

Enter & View

Contents

Contents.....	1
About Healthwatch Swindon.....	2
What is Enter and View?	2
Details of the visit.....	3
Visit overview	4
Recommendations	6
Observations and findings.....	7
Day Therapy Centre – Patient feedback.....	10
Coate Ward – Patient Feedback.....	12
Dove Ward.....	13
Department Response.....	16
Provider Response	16

About Healthwatch Swindon

Healthwatch Swindon is the towns independent champion for people who use health and social care services. We're here to make sure that those running services, put people at the heart of care.

As an independent statutory body, we have the power to make sure that NHS leaders and other decision makers listen to your feedback and use it to improve standards of care.

We are here to listen and understand the needs, experiences and concerns of people who use health and social care services and to speak out on their behalf.

We focus on ensuring that people's worries and concerns about current services are addressed. We are totally independent and can provide you with impartial and independent signposting advice.

We are part of a network of 150 local Healthwatch across England and cover the whole of Swindon.

What is Enter and View?

One of the ways we meet our statutory responsibilities is by using our legal powers to Enter and View health and social care services to see them in action.

During visits we collect evidence of what works well and what could be improved to make people's experiences better.

We do this by observing the quality of service, observing the setting and how people are interacting, and talking to people using the service, including patients, residents, carers, staff and relatives.

Enter and View visits are carried out by our authorised representatives who have received training and been DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checked. These visits are not part of a formal inspection process or audit.

We share our reports with those providing the service, regulators, the local authority, NHS commissioners, the public, Healthwatch England and any other relevant partners based on what we find during the visit.

Details of the visit

Service visited: Chemotherapy Cancer Services at Great Western Hospital specifically the Dove Ward, Osprey Ward and the unit within the Swindon Intermediate Care Centre.

Visit date: 6th December 2023

About the service

Great Western Hospital provides day case chemotherapy services has two rooms within Osprey – Day Therapy Centre and Coate Water Unit. With an additional Medical Day Unit providing chemotherapy and immunotherapy for non-cancer patients which is housed in the Swindon Intermediate Care Centre on the ground floor separate to the main hospital.

They provide a comprehensive range of chemotherapy delivery, alongside procedures including:

- Intrathecal chemotherapy
- Bone-marrow biopsies
- Scalp cooling for specific types of chemotherapy treatments

The Dove Ward is a highly specialist ward where patients who require inpatient treatments, such as complex and lengthy chemotherapy, are cared for.

Purpose of the visit

To review and understand how cancer services for chemotherapy are being provided at Great Western Hospital. We were invited to visit by the cancer team.

How the visit was conducted

A date was agreed with the ward staff and a time set.

The visit was carried out by two authorised representatives. The team spoke to members of staff, patients and volunteers.

Information was collected from observations and conversations with staff, patients and relatives.

At the end of the visit there was a final team discussion to review and collate findings and initial feedback was provided to the ward team.

Healthwatch Swindon authorised representatives

Ann-Marie Scott (staff member)

Josephine Fliski (staff member)

Disclaimer

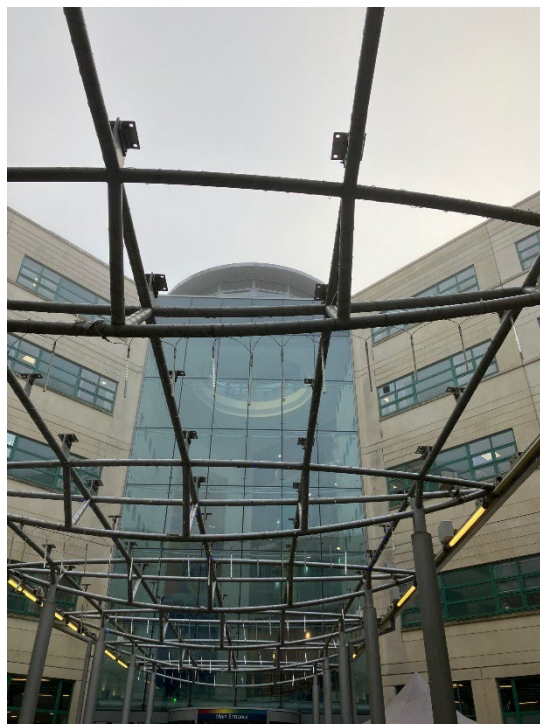
This report relates to this specific visit to the service, at a particular point in time, and is not representative of all patients/staff, only those who contributed. The visit did not include accessing any records. This report is written by two Healthwatch members of staff who are Authorised Representatives using collated feedback they gathered.

Visit overview

After arranging a suitable date with the ward, we met with a member of staff to communicate the process and ask any additional questions. We discussed our plans for the visit and were encouraged to speak to as many people as possible. The only restrictions in place, were those to safeguard patients on the Dove Unit and minimise any impacts on their treatment.

We were warmly welcomed and provided with a guided tour of all the chemotherapy units. Then allowed to freely access all the units in the main hospital. During which we spoke to patients, staff members and volunteers and undertook general observations.

Are initial thoughts were given to the staff member and an agreed time scale set for our full findings to be shared.



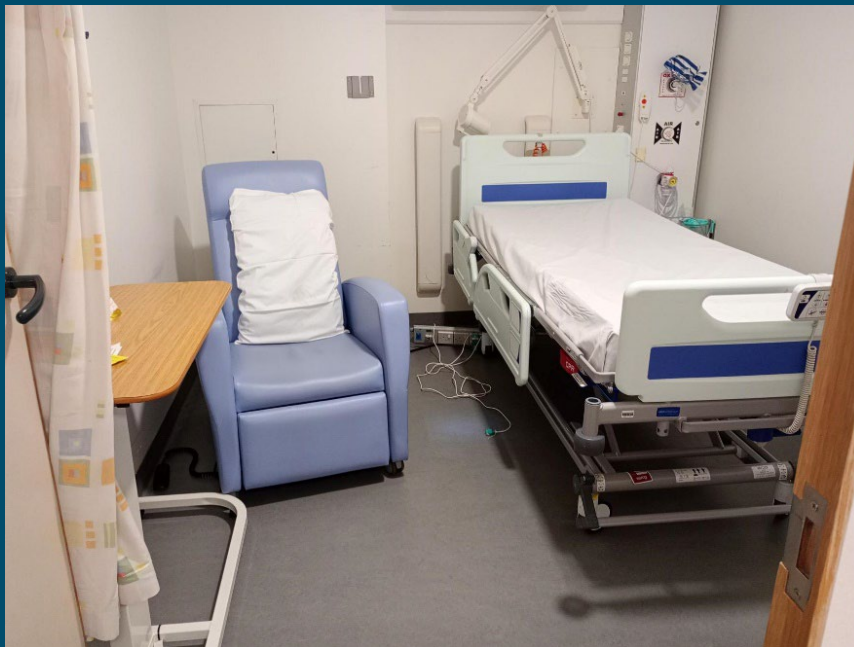
Great Western Hospital Main Entrance

Key findings

The following are our key findings from the visit and should be considered alongside both our observations and what people told us.

- With no official oncology unit, the space is very limited. Reducing where some patients can receive their treatment due to complexities of their medical needs.
- Insufficient storage for both patients' personal belongings and equipment required to treat patients.
- Staff and volunteers knew their patients well and provided brilliant care.
- All patients spoke very highly of the staff and felt well supported.
- Staff and volunteers made visitors feel welcome.
- With the units being so cramped and more people requiring treatment and in some cases for much longer time scales, there is a concern as to where and how that can be achieved.

Medications cannot be prepared on site, so if they are delayed getting to GWH it impacts the organisation of the day and in some cases, people's receipt of their treatment.



Private room on the Osprey ward.

Recommendations

We would like the trust to consider the following recommendations for improvement. These are based on our findings from the visit.

- Improved storage and facilities for staff members; to safely care for their patients, store and administer treatments as well as providing an improved staff area to help maintain their wellbeing.
- New equipment such as footstalls, working lamps, privacy curtains and adjustable tables.
- A dedicated space just for cancer treatment, so that patients aren't waiting in corridors or being asked personal information in front of a packed waiting area.
- Refreshed décor, to help brighten the area and help patients feel calm and relaxed.
- Facilities on-site to prepare medications and avoid timely delays to treatment and disruption in the running of the day therapy units.
- Improved access and signage for patients requiring both chemotherapy and radiotherapy on the same day.
- An improved food selection for patients, to support those experiencing difficulties swallowing.

Broken cupboards in Coate ward.



Observations and findings

General Observations

- Day units do not have a capacity to treat all the patients that need support.
- The day unit has limited beds, with most of the space taken up with chairs to maximise the number of patients they can treat at any one time.
- During COVID they used the gym at the Ridgeway Hospital, the space worked really well and had extended hours.
- The hours the unit runs are limited which reduces the amount of people who can receive treatment.
- There is no toilet in the Coate Unit which means the patients have to wheel cumbersome drips to the public toilets in the main waiting area.
- The cancer units are disparate which means a patient may have to move around the hospital to get treatment.
- If someone needs to go from the main hospital to the Radiotherapy unit the porters will not support them as it is classed as not being on site. The nursing staff, volunteers or relatives must help the patient.
- There is little storage in any of the units and the staff must go backwards and forwards to get things.
- Relatives are not allowed (apart from Dove) as there is no space and concerns about protecting patients.
- People may be coming for immunotherapy for up to 3 years, every two to three weeks. Breast cancer patients it can be 5-6 years.
- Immunotherapy is given in the same units as chemotherapy at GWH, whereby other hospitals keep them separate.
- The staff are looking at how to do more effectively to reduce the people in the units through faster infusions or minimising complications by making sure people are ready for the treatment.
- Staff are dedicated to making the process as easy as possible for all their patients.
- Treatments are not made at GWH which causes issues with medication not arriving on time. Hopefully in the next year they will be made on site. Currently they have to order on the day and wait for them to arrive at 11. Due to their short shelf life, if they are late not only is the treatment unusable but a chair/bed is blocked by patients waiting.

- The Oncology teams are stretched, the time to start the treatment is complicated by the need to genetically test and get genetic markers to see what other treatments can help.
- Genetic tests take two weeks, which delays treatment when its needed ASAP.
- It is difficult when patients need chemo and radiotherapy, as have to do it on time and it is often delayed due to the testing or arrival of medication.
- Cancer buddy's help as well, due to some patients being on the unit up to 8 hours a day and there is nothing to do.

Observed Challenges

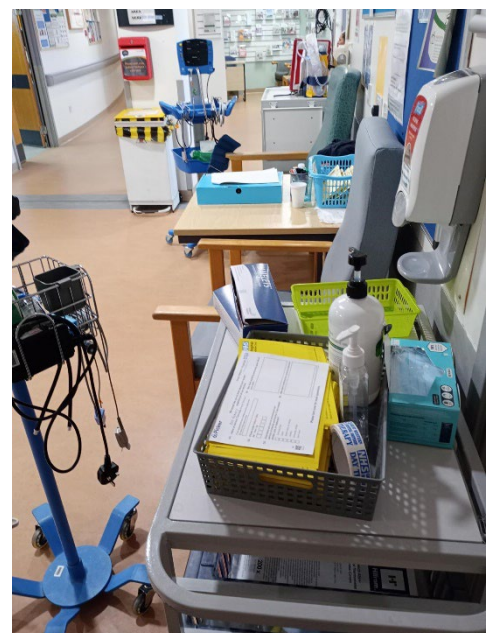
- Treating more patients for longer, there are more options to keep patients alive, but the question is where and how to treat them.
- GWH do not have an oncology unit. The patient may attend the outpatient unit for the treatment and come back to their inpatient ward within GWH, be admitted on the haematology ward (if capacity) or receive their treatment in the inpatient oncology ward of other centres like Oxford.
- Some consultants are based in Oxford and travel to Swindon.
- There is little or no progression in Oncology in Swindon, so it is difficult to recruit and retain doctors.
- They are reaching the point we cannot fit in all the patients.

Day Units within Osprey

The space was quite dark; the staff space was a cupboard that was waiting to be decorated and the kitchen was only big enough for one person.

When a patient arrived, they were initially seen in the corridor to check blood pressure and temp, the patients expressed it was not a great experience as no privacy.

The central desk in the day therapy unit was very large and not really used, the staff suggested it could be removed and a smaller one put into free up space. The waiting area was large with an information screen, there is a corner with leaflets, there used to be a volunteer greeter to make people comfortable however now there is an empty desk, that has not been used since COVID.





Waiting area in Osprey, before being admitted into the Coate Unit or Day Therapy Centre.

There were three side rooms, with one being used for specific treatments.

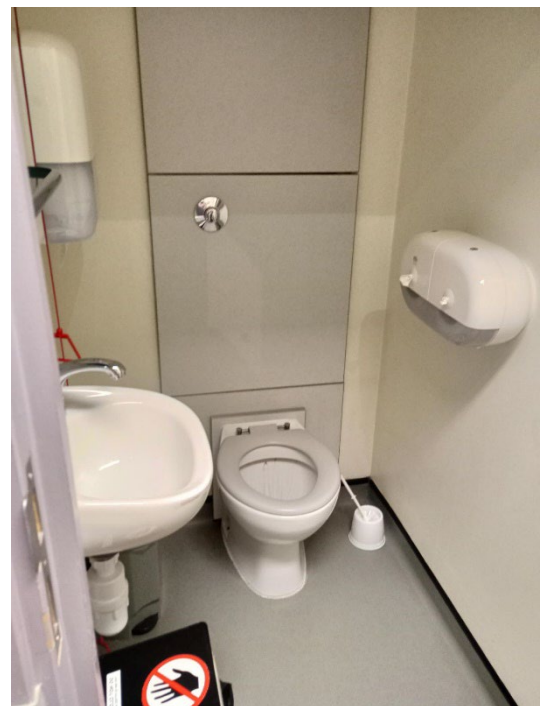
One toilet was not big enough to use with a drip stand.

The nurses regularly checked on the patients and are friendly but professional. They asked if there was any pain or discomfort and took observations including blood pressure and body temperature.

The medicine area was not spacious, and the apron holder was broken. It was reported of been broken for a long time. A cupboard door had been removed to help improve access, with the door placed between the wall and the cupboard to avoid it getting in the way.

Lamps are broken and floppy and there was no dedicated charging area for equipment and devices. Resulting in them being scattered all over the ward.

No adjustable tables, making it difficult to for both patients and staff.



Day Therapy Centre – Patient feedback

Staff and volunteers

- “The nurses are amazing; I came here for the first time in June and the staff have been nothing but supportive” (now Dec)
- “The cancer volunteers and cancer buddies are great; they make a difference”
- “The staff are brilliant”

The environment

- “The decor is tired and a bit depressing, but you get used to it and do not notice it after a while”
- “Not easy to get to the toilet even though it is on the ward, the stands are a bit wonky sometimes which makes it tricky”
- “The unit is very busy, and we are close together, the staff do their best to make it feel relaxed but its’ hard”
- “Have to put my bags on the floor next to me there is not anywhere to store it which is not ideal”
- “Feel it is manic and busy, you queue to get in and feel pressured to leave”
- “Stuck in a chair and corners with nothing to do or look at”
- “I have an injection in my posterior so need privacy, the nurse had to climb on a chair to fix the curtain as it was stuck”
- “Want a change in the atmosphere, feel isolated from each other and hate the fact my husband is sitting in the waiting room”
- “Toilet facilities not great it is difficult to take a drip in”
- “Use Nappies which means I do not need to use the toilet thankfully as they are tricky to use”
- “I need a footstall and there is only one I believe; I need to sit when my feet are up and there are very few around”
- “No complaints, the room could be brighter, but a gin or prosecco bar would be good”
- “Would be nice to have a cheerier and brighter environment to help make it feel calmer and more relaxing.

- “Very Cramped”

Food

- “They provide hot drinks and lunch – sandwiches, drinks and fruit, sandwiches are hard to eat, very dry”
- “My mouth gets dry, and I struggle with the sandwiches they are really dry and hard to eat. They are plain cheese or meat no sauce which is not great. Had a vegetarian one recently that had sauce and was much easier to eat”

Transport

“I use an ambulance to get here from Hungerford it is difficult. A 9am appointment is impossible. We use South Central Ambulance Service. They come from Basingstoke and start driving at 0830. (45-minute drive to Hungerford). Then from Hungerford to Swindon is 30 minutes. It means the earliest I can get here is 1015, if they are running to time, I only come for an injection which takes minutes.”

Treatment

- “My treatment is 3 injections, but I am stuck blocking a chair waiting for the drugs to be delivered”
- “The nurses are having to run around sorting drugs and transport”
- “Booked a time with transport but still waiting for drugs these are new ones so not had it before, the doctor signs it off first, the sent to Boots Pharmacy and this is what takes the time. Now having to wait in restaurant for transport home as they had to go pick someone else near our home up, they will bring them back and then pick us up. No idea how long it will be”
- “Treatment is going really well. There are always translators available for when a family member can’t attend. We’re also allocated a side room where possible to allow for enough space for my family to translate my treatment for me.

Coate Ward – Patient Feedback

Staff

- “The staff are lovely looking after our needs they are brilliant”
- “The nurses are great at giving us sandwiches and tea”

Environment

- “It is not great having to walk out to go to the loo, they are in the waiting area”
- “The space needs brightening up its very dull”
- “When I went for a scan, there was a lovely mural on the ceiling, it would be great if they can do something similar here”
- “The space needs pictures, plants and calming things”
- “It often feels tight with so many people in here”
- “It is nice to have a break from the noise of home, feel like coming here is a bit of a break, a space where I can sit in silence”
- “Struggle with disabled parking, there is not enough, and it is not close enough”
- “Would love some murals on the wall, like the diving board picture”

Treatment

- “The drugs come quickly no wait”
- “Prescriptions for my regular medication are ready before I go home, they get the injections from the fridge”
- “The pharmacist in here is really good, if you’ve got something wrong, they will help, give medication for side effects. I had an issue around my eye and got cream straight away”
- “I look forward to coming up, it is a safe space, the nurses are friendly and helpful. Nothing is too much trouble”

Dove Ward

The Dove Ward hosts the more vulnerable patients, with a maximum of 10 at any time. Patients can be in for weeks or months, with the option to personalise their space. The televisions and fridges are all different in each space as they are donated.

Storage is much improved here, but equipment is still faulty. We witnessed the nursing team try 3 different machines to set up a patient's chemo drip before they found one that worked.

No restrictions on when family can visit, they can call or pop in anytime, often bringing food as the hospital food is not great.

Patients can bring their own kettle, but it must be PAT tested. Toasters are not allowed! Saw two bathrooms one with shower and one with bath, both looked tired (photos)

There is no information stand on the Dove Ward and the reception desk is large and not accessible for people in wheelchairs.

The family room was well decorated, but the painting and clock were still waiting to be hung.



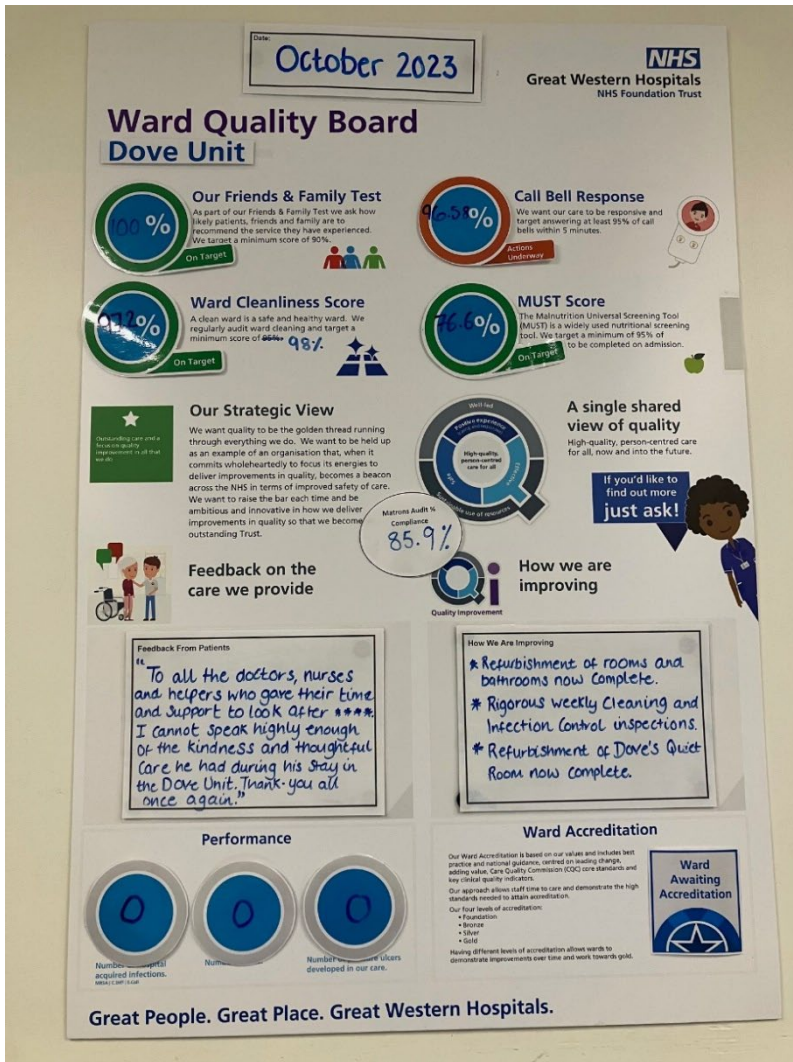
Newly decorated family room.

Décor in the Dove ward looked tired despite being recently decorated, the painters had not taken things off the wall just painted around them and paint was already peeling.

Outside the ward entrance were large waste bins which did not make the space look welcoming.

Patient Feedback

- "I've arranged to have my chemo here as its easier than going to Oxford. The first round of chemo failed and then I had Radiotherapy. But unfortunately relapsed so starting all over again."
- "Sometimes my stays should be short, but due to delays in getting the medication here before it expires, these stays are extended, and my overall treatment plan delayed."
- "I was previously treated in Oxford for 37 days, visitors could only come at weekend, and it was very boring. But the staff were fabulous, and I could sneak off for a decent coffee."
- "Being here is like staying at a very good hotel! The staff are friendly, they always introduce themselves and explain everything. Genuinely nice and helpful."
- "When I visit for just two nights, I use a taxi to get here and back. Much easier than bothering the family."
- "Whilst I spend most evenings on my own, the staff are great company during the day. I just touch the button and they arrive instantly. Excellent care is second nature, it's nice."
- "Absolutely fantastic!"



Dove Ward Quality Board.

Intermediate Care Unit

- The equipment and medicine were well organised and labelled - easily accessible.
- Not able to talk to the patients as the space was so small and we would be in the way of the nurses.
- Patients were waiting in the corridor, leaning against the wall whilst waiting to be called in.

Acknowledgements

The Healthwatch Swindon would like to thank all GWH staff, patients and volunteers for a friendly welcome and unlimited access to the premises.

Department Response

Thank you for this detailed report and for sharing the key findings from your visit. We are positive that your views and suggestions will help us improve our service and patient experience and agree with your recommendations.

We are looking forward to our pharmacy aseptic unit being completed, which we are hoping will be by the end of the year. Once this is done, most of our treatments will be prepared on site, resulting in a more positive experience for our patients through reduced wait times.

We have been working closely with Macmillan for the last year, in preparation for a Macmillan Grant application that will support us with some of the funding for the much-needed improvements. This funding is for non-fixable equipment and will be invested in storage racks and trolleys within the treatment units, which transforms it into a more organized and easier area to work.

The department is also currently looking for ideas to brighten up the place with a refreshed décor looking for a calmer and more relaxed environment.

We acknowledge the concerns raised and are committed to joining efforts between the Trust and local partners, to obtain meaningful improvement for our chemotherapy units and the patients that receive care in them. This includes improvements such as, a dedicated space in the waiting area that allows the staff to maintain patient confidentiality and privacy, and improved access and signage for patients requiring chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

Provider Response

“We are pleased to see that Healthwatch recognise the brilliant care provided by our staff and volunteers to patients and appreciate the recommendations for improvements they have shared with us. Our teams are committed to introducing improvements and are already using these findings to help shape changes which improve the environment, facilities and services for our patients who are receiving chemotherapy.”

Lisa Cheek, Chief Nurse for the Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust



Sanford House
Sanford Street
Swindon
SN1 4HE

www.healthwatchswindon.org.uk

t: 01793 497 777

e: info@healthwatchswindon.org.uk

 [@hwatchbathnes](https://twitter.com/hwatchbathnes)

 [Facebook.com/healthwatchbanes](https://www.facebook.com/healthwatchbanes)