

Wheelchair Access Report

A combined review of wheelchair access
across Manchester's three major hospitals



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About us

Healthwatch Manchester(HWM) is the independent consumer champion for health and care. It was created to listen to and gather the public and patient's experiences of using local health and social care services. This includes services like GPs, pharmacists, hospitals, dentists, care homes and community based care.

Emerging from the Health and Social Care Act 2012, a Healthwatch was set up in every local authority area to help put residents and the public at the heart of service delivery and improvement across the NHS and care services.

As part of this role HWM has statutory powers to undertake Enter and View visits to publicly funded health or social care premises. These visits give our trained Authorised Enter and View Representatives the opportunity to observe the quality of services and to obtain the views of the people using those services.

What is Enter & View?

Local Healthwatch representatives carry out Enter and View 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 from the perspective of people who experience the service first hand.

Healthwatch Enter and Views are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch safeguarding policies.

In addition, if any member of staff wishes to raise a safeguarding issue about their employer they will be directed to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) where they are protected by legislation if they raise a concern.

Introduction

1.1 This report aims to present the findings and recommendations of a comparative review of wheelchair access across Manchester's three major hospitals. Beginning in December 2022 and finishing in December 2023, three reviews of wheelchair access and availability were carried out on the following hospital sites:

- Manchester Royal Infirmary
- North Manchester General Hospital
- Wythenshawe Hospital

1.2 After each visit, an independent report was produced. This report combines the findings from the three individual Enter and View reports.

1.3 AccessAble have produced individual guides for Manchester Royal Infirmary(MRI), North Manchester General Hospital(NMGH) and Wythenshawe Hospital(WH).

1.4 AccessAble are an accessibility organisation who provide information regarding the accessibility of a venue through Detailed Access Guides¹. The AccessAble page for each Hospital site we visited states that there are *'a limited number of wheelchairs are available at each hospital entrance'*².

1.5 NHS England's Reasonable Adjustment Statement reads **'the NHS has to make it as easy for disabled people to use health services as it is for people who are not disabled.** This is called making reasonable adjustments.

1.6 These could be things like:

- making sure there is wheelchair access in hospitals
- providing easy read appointment letters
- giving someone a priority appointment if they find it difficult waiting in their GP surgery or hospital
- longer appointments if someone needs more time with a doctor or nurse to make sure they understand the information they are given.'³

¹ <https://www.accessable.co.uk/pages/about>

² <https://www.accessable.co.uk/venues/manchester-royal-infirmary-building#f1081e42-fb57-0445-91f5-2f75fed4a6f7>

³ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/learning-disabilities/improving-health/reasonable-adjustments/>

Background and Rationale

2.1 HWM have a legal power to visit health and social care services and see them in action. This power to Enter and View services offers a way for Healthwatch to meet some of their statutory functions and allows them to identify what is working well with services and where they could be improved.

2.2 HWM's Enter and View work has been an ongoing project since the Covid-19 pandemic. In alignment with its powers of Enter and View, HWM conducted a review of wheelchair access across Manchester's three major hospitals.

Methodology

3.3 The HWM team made three unannounced visits to the hospital sites to conduct Enter and View reviews.

HWM visited MRI in November 2022, NMGH in April 2023 and WH in December 2023.

Prior to the Enter and View taking place

3.2 All Enter and View representatives were fully trained in how to carry out an Enter and View. They were also checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

3.3 All Enter & View representatives have been briefed and have agreed to abide by the Healthwatch Manchester Code of Conduct and Infection Control policy.

3.4 The lasted between 45 - 90 minutes. The visit date and times are shown in the appendix of this report.

During the visit

3.5 Each visit consisted of a team of HWM representatives who carried out the following procedure as part of the review:

- Location of wheelchairs in the hospital
- Location of information on how to use wheelchairs provided
- Review of ease of movement within the hospital for the wheelchair user and handler
- Review of access to wheelchairs on request

Following the Enter and View Visit

3.6 Following each visit initial findings were fed back to the provider and other relevant parties in accordance with the HWM escalation policy.

3.7 Each report was produced within 10 working days of the visit. An initial draft was circulated to the service provider to enable a response. The service provider was obliged to acknowledge and respond within 20 working days of receipt of the draft report. The response from the provider is included at the end of this report.

Findings

- 4.1 The entrances to each hospital we visited were all wheelchair accessible.
- 4.2 Locating a wheelchair was difficult for a person with no physical or sensory disabilities. For a person with physical or sensory disabilities it is therefore even more difficult. This is non-compliant with the Public Sector Equality Duty⁴.
- 4.3 Two out of the three hospital sites didn't provide clear and obvious signage regarding the use of wheelchairs. Only Wythenshawe Hospital provided this information.
- 4.4 Once a wheelchair was obtained in any of the sites, mobility and access was very good. These locations were all navigable with a wheelchair.
- 4.5 Staff and volunteers were polite and helpful across all sites regarding wheelchair access information.
- 4.6 HWM were informed that MRI had purchased a batch of new wheelchairs in order to address the recommendations HWM made in the individual report for MRI.

Conclusions

- 5.1 All three major hospital sites in Manchester are wheelchair accessible.
- 5.2 However, the number of wheelchairs available for people with physical and sensory disabilities is significantly limited across all three major hospital sites.
- 5.3 Signage explaining how to use a wheelchair was lacking across the majority of the hospital sites we reviewed.
- 5.4 Usage of a wheelchair is easy inside the hospital buildings. The floors were smooth and doorways were wide enough to enable wheelchair access.
- 5.5 Staff and volunteers across the three sites were polite and helpful to HWM during our reviews.
- 5.6 It should be noted that the hospital trust has made an effort to both provide more wheelchairs in their hospitals and gather their wheelchairs from carparks and storage areas on the hospital grounds on a more regular basis (*See Response from service provider, pp. 17-18*).

Recommendations

- 6.1 University of Manchester NHS Foundation Trust should increase the number of wheelchairs available across all three major hospital sites in Manchester.
- 6.2 Signage regarding the use of wheelchairs should be improved across all three major hospital sites including how to use them.
- 6.3 The availability of information regarding the use of wheelchairs should be improved across all three majority hospital sites.
- 6.4 HWM should conduct the same review in a year's time in order to assess improvement in wheelchair access.

⁴ Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) 2011

Response from the service provider

Acknowledgements

Thank you to members of our Citizens Reading Panel for their support in the production of this report.

Appendix

Healthwatch Manchester: Manchester Royal Infirmary Enter and View Report



Manchester Royal Infirmary Enter and View Report

Contact Details	Manchester Royal Infirmary, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9WL
Visit Date and Time	28/11/2022 8:30am-10am
Healthwatch Manchester Representatives	Thomas Carr (HWM staff) Eamon Hasoon (HWM staff) Neil Walbran (HWM staff) Lyndsey Norman (HWM staff)



Disclaimer

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.

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About us

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Emerging from the Health and Social Care Act 2012, a Healthwatch was set up in every local authority area to help put residents and the public at the heart of service delivery and improvement across the NHS and care services.

As part of this role Healthwatch Manchester has statutory powers to undertake Enter and View visits to publicly funded health or social care premises. These visits give our trained Authorised Enter and View Representatives the opportunity to observe the quality of services and to obtain the views of the people using those services.

What is Enter & View?

Local Healthwatch representatives carry out Enter and View 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 from the perspective of people who experience the service first hand.

Healthwatch Enter and Views are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch safeguarding policies.

In addition, if any member of staff wishes to raise a safeguarding issue about their employer they will be directed to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) where they are protected by legislation if they raise a concern.

General information about the service

Name of the Provider: Manchester University NHS Trust

Manchester University NHS Trust has nine hospital sites: Manchester Royal Eye Hospital, Manchester Royal Infirmary, Royal Manchester Children's Hospital, Saint Mary's Hospital, The University Dental Hospital, Altrincham Hospital, Trafford General Hospital, Wythenshawe Hospital and Withington Community Hospital. The trust also provides community services. The trust provides a range of primary, secondary and tertiary care services across Manchester and the wider region

Description of Facility: Wheelchair provision for patients and visitors to the infirmary.

CQC Rating*: Good (inspection conducted 2nd October - 8th November 2018) - the report can be found [here](#)

See Care Quality Commission (CQC) website to see their latest report on this service.

** Care Quality Commission is the independent regulator of health and adult social care in England.*

Purpose of the visit

The purpose of the visit was to:

- Review access to wheelchair provision
- Review ease of wheelchair use within the infirmary excluding its exterior grounds. The ease of wheelchair use includes the availability of guidance on how to use one of the wheelchairs provided

Executive Summary of Findings

1. Access to a wheelchair in Manchester Royal Infirmary is poor.
2. Information regarding use of a wheelchair is unavailable.
3. Access around MRI is good for wheelchair users

Summary List of Indicators

Source: AccessAble (Manchester Royal Infirmary)

Getting Help and Assistance

- There is a Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) at the hospital.
- The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is located inside the Manchester Royal Infirmary Entrance 2.
- The telephone number for the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is 0161 276 1234.
- The email address for the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is pals@mft.nhs.uk.
- There are volunteers available for help and assistance at the hospital.
- Volunteers can be found at both entrances.
- Documents are available in an alternative format and can be provided to include: Braille on request, large print on request and different languages on request.
- There is an assistance dog toilet or toileting area on the hospital site.
- The assistance dog toilet or toileting area is located on the grass area in front of the main Manchester Royal Eye Hospital Entrance.
- Water bowls for assistance dogs are available.
- BSL interpreters can be provided on request.
- Language interpreters can be provided on request.
- A mobility scooter charging point is not available at the hospital.
- ***Mobility aids are available to help patients move around and include; wheelchairs.***
- To obtain mobility aids please contact Main Hospital Reception.
- Nursing staff complete an e-learning course to assist with treating patients with learning disabilities

Methodology

We informed the Patient Advice and Liaison Service that an unannounced Enter and View visit was taking place in the infirmary at 7:55am on the day of the visit.

Prior to the Enter and View taking place

All Enter and View representatives were fully trained in how to carry out an Enter and View. They were also checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

All Enter & View representatives have been briefed and have agreed to abide by the Healthwatch Manchester Code of Conduct and Infection Control policy.

The visit was carried out over the course of one and a half hours. The visit date and times are shown on the front cover of this report.

During the visit

The visit consisted of a team of Healthwatch Manchester representatives who carried out the following procedure as part of the review:

- Location of wheelchairs in the infirmary
- Location of information on how to use wheelchairs provided
- Reviewed of ease of movement within the infirmary for the wheelchair user and handler

Procedure in detail

- Went through the infirmary
- Headed to main reception next to A&E outpatients
- Lights were not turned on
- Reception was not staffed
- Security staff were asked was reception going to open soon, we were told no by the security staff
- There were no way-finders from the 'way-finders' scheme to meet and greet us
- We were clearly identifiable as Healthwatch representatives
- Attempted to locate a wheelchair ourselves
- Saw no signage
- We found a member of staff identifiable as working at the infirmary who was busy but nevertheless took the time to talk with us and answer our queries.
- We asked where we might locate a wheelchair, she signpost us to an alcove area around a glass brick wall and told us there would be someone there to help us with our query
- There was nobody there
- We returned to the same healthcare professional and reported our findings where we were then told to find one ourselves
- We found one outside the hospital not too far from the main entrance. It was uncovered and cold

- We then proceeded with the review of ease of movement around the interior of the infirmary on the ground floor
- One member of staff was seated in the wheelchair another pushed the wheelchair.
- After 10 min a passer-by told us to pull the wheelchair rather than push which would've made our movement much more comfortable
- Two other members of staff made observations as the review proceeded, an action camera was used to record the patient journey in the wheelchair through the infirmary to check its ease of access and smoothness of passage
- We were also looking at signage and how easy each department was to locate
- The main corridors were reviewed using this process

Authorised representatives spoke to a total of one healthcare professional.

Following the Enter and View Visit

Immediately following the visit initial findings were fed back to the provider and other relevant parties in accordance with the Healthwatch Manchester escalation policy.

This report was produced within **10 working days** of the visit. An initial draft was circulated to the service provider to enable a response. The service provider was obliged to acknowledge and respond within **20 working days of receipt of the draft report**. The response from the provider is included at the end of this report.

Enter and View Observations

The external environment

The entrance we viewed at main reception was wheelchair accessible with no uneven surfaces, enabling easy access.

The internal environment

Locating a wheelchair was difficult for abled bodied and non-sensory impaired people. This would be very difficult for somebody with a disability. This is non-compliant with the Public Sector Equality Duty⁵.

Information regarding the use of a wheelchair was not available nor was assistance in managing the use of a wheelchair.

Wheelchair access was very good, there were no obstacles and everywhere on the ground floor of the infirmary was navigable in a wheelchair. There were regularly spaced out lifts to get to other floors. Moreover, the level of lighting was very good. The corridors were wide and unobstructed apart from people going about their duties in the hospital.

Staff were very helpful and polite.

⁵ Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) 2011

Recommendations

The University of Manchester NHS Foundation Trust should aim for full compliance with the Public Sectors Equality Duty and Healthwatch Manchester would welcome site of its associated equality information (Published March 2022).

Information regarding the use of a wheelchair in the Hospital needs to be provided either through printed resources or through staff assistance.

Response from service provider

Response to Healthwatch Manchester Enter and View Visit 28th November 2022

Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust (MFT) welcome the report provided by the Healthwatch Manchester (HWM) Team following their visit on 28th November 2022. It was pleasing to note the positive findings in the report, at the same time as acknowledging areas where improvements can be made for the benefit of the public, patients and their visitors who may access the MRI.

External accessibility and internal environment

The HWM Team entered the MRI through Entrance 1 at 07.55hrs on 28th November 2022, at the same time the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) team were notified of the visit by email. The HWM Team experienced easy access to the MRI for wheelchair users. The HWM Team noted that there no staff were at the reception area. The reception area is currently operational between 08:00hrs to 16:00 Monday to Friday and is staffed by the MRI Outpatient Team. Action has been taken since the Healthwatch visit, to support anyone who may attend outside these hours. We have provided information to be placed in the reception area, in easy read (accessible) format on how to contact staff for any assistance if required.

The HWM Team followed directions to the main PALS Helpdesk, internally toward Entrance 2, where the PALS helpdesk is situated. The team found that the PALS Helpdesk was not manned as it only operational between 09:00hrs and 16:00hrs Monday to Friday. Although we are not able to increase staffing to this area outside core hours, action we have taken to improve the experience for all patients has included improved signage directing staff on how to access support if required and ensuring that the information available on the AccessAble online platform reflects operational times for reception areas.

The HWM Team noted that the lights were not turned on in the PALS Helpdesk area at the time of their visit, as it was not operational at the time of the visit. However, we recognise that visitors may enter the building through Entrance 2 at earlier than 09:00hrs when the PALS helpdesk is operational, and have immediately remedied the situation. Action has been taken to ensure that lights are switched on appropriately to when the area is likely to be used. We have also provided improved signage to ensure that the operational times for the PALS Helpdesk is prominently displayed. Additionally, we will update the online AccessAble guide to ensure the opening times for the PALS Helpdesk are displayed.

The HWM Team were not able to find a Way-Finder from the 'Way-Finders' scheme to meet and greet them during the visit. MFT have over 40 Way-Finders, who are a team made up of volunteers providing support across the Oxford Road Campus (ORC). Their core hours are 10:00am to 16:00hrs, and their role is to augment other aspects of Way-Finding.

The Estates and Facilities (E&F) team, in partnership with Sodexo, have been working hard to improve all aspects of Way-Finding to ensure it is simple, accessible and as accurate as possible. The new ORC way-finding scheme is based on wider and more noticeable use of the ORC hospital colours.

- MRI – Maroon
- Saint Mary's Hospital – Blue
- Manchester Royal Eye Hospital – Yellow
- Royal Manchester Children's Hospital – Green

At ORC, each lift along Hospital Street has a large letter attached to it to denote the hospital zone it is in. Staircores and lift lobbies have been painted in the appropriate hospital colour, and improved signage and floor directories have been installed to better patients, visitors and staff understanding of where they are in relation to where they need to be. The HWM Team found that the lift spacing, and wheelchair accessibility was good.

The E&F team have also worked improvement of the identification of zones A to N. The zones and colours have always been part of ORC wayfinding but have not been utilised in the obvious way that they are currently. It is pleasing to note that during their visit, the HWM Team were able to navigate along the ground floor of the MRI and that staff spoken to were friendly and keen to help if it was required.

The wayfinding team work continually to ensure all the MFT site maps are accurate and kept as up to date as possible to reflect the ever-changing landscape of the Trust. However, it was disappointing to note the HWM Teams finding that there was no signage directing the Healthwatch team to the wheelchair base, and that the only wheelchair that could be located was outside, therefore it was uncovered and cold.

Wheelchair availability and ease of use

The HWM Team visit prompted rapid assessment of wheelchair availability by the Head of Nursing for Patient Experience and Head of Facilities Management, who immediately visited the area. They were able to locate around 10 wheelchairs, which were returned to the Wheelchair Base. However, similarly to the findings of the HWM Team, they were not able to find the wheelchairs in the Wheelchair Base itself, or in any other central area. For example, some chairs were found in the multi-storey car park area, where they had not been returned by users.

Actions taken as a result of the findings include:

- The E&F Team, working with Sodexo (providers of portering services on site), to ensure that wheelchairs are regularly collected and distributed to allocated points across the site.
- The Head of Facilities Management provided an additional 25 wheelchairs to the ORC site; these were delivered on Monday 19th December.
- Signage has been provided at the Reception Desk directing the public to the wheelchair bay; instructions for use and return will be provided at the wheelchair bay.

The HWM team had some difficulty in manoeuvring the wheelchair that they located, and were informed by a passer-by that pulling, rather than pushing the wheelchair, would have made movement much more comfortable. There are three types of wheelchairs in use at ORC for transport

of patients. There are approximately 50 Bristol Maid model chairs, and 25 of Stryker model chairs. The Stryker model is intended for use by the public as a mobility aid round the site, and instructions for use are found adhered to the back of the chair. The Stryker chairs are easy to manoeuvre by pushing. It is likely therefore that the HWM Team had found and used a Bristol Maid model, which is mainly intended for use by the portering team. These chairs are identified by the sign 'PORTERS' written on the back of the seat. It is anticipated that by increasing the number of Stryker chairs, improving signage and by organising regular wheelchair returns that accessibility of mobility aids will improve.

Annual response to the Public Sector Equality Duty obligations

A recommendation of the HWM report was to have access to MF's annual response to the Public Sector Equality Duty obligations. The HWM Team were not easily able to access the report through MFT Website. This has now been rectified. In addition to providing a copy of the report to HWM, the accessibility of the report on the MFT website has been improved. The link to the report is provided here https://mft.nhs.uk/app/uploads/2022/04/EDIAnnualReport_2022_A4_V7-1.pdf

Summary

MFT welcomed the findings of the HWM Team visit on 28th November as an opportunity to make further improvements to accessibility of wheelchairs on the MRI site. We noted the positive findings in the report and were pleased that the work undertaken to ensure good access to the MRI by wheelchair was evident. However, we also noted areas where improvements are required to ensure availability of wheelchairs. Following the HWM visit, a series of actions have been put in place intended to address the findings in the report. These are identified in the section below.

Summary of Actions

1. To support anyone who may attend Entrance 1 and 2 outside core hours, information has been provided in the reception areas, in easy read (accessible) format on how to contact staff for any assistance if required.
2. To improve the experience for all visitors and patients, improved signage is in place around the entrances directing staff on how to access support if required and ensuring that the information available on the AccessAble online platform reflects operational times for reception areas.
3. The E&F team have taken action to ensure that lights are switched on appropriately at entrance areas and reception areas, when the area is likely to be used.
4. The E&F Team, working with Sodexo (providers of portering services on site), have taken actions to ensure that wheelchairs are regularly collected and distributed to allocated points across the site.
5. An additional 25 Stryker wheelchairs have been made available to the ORC site.
6. Signage has been provided at the Reception Desk directing the public to the wheelchair bay and instruction for use and return will be provided at the wheelchair bay.
7. The Equality Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report is now more easily accessible on the MFT website, and a copy of the report has been provided to HWM.

Points for factual accuracy

The name of the Trust in Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust, rather than University of Manchester NHS Foundation Trust

Healthwatch Manchester: North Manchester General Hospital enter and View Report



North Manchester General Hospital Enter and View Report

Contact Details	North Manchester General Hospital, Delaunays Road, Manchester, M8 5RB
Visit Date and Time	18/04/2023 10am-11am
Healthwatch Manchester Representatives	Thomas Carr (HWM staff) Neil Walbran (HWM staff) Lyndsey Norman (HWM staff)



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Healthwatch Enter and Views are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch safeguarding policies.

In addition, if any member of staff wishes to raise a safeguarding issue about their employer they will be directed to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) where they are protected by legislation if they raise a concern.

General information about the service

Name of the Provider: Manchester University NHS Trust

Manchester University NHS Trust has nine hospital sites: Manchester Royal Eye Hospital, Manchester Royal Infirmary, Royal Manchester Children's Hospital, Saint Mary's Hospital, The University Dental Hospital, Altrincham Hospital, Trafford General Hospital, Wythenshawe Hospital and Withington Community Hospital. The trust also provides community services. The trust provides a range of primary, secondary and tertiary care services across Manchester and the wider region

Description of Facility: Wheelchair provision for patients and visitors to the North Manchester General Hospital (NMGH).

CQC Rating*: Good (inspection conducted 2nd October - 8th November 2018) - the report can be found [here](#)

See Care Quality Commission (CQC) website to see their latest report on this service.

** Care Quality Commission is the independent regulator of health and adult social care in England.*

Purpose of the visit

The purpose of the visit was to:

- Review access to wheelchair provision
- Review ease of wheelchair use within the infirmary excluding its exterior grounds. The ease of wheelchair use includes the availability of guidance on how to use one of the wheelchairs provided

Executive Summary of Findings

4. Access to a wheelchair in NMGH is poor.
5. Information regarding use of a wheelchair is unavailable.
6. Access around NMGH is good for wheelchair users

Summary List of Indicators

Source: AccessAble (Manchester Royal Infirmary)

Getting Help and Assistance

- There is a Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) at the hospital.
- The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) office is located on the Upper Main Corridor of the hospital.
- The telephone number for the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is 0161 276 1234.
- The email address for the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is pals@mft.nhs.uk.
- There are volunteers available for help and assistance at the hospital.
- Volunteers can be found at both entrances.
- Documents are available in an alternative format and can be provided to include: Braille on request, large print on request and different languages on request.
- There is an assistance dog toilet or toileting area on the hospital site.
- The assistance dog toilet or toileting area is located on the grass area in front of the main Manchester Royal Eye Hospital Entrance.
- Water bowls for assistance dogs are available.
- BSL interpreters can be provided on request.
- Language interpreters can be provided on request.
- A mobility scooter charging point is not available at the hospital.
- ***Mobility aids are available to help patients move around and include; wheelchairs.***
- To obtain mobility aids please contact Main Hospital Reception.
- Nursing staff complete an e-learning course to assist with treating patients with learning disabilities

Methodology

We made an unannounced Enter and View visit to the infirmary at 10am on the day of the visit.

Prior to the Enter and View taking place

All Enter and View representatives were fully trained in how to carry out an Enter and View. They were also checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

All Enter & View representatives have been briefed and have agreed to abide by the Healthwatch Manchester Code of Conduct and Infection Control policy.

The visit was carried out over the course of one hour. The visit date and times are shown on the front cover of this report.

During the visit

The visit consisted of a team of Healthwatch Manchester representatives who carried out the following procedure as part of the review:

- Location of wheelchairs in the hospital
- Location of information on how to use wheelchairs provided
- Reviewed of ease of movement within the infirmary for the wheelchair user and handler

Procedure in detail

- Headed to main reception
- Reception was staffed by two volunteers
- There were no way-finders from the 'way-finders' scheme to meet and greet us
- We were clearly identifiable as Healthwatch representatives
- Attempted to locate a wheelchair ourselves
- Saw no signage
- We asked the two volunteers where the wheelchairs were as the designated area for them was empty
- They told us that people take them and don't bring them back
- Porters, ambulance staff and patients all use them despite the fact that porters have their own and so do ambulance staff
- The two volunteers were aware of the lack of wheelchair access and confirmed it had been the same for the last 9 years at least
- One of the volunteers had to go and find a wheelchair for someone to use as there were none in the entrance that morning
- The volunteers told us that a man once had to physically carry his mother into the hospital as there were no available wheelchairs
- The volunteers told us that apparently memos were sent to the wards to inform them that they had to return the wheelchairs to the entrance however neither of the volunteers had seen proof of this in writing or in action

- They also informed us that ambulance staff are having to take wheelchairs for admissions, who end up using that wheelchair for the duration of their admission process.
- Wheelchairs are often left to sit where they were left, rather than proactive action being taken to return them to the reception area.
- Patients regularly use wheelchairs for somewhere to sit when they go outside for a cigarette, this is not being policed.
- The HWM team counted a total of 14 people smoking just outside entrances to the hospital within the hour long review.
- The HWM team looked around the hospital and only found 1 available wheelchair
- We then proceeded with the review of ease of movement around the interior of the hospital on the ground floor
- One member of staff was seated in the wheelchair another pushed the wheelchair.
- After a few attempts, we realised we had to push the wheelchair rather than pull which would've made our movement much more comfortable
- We were also looking at signage and how easy each department was to locate
- The downstairs corridor and Upper Main Corridor were reviewed using this process

Authorised representatives spoke to a total of zero healthcare professionals.

Following the Enter and View Visit

Following the visit initial findings were fed back to the provider and other relevant parties in accordance with the Healthwatch Manchester escalation policy.

This report was produced within **10 working days** of the visit. An initial draft was circulated to the service provider to enable a response. The service provider was obliged to acknowledge and respond within **20 working days of receipt of the draft report**. The response from the provider is included at the end of this report.

Enter and View Observations

The external environment

The entrance we viewed at main reception was wheelchair accessible with no uneven surfaces, enabling easy access.

The internal environment

Locating a wheelchair was difficult for abled bodied and non-sensory impaired people. This would be very difficult for somebody with a disability. This is non-compliant with the Public Sector Equality Duty⁶.

Information regarding the use of a wheelchair was not available nor was assistance in managing the use of a wheelchair.

Wheelchair access was very good, there were no obstacles and everywhere on the ground floor of the infirmary was navigable in a wheelchair. There were regularly spaced out lifts to get to other floors. Moreover, the level of lighting was very good. The corridors were wide and unobstructed apart from people going about their duties in the hospital.

Volunteers were very helpful and polite.

⁶ Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) 2011

Recommendations

The University of Manchester NHS Foundation Trust should aim for full compliance with the Public Sectors Equality Duty and Healthwatch Manchester would welcome site of its associated equality information (Published March 2022).

Information regarding the use of a wheelchair in the Hospital needs to be provided either through printed resources or through staff assistance.

Response from service provider

Response to Healthwatch Manchester Enter and View Visit 18th April 2023.

Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust (MFT) welcome the report provided on the 21st April 2023 by the Healthwatch Manchester (HWM) Team following their visit on 18th April 2023 to North Manchester General Hospital (NMGH).

It was pleasing to note the positive findings in the report, at the same time as acknowledging areas where improvements can be made for the benefit of the public, patients and their visitors who may access NMGH.

Entrance accessibility, staff availability and way-finding

The HWM Team conducted an unannounced Enter and View visit to NMGH on the 18th April 2023 at 10:00, of which MFT were notified via email on the 18th April 2023 at 12:24.

On arrival to NMGH the HWM team headed to the main reception which was staffed by two volunteers.

The HWM Team were not able to find a Way-Finder from the 'Way-Finders' scheme to meet and greet them during the visit. MFT Way-Finders, are a team made up of volunteers providing support across MFT. Their core hours are 10:00am to 16:00hrs, and their role is to augment other aspects of Way-Finding.

The HWM team attempted to locate wheelchairs independently and upon doing so, saw no signage. In response to this the Estates and Facilities (E&F) team, in partnership with the Health and Safety (H&S) team will review the appropriate areas to store wheelchairs and install appropriate signage to the located areas.

Wheelchair availability and ease of use

On locating the designated area for wheelchairs which the volunteers directed the HWM team too, the HWM Team noted it was empty. On further discussions with the volunteers, the HWM team were informed that people do not proactively bring wheelchairs back to the reception area, and they were often left to sit where they were left. The HWM team were given examples of when wheelchairs had not been available, and the volunteers further confirmed it had been the same for the last nine years.

Following previous escalation to E&F team about the availability and volume of wheelchairs at the NMGH site, 15 Bristol Maid wheelchairs were delivered to NMGH in August 2022, and a further 5 wheelchairs were delivered from Emirates.

Further to this, a risk assessment was conducted and presented to E&F on the 28th November 2022 which identified further wheelchairs were required. In response to this a review of which wheelchair to purchase was conducted and Stryker wheelchairs were trialled across the NMGH site.

On the 6th April 2023 it was confirmed the feedback from both porters and clinical staff was positive with regards to the Stryker wheelchairs other than the level of the oxygen holder. Following discussions with Stryker, it was confirmed that the newer model of the chair resolved this issue, and a risk assessment and proposal were written to purchase a further 50 wheelchairs. This proposal was discussed on the 14th April 2023 and it was agreed that in the interim, 30 wheelchairs were to be dispatched to NMGH from Wythenshawe.

The findings from the HWM visit prompted an immediate visit to the area by the Head of Nursing for Patient Experience, and Head of Facilities Management, who conducted a rapid assessment of wheelchair availability. Similarly, to the HWM team they were unable to locate a wheelchair in the reception area, or the designated area for wheelchairs which the volunteers directed them too. They were able to locate 6 wheelchairs which had been left outside of the hospital building, which were returned to the reception area. As an immediate response to the wheelchairs not being returned to the reception areas, a verbal request has been communicated to all portering staff and a further request will be cascaded during their next 'tool box talk,' that if they pass an unused wheelchair to return it to the reception area.

The HWM team also reported that after a few attempts, they realised they had to push the wheelchair rather than 'pull', which would have made their movements much more comfortable. There are two types of wheelchairs in use at NMGH for transport of patients. There are Bristol Maid model chairs, and Stryker model chairs. The Stryker model is intended for use by the public as a mobility aid round the site, and instructions for use are found adhered to the back of the chair and are easy to manoeuvre by pushing. The Bristol Maid model, is mainly intended for use by the portering team and these chairs should be easily identified by the sign 'PORTERS' written on the back of the seat. In response to the HWM report a full review of the appropriate signage adhered to the chairs is being undertaken and it is anticipated that by increasing the number of Stryker chairs, improving signage and by organising regular wheelchair returns that accessibility of mobility aids will improve.

Access around the site

The HWM team reported that access around the NMGH site was good for wheelchair use.

Incidental findings

In addition to the poor access to wheelchairs and unavailable information regarding use of a wheelchair, the HWM team also reported that they counted a total of 14 people smoking outside entrances to the hospital within their hour-long review. In response to this the E&F team along with H&S will review the no-smoking signs and appropriateness of location with a view to increase visibility of the signs.

Summary

MFT welcomed the findings of the HWM Team visit on 18th April 2023 as an opportunity to make further improvements to accessibility of wheelchairs on the NMGH site. We noted the positive findings in the report and were pleased that the work undertaken to ensure good access to the

NMGH by wheelchair was evident. However, we also noted areas where improvements are required to ensure availability of wheelchairs, signage of where to locate a wheelchair and information regarding use of wheelchairs. Following the HWM visit, a series of actions have been put in place intended to address the findings in the report. These are identified in the section below

Summary of Actions

- The Estates and Facilities team, in partnership with the Health and Safety team will review the appropriate areas to store wheelchairs and install appropriate signage to the located areas.
- Following this review, 30 wheelchairs will be dispatched from Wythenshawe to NMGH in May 2023.
- A verbal request has been communicated to all pottering staff and a further request will be cascaded during their next 'tool box talk,' that if they pass an unused wheelchair to return it to the reception area.
- A full review of the appropriate signage adhered to the chairs is being undertaken.
- The Estates and Facilities team, in partnership with the Health and Safety team will review the no-smoking signs and appropriateness of location with a view to increase visibility.

Factual Accuracy

The Trust is Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust, rather than University of Manchester NHS Trust. Additionally, the MFT group has 10 hospital sites opposed to nine. For ease these are:

- North Manchester General Hospital
- Manchester Royal Eye Hospital
- The University Dental Hospital
- Manchester Royal Infirmary
- Royal Manchester Children's Hospital
- Saint Mary's Hospital
- Altrincham Hospital
- Trafford General Hospital
- Wythenshawe Hospital
- Withington Community Hospital

Healthwatch Manchester: Wythenshawe Hospital Enter and View Report



Wythenshawe Hospital Enter and View Report

Contact Details	Wythenshawe Hospital, Southmoor Road, Wythenshawe, Manchester M23 9LT
Visit Date and Time	19/12/2023 10:15am-11am
Healthwatch Manchester Representatives	Neil Walbran (HWM staff) Ada Mok (HWM staff)



Disclaimer

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.

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About us

Healthwatch Manchester is the independent consumer champion for health and care. It was created to listen and gather the public and patient's experiences of using local health and social care services. This includes services like GPs, pharmacists, hospitals, dentists, care homes and community based care.

Emerging from the Health and Social Care Act 2012, a Healthwatch was set up in every Local Authority area to help put residents and the public at the heart of service delivery and improvement across the NHS and care services.

As part of this role Healthwatch Manchester(HWM) has statutory powers to undertake Enter and View visits to publicly funded health or social care premises. These visits give our trained Authorised Enter and View Representatives the opportunity to observe the quality of services and to obtain the views of the people using those services.

What is Enter & View?

Local Healthwatch representatives carry out Enter and View 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 from the perspective of people who experience the service first hand.

Healthwatch Enter and Views are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch safeguarding policies.

In addition, if any member of staff wishes to raise a safeguarding issue about their employer they will be directed to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) where they are protected by legislation if they raise a concern.

General information about the service

Name of the Provider: Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust

The Manchester University NHS Trust provides a range of primary, secondary and tertiary care services across Manchester and the wider region. It has nine hospital sites: Manchester Royal Eye Hospital, Manchester Royal Infirmary, Royal Manchester Children's Hospital, Saint Mary's Hospital, The University Dental Hospital, Altrincham Hospital, Trafford General Hospital, Wythenshawe Hospital and Withington Community Hospital. The trust also provides community services.

Description of Facility: Wheelchair provision for patients and visitors to Wythenshawe Hospital.

CQC Rating*: Requires Improvement (inspection conducted 7th - 9th March 2023) - the report can be found [here](#)

See Care Quality Commission (CQC) website to see their latest report on this service.

** Care Quality Commission is the independent regulator of health and adult social care in England.*

Purpose of the visit

The purpose of the visit was to:

- Review access to wheelchair provision
- Review ease of wheelchair use within the hospital excluding its exterior grounds. The ease of wheelchair use includes the availability of guidance on how to use one of the wheelchairs provided

Executive Summary of Findings

1. Direct access to a wheelchair in Wythenshawe Hospital is poor
2. Access to a wheelchair on request is available but is reported as slow
3. Information regarding the use of wheelchairs is available

Summary List of Indicators

Source: AccessAble⁷ (Wythenshawe Hospital - Yellow Zone)

Getting Help and Assistance

- To see the hospital map please click here (opens new tab).
- There is a Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) at the hospital.
- The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is located to the right as you enter through Outpatients - Entrance 5.
- The telephone number for the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is 0161 291 5600.
- The email address for the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is pls@mft.nhs.uk.
- Documents are available in an alternative format and can be provided to include: Braille on request, large print on request and different languages on request.
- Water bowls for assistance dogs are available on request.
- BSL interpreters can be provided on request.
- Language interpreters can be provided on request.
- A mobility scooter charging point is not available at the hospital.
- A limited number of wheelchairs are available at each hospital entrance.

⁷ [Wythenshawe Hospital - Yellow Zone | AccessAble](#)

Methodology

We made an unannounced Enter and View visit to the Hospital at 10:15am on the day of the visit.

Prior to the Enter and View taking place

All Enter and View representatives were fully trained in how to carry out an Enter and View. They were also checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

All Enter and View representatives have been briefed and have agreed to abide by the HWM Code of Conduct and Infection Control policy.

The visit was carried out over the course of 45 minutes. The visit date and times are shown on the front cover of this report.

During the visit

The visit consisted of a team of HWM representatives who carried out the following procedure as part of the review:

- Location of wheelchairs in the hospital
- Location of information on how to use wheelchairs provided
- Review of ease of movement within the infirmary for the wheelchair user and handler
- Review of access to wheelchairs on request

Procedure in detail:

- Arrived at Outpatients car park
- Reviewed wheelchair access between the carpark and outpatient's information point including the covered entrance
- Interviewed staff at the information point
- Interviewed patients at the information point
- Conducted four observational walks along the hospitals corridors
- Obtained a wheelchair and tested its ease of function
- Recorded locations where wheelchairs had been left unattended

This report was produced within **three weeks** of the visit due to the Christmas and New Year break. An initial draft was circulated to the service provider to enable a response. The service provider was obliged to acknowledge and respond within **20 working days of receipt of the draft report**. The response from the provider is included at the end of this report.

Enter and View Observations

The External Environment

We found no wheelchairs available between the car park and the main Outpatients entrance (Figures 1 and 2).

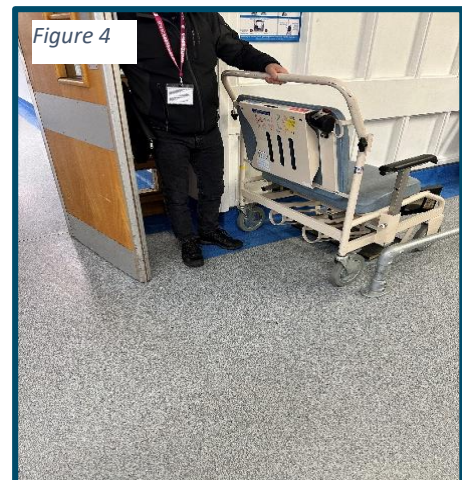
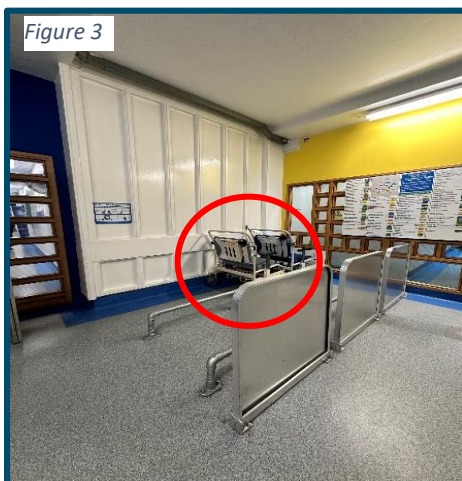


The Internal Environment

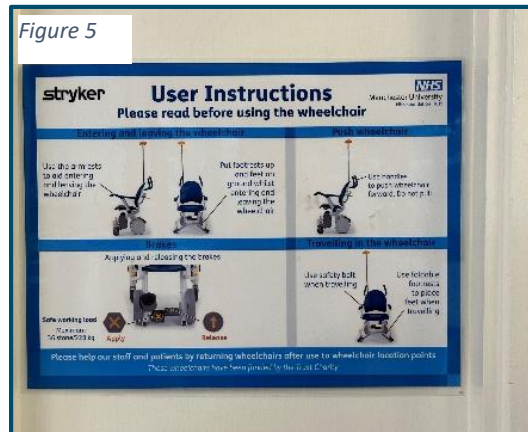
We found no wheelchairs available inside entrance 5.

There were also no wheelchairs available in the Pharmacy, restaurant, or shop area.

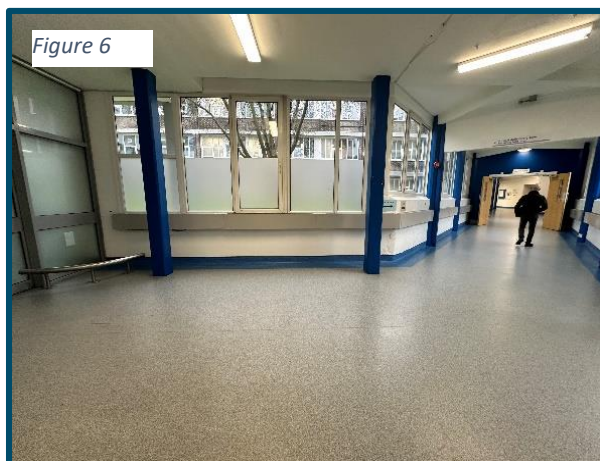
After following the yellow and purple routes inside the hospital to Outpatients, we found two wheelchairs available in a designated storage area - see Figures 3 & 4 below.



We found instructions on how to use the Stryker wheelchairs (Figure 5) on the wall which was good to see.



We also assessed the waiting area at the chest clinic for wheelchair availability. We found one wheelchair here.



During an observation of Outpatients B, we found one wheelchair (Figure 7).



Overall, we found three wheelchairs available to use on our visit however none of these were available in the Reception area.

Findings from speaking with service users and volunteer staff

A staff member noted that patients regularly leave their wheelchairs in the car park rather than returning them to a designated area. This requires a member of staff to collect them.

The same member of staff then went on to say that;

'It is a problem getting a wheelchair' in Wythenshawe hospital, especially considering roughly 20 of them are damaged despite still being used.

Moreover, staff also mentioned people can wait up to 20 minutes for a wheelchair, even if they had booked one in advance. The reasons given for the wait were a general shortage and poor quality of the wheelchairs.

One service user described wheelchair provisions at Wythenshawe Hospital as *'A nightmare'*.

The same patient revealed that when she was using a wheelchair, she left it outside of her CT scan appointment only to find that it had been taken by the time her appointment had finished.

Recommendations

Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust should aim for full compliance with the Public Sectors Equality Duty.

The public sector equality duty is a duty on public authorities to consider or think about how their policies or decisions affect people who are protected under the Equality Act⁸.

⁸ <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/law-and-courts/discrimination/public-sector-equality-duty/what-s-the-public-sector-equality-duty/#:-:text=The%20public%20sector%20equality%20duty%20is%20a%20duty%20on%20public,to%20comply%20with%20the%20duty.>

Response from service provider

Response to Healthwatch Manchester Enter and View Visit 19th December 2023.

Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust (MFT) welcome the report provided on the 04th January 2024 by the Healthwatch Manchester (HWM) Team following their visit on the 19th December 2023 to Wythenshawe Hospital.

It was pleasing to note the positive findings in the report, at the same time as acknowledging areas where improvements can be made for the benefit of the public, patients, carers and their visitors who may access this hospital site.

Location of wheelchairs in the hospital.

It is acknowledged within the report that the HWM found no wheelchairs between the car park and the main outpatient's entrance, inside entrance 5, in the pharmacy, restaurant or shop area.

It is pleasing to read that upon following the yellow and purple routes inside the hospital to outpatients, wheelchairs were located in the available in a designated storage area. It was also assuring to read that wheelchairs were located in the waiting area in the chest clinic and in the vicinity of outpatients B.

Location of information on how to use wheelchairs provided.

It is noted from the report that 'We also found instructions on how to use the Stryker wheelchairs on the wall which was good to see'.

Findings from speaking with service users and volunteer staff.

It is noted that staff reported patients regularly leave their wheelchairs in the carpark rather than returning them to a designated area and that a number are damaged. It is also noted that a service user reported wheelchair provision at Wythenshawe as 'A nightmare'.

Wythenshawe Hospital currently has 130 wheelchairs in operation on site which are allocated to a number of collection points adjacent to the building in car parks, and there is a number of custom-built areas for storing chairs within the building.

There are porters allocated throughout the day and at during the night to collect wheelchairs from the car parks and corridors and ensure wheelchairs are returned to the storage areas. In addition to this allocation, additional portering hours are allocated to this task where available.

Outcome.

Regrettably, the finding from the review do not reflect what we would have expected to see given the number of chairs on site and the processes in place.

In response to this a 'wheelchair amnesty' will be carried out and clinical areas will be encouraged to return any chairs from their areas to the general circulation.

This will be highlighted and discussed further in the trusts Patients Environment Of Care (PEOC) meeting.

Summary.

MFT welcomed the findings of the HWM Team visit on 19th December 2023 as an opportunity to make further improvements to accessibility of wheelchairs on the Wythenshawe site. We noted the

positive findings in the report and were pleased that the work undertaken to ensure provisions of wheelchairs and instructions on how to use them was evident.

We also recognise that as these findings are not reflective of we would have expected there are improvements required to ensure availability of wheelchairs in designated storage areas.

Summary of Actions

- A 'wheelchair amnesty' will be carried out and clinical areas will be encouraged to return any chairs from their areas to the general circulation.
- A verbal request has been communicated to all portering staff and a further request will be cascaded during their next 'tool box talk,' that if they pass an unused wheelchair to return it to a designated storage area.
- This report will be highlighted and discussed further in the trusts Patients Environment Of Care (PEOC) meeting.

Factual Accuracy

The Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust has 10 hospital sites opposed to nine. For ease these are:

- North Manchester General Hospital
- Manchester Royal Eye Hospital
- The University Dental Hospital
- Manchester Royal Infirmary
- Royal Manchester Children's Hospital
- Saint Mary's Hospital
- Altrincham Hospital
- Trafford General Hospital
- Wythenshawe Hospital
- Withington Community Hospital



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