



Enter and View Report – April 2023 Royal Sussex County Hospital

Service name:	Maternity Assessment Unit, Postnatal & Antenatal
Service Provider:	University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust
Date and Time:	Monday 24th April 2023
Authorised Representatives:	Sylvia New, Laura Naish, Clare Funnel & Clary Collicutt
Contact details:	Clary Collicutt, Project Co-ordinator clary@hwbh.co.uk Healthwatch Brighton and Hove Community Base, 113 Queens Rd, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 3XG

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove would like to thank our volunteers, service providers, service users and staff for contributing to the Enter and View programme.

Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to findings observed on the specific date set out above. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all service users and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.



What is Enter and View?

Part of the local Healthwatch programme is to carry out Enter and View visits. Local Healthwatch representatives carry out these visits to health and social care services to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement.

The Health and Social Care Act allows local Healthwatch authorised representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies. Enter and View visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service, but, equally, they can occur when services have a good reputation so we can learn about and share examples of what they do well.



Purpose of the visit

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove have worked in partnership with our local hospital trust for several years to conduct regular Enter and View visits. These visits to wards and other units are carried out by trained volunteers and are called Healthwatch Hospital Enter and View visits. The visits are an extension of a national programme of audits called PLACE - Patient Led Assessment of the Care Environment.

These Healthwatch visits:

- provide valuable insight into the work of our local trust and its hospitals
- allow us to see first-hand the many positive aspects of our hospitals
- provide an opportunity to raise any concerns directly with senior trust staff.

Healthwatch Hospital, Enter and View visits are intended:

- to provide a regular, independent supply of information about the environment of our hospitals to the trust, which empowers them to act on emerging issues
- to ensure that patients and staff benefit from an ever-improving hospital environment which in turn supports the delivery of high standards of care, dignity, and safety
- to provide Healthwatch with an audit trail of intelligence and evidence which it can use to assess how our recommendations are helping to improve hospital environments
- to enable Healthwatch to share our findings with interested partners such as the Care Quality Commission and the public.

Methodology

One trained DBS checked Enter and View volunteer representative, two members of Healthwatch Staff (as part of their induction), and the Strategic Chair of the UHSussex Maternity Voices Partnership visited the Maternity Assessment Unit, the Postnatal and

Antenatal wards. They talked with six patients across the three wards and asked for their views on their experience with maternity services, what they thought of the ward that they were in, what they thought of the food, what their care has been like, whether they knew when they were being discharged and if someone had spoken to them about what would happen. They were also free to discuss any aspects raised by the patients they met.

The representatives were accompanied by Antoinette Thomas, the Service Manager of Housekeeping at the trust. They observed the ward environment, and their views of the physical environment were recorded. They also completed a checklist to capture positive findings, challenges and concerns, and anything staff told us and our recommendations.

The checklist Healthwatch uses is based on the NHS publication “[The Fifteen Steps Challenge: Quality from a patient’s perspective](#)”, which explores what good care looks like through a patient’s eyes. When completing the checklist, volunteers are asked to say whether specific criteria have been met in full, partially or not at all and to award a suitable score out of ten. Volunteers are provided with the opportunity to record any positive findings and make recommendations under four headings:

- (i) is the environment welcoming?
- (ii) is the environment safe?
- (iii) is the environment caring and involving?
- (iv) is the environment well-organised?

Lastly, the volunteers spoke to patients who were happy to have a short chat. Notes from these conversations were recorded anonymously to maintain patient confidentiality.





Results of visit

Is the environment welcoming?	Score awarded: 8 out of 10
Is the environment safe?	Score awarded: 8 out of 10
Is the environment caring?	Score awarded: 10 out of 10
Is the environment well-organised?	Score Awarded: 10 out of 10

Healthwatch asks volunteers to give a score out of 10 for each area as a simple way to assess things. The scores represent the subjective views of our trained volunteers and are not part of a national scoring system. Healthwatch considers that:

- 9 or 10 indicates that the ward or unit is performing strongly with little or no room for improvement and areas of excellence have been observed
- 7 or 8 suggests there are a number of areas which require attention in order to improve the environment, but overall, things are good
- a score of 6 or less indicates that significant changes may be needed to improve the environment.

(a) Welcoming environment	
Positives	Recommendations
• All staff were friendly and welcoming. • There was a calm, clean and pleasant environment. • Excellent noticeboard, which was filled with helpful information. • Staff photos and names are clearly displayed.	• There needs to be clearer signage for the MAU as you come out of the lift. • Signposting to the MAU and postnatal wards is very poor and difficult to find. • Uniform significance not described.



(b) Safe environment	
Positives	Recommendations
• The ward feels safe, well-organised and clean and tidy. • Staff administering drugs also wear a red tabard.	• No red cords seen – someone on the floor cannot reach a red button on the wall in the bathrooms. • Install handrails in the corridors, so women have something to safely hold on to if they need.

(c) Caring environment	
Positives	Recommendations
• The staff are friendly and chatty, the patients also said this. • The patients seemed happy and content.	• None

(d) Well organised & calm environment	
Positives	Recommendations
• The environment was well-organised, clean, tidy and calm. • Discussed with staff, and the ward was about 35% full on the day we visited.	• Our experience may have been different if the ward had been fuller.

Conversations with patients

- Fantastic. I was lucky enough to have one midwife and she was great, really calm and talked through everything. The doctor was also great, I had to have an episiotomy which I was worried about but he talked through the whole procedure and made me feel at ease about it. The labour didn't go the way I wanted it to as in my birth plan but I still had a really positive

experience. The department has been great, we phoned up twice with concerns and both times they said to come in to be checked. The midwives on the ward have been brilliant. They have talked to me about personal care and caring for the baby. They have also offered to look after my baby so I can get some sleep. The ward is a little noisy, would be great if I had my own room! 🍷

- *Patient 1, Postnatal*

🍷 Amazing, incredible! We have gone through all the units, and they have all been amazing and everything has been joined up, we even had a text from our GP. 🍷

- *Patient 2, Postnatal*

🍷 The patient said that they had a mostly very good experience, however, she was desperate to tell me that she was not listened to by staff. Having had 5 babies already, she knows that they come quickly after a very short labour time. She told staff this repeatedly but they insisted her husband must go home and come back later. They both argued about this because they wanted him to be there but he was ousted. Almost as soon as he left, she had the baby and he did not know until he got home so he missed it. This was distressing for them both. 🍷

- *Patient 3, Postnatal*

🍷 Very good, the staff are always checking to make sure that I'm ok. 🍷

- *Patient 4, Postnatal*

🍷 Said her experience has been OK. 🍷

- *Patient 5, Antenatal*

🍷 The midwives have been really good and so has the communication with them. But when I was pregnant I had reduced movements, so I called and I felt like they were trying to push me to other services. So I called my GP and they said call the hospital. I felt like they were putting me off coming in, and in the meantime, my bleeds were getting left. The same doctor assessed me and again said it was growing pains, but it was internal bleeding, and because it was left it got worse. The midwife knew this and also pushed it with the doctor, we both cried because we were so frustrated that the



doctor was just dismissing me. The midwives have been supportive, both emotionally and physically. My daughter was born very prematurely. 🍷

- Patient 6, Maternity Assessment Unit

Overall

Healthwatch last visited the Maternity Wards in 2019 for the national PLACE audit. It is not possible to compare scores because a different assessment system was used. Also, the PLACE visit was entirely an environmental assessment, whereas, during our Enter and View visit, we also spoke with the patients about their experience with maternity services.

From an environmental perspective, the most significant thing that still has not been addressed since the PLACE visit is that the signage in the maternity wards has not improved. There needs to be more signage from the bus stop and car park. Then the signage within the hospital is misleading until you reach the lift, where there is a temporary sign. This is of concern because if a woman was advanced in her labour upon arrival, the lack of signage could be a problem for her reaching the labour ward in time.

From the notes made for the last PLACE visit, the environment within the Postnatal, Maternity Assessment Unit and Antenatal wards has improved overall. The volunteers scored an eight out of ten for the environment being welcoming and safe, and this was due to the lack of signage and no red cords in the bathrooms. Finally, they scored a ten out of ten for the maternity ward's caring and well-organised environment. On the day of our Enter and View visit, the maternity ward was at 35% capacity, so things may appear differently when the ward is busier.



The volunteers spoke with six Postnatal, Antenatal and Maternity Assessment Unit patients. Three patients in the Postnatal ward expressed that they had had a fantastic, incredible and very good experience. One patient from the Postnatal ward said that her experience was mostly very good. However, she had not felt she was listened to by the staff about the speed at which she thought her baby might arrive; consequently, her husband missed the baby's birth. A patient interviewed in the Antenatal ward said her experience was ok. However, she had just been induced, and it was clear that she was uncomfortable, so the interviewer did not ask any more questions. Finally, a patient interviewed in the Maternity Assessment Unit had quite a mixed experience, centring around a misdiagnosis, however, she said the midwives had been really good. See the quotes above for full details of the interviews.

The ward manager was extremely helpful in showing us around the wards and arranging patient interviews.

Next steps

Healthwatch will discuss our visit findings with the trust at their Patient Experience and Engagement Group where we will ask for an action plan to be created to follow up on our findings.

Our next Healthwatch Hospital Enter and View will be planned for July 2023.



Healthwatch Brighton and Hove

You can sign up to receive [regular newsletters and information from Healthwatch.](#)

Share your experiences of health and social care services with us:

Click here: [Have Your Say](#)

Email us at: info@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk

Call us: 01273 234040

Follow us!

Facebook [@healthwatchbrightonandhove](#)

Twitter [@HealthwatchBH](#)

Instagram healthwatchbh

Website: www.healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk