

Norfolk and Norwich Kidney Centre Feedback

September 2023

Throughout the summer 2023 we visited the three acute hospitals in Norfolk to speak with patients, carers, and visitors about their experiences. We spent a week at each hospital for this work talking to people in Accident & Emergency, in outpatient clinics, and on inpatient wards. The reports from these visits can/will be found on our website. Following this work, we arranged to visit Norfolk and Norwich Kidney Centre which is part of Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital services.

In September 2023 we visited the centre to speak with patients about their experience, what was good and what could be improved. From this visit we received 17 reviews for the centre. The reviews have an average star rating of 4.9 out of five.



Healthwatch Norfolk Observations

The Norfolk and Norwich Kidney Centre is in Bowthorpe but you would not know it was there if you didn't need to and that is part of what makes it so special.

The purpose-built centre offers dialysis treatment to patients and is one of the biggest centres in the country. The set-up has bays of four beds/seats with a nurse stationed at each bay.

There are spaces for 30 people to be seen per session (which can last three or four hours depending on the person's treatment) and three sessions a day Monday to Saturday, which means there are over 500 dialysis sessions per week at this Centre.

The patients have access to free Wi-Fi and each bed has its own TV screen. The building is light, airy and cool with patients enjoying a hot drink and biscuit when we arrived to speak to them.

We had a very warm welcome from reception when we arrived and waited in the clean, large and comfortable waiting area to go through and speak with the Senior Sister and then the patients.

The walls in reception were decorated in a bright sunny yellow with large photo prints to brighten the area even more. Information boards were available with support services and upcoming events. The newsletter "The Kidney Bean" is available to all patients and is a wealth of information about their treatment/care and includes recipes and advice. This edition had a really insightful piece from one of the patients about his journey booking and having a holiday in America, which can really help other people who want to holiday when on dialysis.

The plentiful free parking was also welcomed by most people we spoke to, taking away the worry and stress before treatment – and to not have that worry three times a week, every week is important to everyone – both patients and family/carers.

The staff were all very friendly and welcoming, busy but always smiling and laughing with the patients and fully explaining what they were doing (for example adding medicine to the dialysis machine – they didn't just walk up and do it they explained what it was, where it was going and what it did)

The facility was very clean and tidy.

There was a clear appreciation for this centre by all we spoke to, the ease of getting here, rather than a hospital and the focussed care – knowing every patient was going through the same thing as each other gave the impression that everyone knew they were not alone.

Patient feedback

Overall, the patients we spoke to were very happy with their experiences at the Kidney Centre. They told us how *“everyone is very friendly, looks out for each other, you become like a family”*, this included staff and other patients in the centre.

The patients really appreciated the facilities, the easy parking, the cleanliness, and the *“china cups and good biscuits!”*. However a couple of patients did note that they sometimes found that the air-con *“can be cold first thing in the morning so we have to bring our own blankets”*.

Another suggestion for improvement was for the doctor to come and visit the centre more often, patients noted that they will visit the centre on the days they were not there for dialysis which meant they missed out on speaking with the doctor in person:

“The only minor bugbear I have is the Doctor only comes on a Wednesday and that never varies and that is my day off and the thought of having to come in on my day off – it would be nice if sometimes they could swap and we could go and see them after treatment sometimes but I understand that might be difficult and you can choose a telephone consultation if you want to but I think we all like face to face.”

The reviews are displayed in the table below and can be found on our website here: <https://healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk/services/norfolk-and-norwich-university-hospital-nhs-foundation-trust-norwich-nr4-7uy>.

A response to this report from the Kidney Centre follows the table (page 10).

ID	Title	Review	Rating
217898	Does what it says on the tin!	Staff are really nice and friendly. Everything is as expected to be, the kidney centre does what it says on the tin!	5
217897	Staff really good and friendly	Staff are really good and friendly. They explain things all the time.	5
217895	Feel really supported	<p>Overall the people around here really care. They go out of their way to look after you and make you feel really supported. Don't feel there is anything I couldn't ask for. Staff really bond with the patients. Because of the familiarity I never have any worries about coming here.</p> <p>I'm not aware of how to get access to my blood test results. Access to those would be good.</p>	5
217893	Nurses really good	The nurses are all really good, very friendly and helpful with any queries. The unit is very clean.	5
217891	Happy with everything	Very happy with everything. Staff look after us really well.	5
217890	Staff are very good.	The staff are very good, lovely, and efficient. They are good at their jobs and very caring. Don't like the air-con so much.	5
217889	Staff are brilliant and caring	Staff are all brilliant and caring, always friendly and helpful. People here are very friendly.	5

217888	Everyone is like a family	<p>When you come here you know that it's for a long time, everyone is very friendly, looks out for each other, you become like a family. It's always the same people you are around. The Nurses are very good and friendly, I bring in sweets for them. They always help you out if you have a problem, they do their best to try and help.</p> <p>Transport is always messing up, get their times wrong, and could be sharing lifts with others. You only get the one tea at 9am, but have to be here much earlier so would be nice for a few more, I know you get offered more at the hospital in Lowestoft.</p>	5
217886	Really Informative	<p>Staff explain what's going on, what is happening and why. They are really informative. If they don't know an answer they go and find out or get someone that does know.</p> <p>It would be nice if there was a Dr here more often to give any additional feedback or information, they only come on Mondays and Wednesdays. We are supposed to see the Dr every 6 months, but don't always.</p> <p>The air-con is also on a lot and it can be cold first thing in the morning so we have to bring our own blankets. Really need a middle ground, as we understand that nurses must get hot walking around all day.</p>	5

217696	Everything is run so smoothly	<p>Everyone is absolutely brilliant and everything is run so smoothly. I had a short time in Langley on dialysis but it is nothing like this. If it wasn't for this place I wouldn't be here, this is keeping me going. I come here three times a week and have been coming for three years. It is a pain but I have to do it and everyone here is just wonderful. The ease of access means everything. I lift share with another patient so I don't need hospital transport anymore. I used that for two years but it was always spot on.</p> <p>Anything you want to know here they see you and talk to you and I have no complaints whatsoever. I just can't say anything other than they are brilliant - every single nurse is brilliant.</p>	5
217695	They look after us well	<p>I started coming here in February. The nurses are all helpful and they come over if I need them. I come here three times a week. I was rushed to hospital in January and started my dialysis at the N+N and when I was well enough to I started to come here. We all get to know each other, we sit in the same bays. It is always spotlessly clean here, someone comes and checks and makes sure it is clean. They wash the chair down when we finish before the next person comes.</p> <p>I do have to be patient as I come on hospital transport and some people have four hours of treatment but I have three so I have a bit of a wait when I arrive but they look after us so well and there are no problems. If you don't feel well they come over and adjust the machine.</p>	5

217694	We are like one big family	<p>I first came here a week before covid lockdowns arrived, I had one week in Langley and then I came here. At the time it was always the same patients and everyone became family, it is lovely here. Really lovely. We always have the same four people in a bay now (apart from the odd time) They always offer a screen for dignity if we want one. But it is lovely and relaxed when it is us four ladies we do have such a giggle. It is a bit more relaxed here - it is stressful at a hospital. The staff here are so lovely we hear about each other's lives - we are like one big family. They all pull together, people are so kind. I think we are very lucky.</p> <p>The only minor bugbear I have is the Doctor only comes on a Wednesday and that never varies and that is my day off and the thought of having to come in on my day off - it would be nice if sometimes they could swap and we could go and see them after treatment sometimes but I understand that might be difficult and you can choose a telephone consultation if you want to but I think we all like face to face.</p>	5
217693	We get superb care	<p>I have been having dialysis since March 2022, I had a week at Langley at the N+N and I come here three times a week now. It is a superb facility - we get china cups and good biscuits! I used to use hospital transport to come here but I like my independence so now I drive here and that is so easy with the free parking. This is a dedicated unit for dialysis and we get superb care. We have always got the same nurses and auxiliary staff which makes it nice. I am here for a reason and without it, it would not be good and to have someone you know and trust means an awful lot. They know you and your family and we know about them and theirs. I had to go to the N+N recently and saw two of the nurses from here there and it was so lovely to see a friendly face! I really don't think you can improve on what we have here.</p>	5

217692	Full of life and amusement	<p>I was at Jack Pryor and then the team said I could try dialysis at home. I did that for two years, but then I had a heart operation and as a result and other medicines I have to come here for my dialysis now. I have been coming for a year or so. If you have got to do it then this is the best place. When I first started dialysis it was very daunting and with dialysis there is no light at the end of the tunnel, but you have to live with it and this place helps. The girls are full of life and amusement. Some ward staff can be difficult to get along with, but here is not the case - there is always someone to talk to and that is so important. I wonder if more preventative education into kidney disease would help so people can understand if there is something they can do to help prevent needing this.</p>	5
217646	We matter to them	<p>I started dialysis at the N+N a year ago and now I come to the Kidney centre. One of the great things about here is the parking, there is no cost and parking is available. At the N+N I was so unwell and we couldn't park and then if we did it was a monster walk. This is like a breath of fresh air. When I first came in here I thought "wow there is a hospital in this industrial unit". The thing that makes the kidney ward in hospitals and here different is there the nurse sees you and is gone. Here you know the nurses on a personal level and vice versa. We know about each others families, holidays. They are not just incredibly professional but they are genuinely caring. We matter to them. We have to trust these people and I am a big fan of here. They deserve a monster pay rise. Being here is a bit like going down the pub! Call it Bowthorpe's own King's Head! By that I mean I know everyone. The housekeeper Bob knows how I like my coffee, he knows which biscuits I like. We sit with the same people each time so we get to know each other. Some patients honestly say they come here for the social side. Some people can have dialysis at home but they don't take them up as they have friends here. They couldn't go to any more trouble for us.</p>	5

217641	It is the little things that elevate them	<p>I have been coming here to the kidney centre three times a week since March. It was very daunting when I was first told I had to be on dialysis and was on Langley ward initially and then I came here. The nurse came to me and introduced herself and she was just lovely. It has been a big challenge for me. I told them I wasn't keen on evening sessions and would prefer morning ones and they have been very good sorting that out, so I transferred to morning sessions in May and that has made a big difference to me. It is an amazing centre, I recently had dialysis on holiday and it was in a hospital setting and very different to what we have here. The staff here are all so lovely, they are all calm and interested in you, not just your treatment - you. The nurse has explained what everything on the machine is and showed me an example of the line I have in me and how it all works, and this was great because knowledge is so important. The facilities are as comfortable as they can be having this done. It is great to have free parking outside so you don't have the stress and worry before treatment. It is the little things that elevate them, like a cup of tea in a china mug and the biscuits. Thank you.</p>	5
217899	Need to listen to people a bit more.	<p>On most part experience has been 5 star, but one thing wasn't handled right so overall a 3. I can't have the same dialyser as others as I am allergic. I had to be on oxygen for months whilst it was sorted. They kept telling me it was anxiety and wouldn't consider that it was an allergy as it's not common. Only recently got given a hypoallergenic one. They need to listen to people a bit more, especially as I have had a consultant agree that it was an allergic reaction. Other than that staff are really good here. They are really nice and pleasant and they work hard.</p> <p>Also sometimes there is private stuff in medical histories, and staff speak about it at the beds when there are other people around. It would be better if those things were talked about in private.</p>	3

Response from Norfolk and Norwich Kidney Centre:

Although it is a medical facility it is so important for the patients to feel like they aren't coming into a hospital environment. We are so lucky to have these wonderful facilities to care for these patients in, as well as a team who are dedicated and hard working. I feel very privileged in my work- the Kidney Centre is a special place.