*
- *'Yes, for the daytime but no for the night staff.'*
- *'There are a couple of assistants who say they will be caring for me, but I have only seen them once a day, since I came in on Sunday.'*

3 people rated the care and treatment they received as excellent with 1 rating it good and 1 rating it fair.

4 people said they had been given enough information about their treatment by the hospital.

- *Yes, most definitely they have been very good explaining everything*
- *I think I have yes*

1 person was happy with the information they'd received but pointed out that, *'Night-time Dr asked if we wanted to Nan to have full treatment. Told him she has full capacity.'*

1 person felt they hadn't been given enough information.

- *I don't know why I'm here and I don't why this blood thing (canula) is in my arm.*

## **What was good about the hospital/ward:**

- *The process is efficient from the GP referral to assessment in Whiston when my Nan was admitted last night. The staff in the daytime are fantastic. The doctor in the daytime was fabulous.*
- *I think the staff and treatment received is very good. I can only say we have had good nursing care from the staff.*
- *I think the staff are quite efficient the staff look after everybody I don't think they can do any more than that they take the time to make sure you are alright they are very pleasant.*
- *All my family died in Whiston, so I always felt against it, but the attention has been good. There are regular drinks and the food is fine. The staff have been OK but like everywhere you always get 1 or 2 who are not so good.*
- *Pretty good. The staff help in every way'*
- *It's Brilliant - Staff are very helpful*

## **What would you like to see improved?**

- *The toilet is quite low I think the bathroom needs another grab rail next to the toilet to promote more independence especially for people with dementia who don't feel safe.*
- *I don't know how you can improve on it.*
- *I have not got my stick and the floor is slippery. I need someone to take me to the toilet.*
- *The night staff last night did not have the communication nor caring attitude. Told that we did not have a right to be present on the ward round and not to be so nosy. We wanted to be present to exchange information. Communication between staff and between staff and families need to improve. The night-time doctor didn't check her records that my Nan has a fractured spine which happened 3 years ago. Requested a wristband to indicate this a number of times.*

## **Summary**

Ward 1A provides treatment and care for older people with complex long-term health condition.

It is a clean and tidy ward which had a calm and relaxing feel to it during our visit.

Patients we spoke with were positive in their feedback about the ward and appreciated the efforts of the staff. Patients told us they felt the staff appeared to be over stretched at times.

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## Ward 3A

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The Healthwatch Enter & View Team were:

- Irene Bramwell - Healthwatch Halton
- Roy Davies - Healthwatch Knowsley
- Janet Roberts - Healthwatch St Helens

Ward 3A is the Plastic Surgery ward based within Whiston Hospital and specifically cares for patients requiring surgery or recovering from surgery.

### Overview

On entering Ward 3A, we were greeted by a member of staff who was very welcoming and supported us by explaining that one of the patients in a single occupancy room may be a potential risk to engage with because of behaviour issues. We noted that the ward was spotlessly clean bright and welcoming, the ward was fresh. The staff appeared relaxed and caring when attending to patients. One of our team members observed a member of staff engaging with a patient during the visit in a respectful and courteous manner, whilst supporting the patient to drink fluids.

Visiting times were clearly displayed on notice boards alongside other information such as the complaints procedure, and a notice reminding patients and visitors to use the hand gel dispensers prior to entering the ward.

Patients and staff were happy to talk with the team. Permission was sought from patients prior to asking them questions about their experiences as patients on ward 3A. Throughout the visit there appeared to be an adequate level of staffing and the ward appeared spacious, calm and well laid out.

Patients appeared well cared for and safe. When privacy was needed curtains were drawn around the bed of the patient, and there were no health and safety hazards visible throughout the visit.

It appeared from responses that overall the vast majority of patients and their visitors were happy with the care provided by ward staff. One patient told us, *'the care from the staff is very good, the nurses are very caring and professional they always take their time to care for you and will listen to you if you have any concerns'*.

Another patient said, *'this is my first time ever in hospital and it's been a very pleasant stay since yesterday when I came in. It wouldn't worry me if I had to come in again.'*

We asked people whether they had been provided with information about their treatment and care and received mixed responses. One patient told us, *'I have had plenty of information from staff and they take their time to explain everything to me'*, while another said, *'I don't feel that I have been given enough information the nursing staff definitely do but surgeons need more time to talk but the care is good'*.

When patients and visitors were asked what they thought was good about the hospital one patient told us, *'The staff are very friendly but professional, I think the food is reasonable but could be bigger portions as I have been told I have to increase my weight by the surgeons, the food is ok but just need more of it'*, whilst a visitor on the ward said *'The Care from the staff is very good the nurses are very caring and professional they always take the time to talk and care for you and will listen if you are concerned about anything'*

We asked people about accessibility in hospital and their responses were dependent on individual mobility issues and needs. One patient with full mobility said, *'I have no problem at all if its flat I can use the lifts and stairs'*, whilst a patient and wheelchair user told a member of the team *'the hospital itself is wheelchair accessible however, the bathroom in my room is too small'*.

Patients were given the opportunity to provide further comments and make suggestions for improvements. Two patients discussed the food provided by the hospital. One patient said, *'the food is excellent it is good with ample portions for me and plenty of drinks'*, whilst another patient told us, *'Portion control of food I am having to nip downstairs so I can buy extras to improve my weight gain, I am a wheelchair user and the bathroom mirror is placed high above the sink, the staff had to find a full length mirror to put in the bathroom to enable me to shave myself'*.

During the visit all patients we spoke with who were ready for discharge had been informed of the date of discharge.

## **Patient Feedback**

We spoke with 8 people on the ward, (6 patients and 2 visitors). Everyone we spoke with felt that they had been treated with dignity and respect by staff at the hospital.

- They are doing the best they can to treat you with dignity and respect
- At all times definitely yes
- They are doing their best to treat you with dignity and respect
- Everyone I spoke to were very happy with the way that they were treated.
- I am Iraqi and I find I can understand the nurse's English

5 people rated the care and treatment they received as excellent with the remaining 3 people rating the care as good.

7 patients said they had been given enough information about their treatment by the hospital.

- *'I don't know why I'm here and I don't why this blood thing (canula) is in my arm.'*
- *I have had plenty of information from staff and they take their time explaining to me*

## **What is good about this hospital/ward?**

- *Whenever me or my husband have had to come into the hospital, we have had excellent care, The staff are trying to do their best under the circumstances staff are working hard but have limited resources what else can they do? I have seen a deterioration in the care provided to the last time I was in here the staff are overworked*

- *The care from the staff is very good the nurses are very caring and professional, and they always take their time to talk and care for you, they will listen if you are concerned and explain everything to you I*
- *They looked very clean and well ventilated and smelled fresh and organised*
- *Everything is very good.*
- *The rooms are nice and airy. The food is OK. It is the first time I've been in here.*
- *Spotlessly clean. Staff are very nice.*
- *Facilities are good. the nurses have all been fantastic. staff are there for you. A very efficient process people have been on time, straight into surgery and then to here.*

### **What would you like to see improved?**

- *I would like to see A&E improved my husband was in A&E he has a serious water infection . I telephoned his GP and 111 they were not very good; he fell at home and was in agony he ended up in A&E for hours the nurses moved him from a trolley to a bed in the same room then said he has a bed ? His GP had given him the wrong anti biotics it has been a nightmare*

### **Summary**

Ward 3A was clean and welcoming. We noted that staff carried out their work in a professional, relaxed and caring way during our visit. Patients told us that the care they received from staff was very good.

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## Ward 3D

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Ward 3D is a 32-bed general gastroenterology ward. The ward is located on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, in the green zone.

The Healthwatch Enter and View Team were;

- Kath Parker - Healthwatch Halton
- Paul Mavers - Healthwatch Knowsley
- Pam - Healthwatch St. Helens

### Overview

We visited the Ward 3D, Gastroenterology, guided by staff. The access corridor to the ward was clean and tidy, boxes were attached to the side awaiting storage. A trolley in the corridor was tidy and functional. It was awaiting removal and was subsequently taken away during our visit. The first contact we had with staff on the ward was welcoming. The staff member was very polite and helpful. The environment of the ward was very busy but organised.

The patient areas of the ward were tidy and clutter free. Patients had their drinks and call bells within reach. Patients looked comfortable and safe. Some patients were still in dressing gowns, but all dressed to maintain their dignity. Curtains were drawn round some of the beds to maintain privacy. We observed staff using alcohol gel for hand hygiene.

Staff on the ward were wearing name badges, were pleasant, smiling and helpful. Patients had their names displayed above their beds. We noted that Call bells were not answered in a timely manner during our visit. The waiting was a problem.

During the visit a team member entered a room that was an infection control risk. The signage to indicate this was not clear to visitors. The only sign available was an A4 sheet that had symbols on for nursing staff which would not be easily identifiable as a warning of risk to everyday visitors or patients.

### Patient Feedback

We spoke with 12 people on the ward, (9 patients, 2 relatives and a visitor). Everyone we spoke with felt that they had been treated with dignity and respect by staff at the hospital.

- *Cannot fault the staff, always have time.*
- *I have fallen previously so the hospital has me under the fallen leaves scheme.*
- *All the staff are very kind*
- *Always treated well by staff just not in a timely way often!*
- *Could be quicker for the toilet.*

One patient replied that they were 90% happy. They said, 'The handover from resus could be heard by all the patients - felt uncomfortable to listen to and see - people were named.'



### **What is good about this hospital/ward?**

- *Great, I've never had a bad experience at all. I have been in for 4 months previously. I am now due to be discharged to a rehab ward.*
- *It is very good, but I struggled in previous wards as I was alone in a bay. I am really happy here. I fell at home and could not get up.*
- *Been looked after well. Staff are in and out of the ward.*
- *Staff were welcoming and approachable, pleasant atmosphere*
- *Generally, care is good! My experience of waiting for pain medication has been the only issue and one day waited from 1pm in the afternoon until 2am.*
- *They do the best they can. You may have to wait because they are busy, but things always get done. The nursing team seem to be stretched at times - 3 staff on one day.*
- *Nice staff. They are caring*
- *Good all around*

### **What would you like to see improved?**

- *I would like to see decisions made more frequently and in a timely manner. I have a diagnosis of a terminal illness and to be told I will need to wait a week for a decision to be made feels like a very long time in my situation.*
- *Getting thing done at the right time. I do recognise they are busy but sometimes am confused about why treatment is not given on time. Very knowledgeable about my condition and when I am not given the treatment. I need at the right time I need to manage the situation myself. (Diabetic)*
- *The single bays, I felt so depressed - just moving here has helped me.*
- *The response to the call button could be improved - needed to go the toilet. I arrived at 2am - in A&E until 4pm the following afternoon. I was assessed for a few hours and then placed on this ward.*
- *Food. Do not like it even though there are choices.*
- *Chairs. there are no chairs for patients or visitors.*
- *More chairs for patients and visitors*
- *Noisy at times and staff busy so not able to bring things.*
- *Give the ward more staff. I have had a bone scan and CT scan prior - very quick. I really value the staff and how they work.*
- *Only improvement would be that A&E is only a small area and it is so busy.*

### **Summary**

Ward 3D was tidy and clutter free. The ward appeared very busy but well organised during our visit. We noted that staff were pleasant, smiling and helpful when dealing with patients. Patients

commented positively on the staff but also highlighted that they appeared very busy, which led to patients waiting for attention. During our visit we noted that call bells were not always answered promptly.

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## Discharge Lounge

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The Healthwatch Enter and View Team were;

- Kath Parker - Healthwatch Halton
- Paul Mavers - Healthwatch Knowsley
- Pam- Healthwatch St. Helens

Access to the Discharge Lounge was clean and free of clutter. The staff were friendly and welcoming as we entered the area. Patients appeared comfortable and had drinks available to them. The discharge lounge is situated just behind the main reception area at Whiston Hospital, on the ground level. The Discharge Lounge cares for patients waiting go home or to other care.

Staff we came in to contact with were wearing name badges and were helpful to our team.

It was quiet in the lounge during our visit with just a few patients waiting for discharge.

### **Patient Feedback**

We spoke with 2 patients on the Discharge Lounge. Both patients felt that they had been treated with dignity and respect by staff at the hospital.

One patient agreed to give us further feedback on her stay at the hospital. The second patient told us that the hospital staff had helped her during her stay but didn't want to answer any further questions.

### **What do you think is good about this hospital/ward?**

- They have helped me
- Everything - staff are wonderful. I was on ward 5C for 2 weeks - from the nurses to the staff who bring the drinks trolley - all really helpful.

### **What would you like to see improved?**

- Honestly can't think of anything that could be improved.

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# Hospital Accessibility

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We asked patients and visitors to tell us how accessible they felt the hospital was. Most patients and visitors had no little or problem getting to, or around the hospital. The colour coding of different wards/departments and floors was welcome in aiding patients and visitors to find their way.

- *I think it is excellent we are able to use the disabled car park which is great. There is a dropping off point which is excellent so you can off load the wheelchair*
- *Yes, fine, we have a weekly car pass, which also makes things easier*
- *Would be easy for me via buses, I was admitted via ambulance.*

Some patients though did have difficulties and told us:

- *The hospital itself is wheelchair accessible but the actual room is not the bathroom is too small*
- *In the assessment the toilets are not wheelchair friendly as it was difficult to get her round her to help her onto the toilet from the wheelchair. Not fit for purpose.*
- *It's a big place and it's a bit like a maze when you come in.*
- *I struggle as a visitor to get around as I have had a hip replacement, I remember when they used to use buggies maybe they should bring them back for disabled visitors*
- *I struggle to get around anywhere as I have to use a stick my legs are bad.*
- *It is difficult parking especially Monday to Friday for visiting. Weekends are ok.*

## Visit Summary

During our visit to the hospital one comment was repeated to us many times. Patients and visitors told us how much they appreciated the care and support offered by all staff.

Below we've produced a 'Word Cloud' of the most commonly used word when we asked what was good about the hospital.

What do you think is good about Whiston Hospital?



The Trust should be rightly pleased with the feedback patients and visitors have given in this report. Whilst acknowledging the quality of the staff and hospital during our visit, we'd like to make a few suggestions and recommendations for further improvements based on visit and comments from patients and visitors on the wards.

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## Recommendations & Suggestions

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- 1.** Supply information on Healthwatch for patients and visitors to ensure people know how to feedback and get local information and support with complaints if necessary.
- 2.** Offer information leaflets on services for all areas who use Whiston Hospital. For example, St. Helens Carers Centre leaflets are displayed but we couldn't see any from Halton or Knowsley Carers Centre.
- 3.** Maternity - Review staffing levels during night shifts to ensure the care is equal to that given during the day.
- 4.** Ward 2D - Keep patients up to date with what is happening in their care and why. Ask patients if they have any questions.
- 5.** Ward 2D - Ensure the treatment room is used appropriately with drinks supplied.
- 6.** Ward 2D - Ensure drinks are always readily available to all patients.
- 7.** Ward 1A - Check toilets on the ward to see if the addition of further grab rails would benefit some patients.
- 8.** Ward 1A -It is important that communication between staff and relatives works consistently well. Requests for information by families should be responded to in a timely manner.
- 9.** Ward 3D - Ensure that call buttons are responded to in a timely manner
- 10.** Ensure clear signage is used on rooms that are out of bounds to patients / visitors
- 11.** Consider carrying out a further audit to ensure all necessary areas are wheelchair accessible.



Healthwatch has statutory powers and responsibilities under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the Local Healthwatch Regulation 2012 and the Local Healthwatch Organisations Directions 2013 section 5.

Providers and commissioners of health and social care services are required to respond to our requests within 20 working days by:

- Acknowledgement of receipt of the report or recommendation in writing;
- Providing (in writing) an explanation of any action they intend to take in response, or if no action is to be taken, to provide an explanation of why they do not intend to take any action.

Local Healthwatch are required to report if any providers/commissioners have not provided a response within the required timeframe; this information will be included in our Annual Report.

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## Service Provider Response

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**Response received from Anne Rosbotham-Williams, Deputy Director of Governance, St Helens and Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust.**

‘Thank you for undertaking the visit to our wards and departments in May and for providing this report. It is pleasing to see so many positive comments about our staff, the care we provide and our facilities.

We always welcome feedback and are taking action to address any areas where improvements can be made. The report has been shared with the Directorate Managers and Matrons in each area to enable local actions to be taken and will be shared at the October’s Patient Experience Council meeting to enable the identified learning to be shared Trust-wide.’

# Appendix A

## Healthwatch Listening Event



Hospital name:  Date:

1. Are you: a Patient  a Visitor  Staff  other

2. First four digits of your post code (eg WA7 2)

3. Which hospital ward or outpatient area is your feedback about?

4. What do you think is good about this hospital?

5. What would you like to see improved?

6. Do you feel staff have enough time to spend with you and other patients, both during the day and night, if staying overnight?

7. Have you been given enough information about your treatment by the hospital?

8. How accessible do you think the hospital is in terms of getting around?

Please turn over

9. Have you been treated with dignity and respect by the staff at the hospital?

*For inpatients only*

10. Have you been told an estimated date for your discharge? Yes  No

10b. If 'Yes' to Q10, when will you be discharged?

Within 1 day  2-5 days  6-7 days  1-2 weeks  More than 2 weeks

11. Have you been moved here from another ward or have you been told you may be moved to another ward?

Yes  No

11b. If you answered 'Yes' to Q11

I have been moved here from another ward  
 I've been told I may be moved to another ward

Discharge Comments

12. Please rate the service at this hospital

Terrible  1  2  3  4  5 Excellent

13. Any other comments

## About you

If you are willing to provide us with some monitoring information please complete the details below:

Age  Prefer not to say

Gender: Male  Female  Transgender  Prefer not to say  Other  \_\_\_\_\_

Do you consider yourself to have a disability? Yes  No  Prefer not to say

I would like to know more about how to make an official complaint  I would like to receive the regular e-bulletin / newsletter

Name

Address

Email

Phone

**Thank you for taking part in this survey!**



## Do health and care services know what you really think?

By sharing your ideas and experiences you can help services hear what works, what doesn't, and how care could be better in the future.

Tell us what you think and help make care better.



Supporting  
**NHS70**

**healthwatch**