

Healthwatch visits Mill View Hospital and Rutland Gardens as part of the PLACE program

September 2022

In September, Healthwatch Brighton and Hove conducted visits to two sites run by the Sussex Partnership Foundation NHS Trust (SPFT). Six of our trained volunteers and one staff member conducted these visits.

Our visits to Mill View Hospital and Rutland Gardens were part of PLACE or 'Patient-Led Assessments of the Care Environment'. This report provides a summary of our visits, including our observations. PLACE is delivered as a national programme and all data is collected and formally analysed by NHS Digital. They will publish detailed reports after the program has ended on 30th November.

What is PLACE?

PLACE assessments focus on the environment in which care is delivered to people, such as hospital wards. It does not look at clinical care or how well staff are doing their job.

Good environments matter. Every NHS patient should be cared for with compassion and dignity in a clean, safe environment. Where standards fall short, this should be drawn to the attention of managers so that improvements can be made.

Assessments involve local people (known as patient assessors) going into local hospitals to assess how good the environment is.

PLACE visits were last carried out in 2019. COVID stopped them from happening in 2020 and 2021.

What's it like to be a patient assessor?

PLACE gives patients and the public a voice to have more influence over the way their local health and care services are run.

Our volunteers who are acting as patient assessors are given basic training and support by Healthwatch, using materials produced by the NHS. They visit different wards, clinics and communal areas and assess how well patients' privacy and dignity are respected, overall cleanliness and general building maintenance. They also look at the extent to which the environment can support the care of those with dementia or with a disability. Lastly, they undertake food tastings and, where possible, observe how meals are served to patients.

You can read more about the PLACE programme by clicking [here](#)

Thank you

Healthwatch would like to express its thanks to the Trust for inviting us to participate in PLACE. This allows us to assess the patient environment first-hand and share our observations. We would particularly like to thank Gavin Ford and Craig Mooney from Facilities for supporting our visits and accompanying us on each one. They welcomed our observations and recorded any repairs or actions that were needed. It is obvious that the Trust takes PLACE very seriously and is keen to act on its findings.

A summary of our observations

PLACE asks patient assessors to look at six distinct areas when carrying out visits. In the table below, we have provided a very high-level summary of how we would assess the two sites we visited. More detail about each visit is given in the tables on the following pages.

Area assessed	Healthwatch's main observations
Cleanliness	Overall, very good across all areas
Food and drink	Overall, very good
Patient privacy and dignity	Overall, very good across all areas
Supporting dementia patients	Overall, very good across most areas
Supporting disabled patients	Overall, very good across most areas
External areas	Overall, very good across all areas

Where we visited

Day	Areas visited
27 th September	Mill View Hospital
29 th September	Rutland Gardens

Mill View Hospital, 27th September – a summary of our observations

Five Healthwatch volunteers undertook this visit: **thank you to Neil, Sue, Paul, Mizzie, and Leah for their time and contributions.**

Mill View is located at Nevill Avenue, Hove, BN3 7HY. It is a hospital for adults with mental health needs. It has four inpatient wards that treat general mental health conditions. Their website is:

<http://www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/location-mill-view-hospital>.

In previous years, the hospital has performed extremely well during PLACE inspections. Our [Healthwatch report](#) following the last PLACE visit in 2019 shows the high scores achieved (see page 18 of that report).

Our observations

Overall, our volunteers were very impressed. They judged that the hospital is delivering a high-quality environment which supports good patient care. It was clear to them that the managers who supported them on their visits, took PLACE seriously and wanted the hospital to perform well, but that they were keen to hear where improvements might be made. It was felt that the hospital is well-run and had no major environmental or clinical issues.

Below, we describe some of the minor issues noted by our volunteers.

Pavilion Ward. The flooring here appeared scuffed and scraped.

Regency ward. The shower floors appeared to be dirty with signs of historic stains. Both shower units had issues: one was flooded and the other had a pile of abandoned clothes and wet towels which we were told had been reported but not resolved. The ward is due to be refitted and at present looks rather tired.

Caburn ward. This is in the process of having new ensuite facilities fitted for each bedroom. This is quite a difficult task as the builders are on site and the ward is being used, but it all seemed to be running smoothly.

Brunswick is a dementia ward. Our volunteers were very impressed by the ward which was judged to be fully dementia-friendly, making optimal use of colour and design to achieve this. The outside space was welcoming and well-maintained and included a potting area, and wonderful views of the Downs. It was felt that the rest of the hospital could be made slightly more dementia-friendly i.e. ensuring that all communal areas meet this standard remembering that any patient or visitor with dementia may travel through any part of the hospital.

Communal areas. On the stairwells and windows, the film over the glass looked messy. The one area where it was felt that an overhaul was needed, was the main reception. This is quite unwelcoming as a high

Perspex screen has been erected on top of the counter as a COVID barrier. This means that when the receptionist sits down they cannot hear or see people very well. It was described as wheelchair unfriendly.

External areas. No issues were reported.

Food tasting. This went very well and most of the food was judged to be good. It was felt that the pasta was a little mushy and the gravy was not as nice as it might be. The pudding, with vegan custard, was excellent. Some of the meals advertised on the menu were not available but this was due to a change in supplier which happened following an unexpected event outside the control of the Trust. A contract with the previous supplier is due to resume shortly. Volunteers did not see the food served to patients.



The day worked very well and I thought we had a good mix of people conducting the visit and we worked well as a team. Overall, I felt the hospital was well run and had no major environmental or clinical issues to flag myself.



- **Healthwatch volunteer**

Rutland Gardens, 29th September - a summary of our observations

One Healthwatch volunteer and one member of staff undertook this visit: **thank you to Fran and Clary for their time and contributions.**

Rutland Gardens is located at 5 – 7 Rutland Gardens, Hove, BN3 5PA. It provides tailored support packages for people with a learning disability or autistic spectrum disorder. This service provides care and support to people living in a ‘supported living’ setting so that they can live in their own home, as independently as possible.

In previous years, the site has performed extremely well during PLACE inspections. Our [Healthwatch report](#) following the last PLACE visit in 2019 shows the high scores achieved (see page 18 of that report).

Our observations

Our overarching impression was that this is a good facility, which is well cared for and very clean. We noted some general wear and tear, but nothing serious. Although outside of the remit of PLACE, we also noted that staff seemed happy too.

Communal areas – there is a nice activity room. The space feels homely rather than institutional, with lots of arts and crafts, DVDs to watch and it was clean and bright with artwork to look at. There were plenty of activities available. The feedback board had a useful “you said we did” area which was updated on a weekly rolling basis. The communal area opens up to the garden.

External areas – There was a well-tended vegetable patch and a nice-looking mural. Wheelchair access was not observed.

Residents clean their own rooms, and there are no wards. All of the bathrooms viewed were in good condition.

There was a nice spiritual room at the top of the building which was used for private meetings/conversations.



“A really lovely place that is clearly well-maintained. It was clear why the residents say they like living there.”

- **Healthwatch staff member**



Contact us



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