



Addenbrooke's Eye Clinic

Enter & View supplementary report
October 2024

healthwatch
Cambridgeshire

healthwatch
Peterborough

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About Healthwatch Cambridgeshire / Healthwatch Peterborough

We are your local health and social care champion. We are independent and have the power to make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers listen to local feedback and improve standards of care.

We can also help you to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.

Introduction

Following our initial Enter & View visit to Addenbrooke's Eye Clinics in September 2024, we were invited to Enter and View the other two clinics within the hospital:

- Clinic 3 – visited on 15th October 2024 10am -12.
- Clinic 14 (Cataract department) – visited 21st October 2024 2-4pm

Service provider: Cambridgeshire University Hospital (CUH)

This report is an appendix to the [Enter and View report](#) published in September 2024.

Addenbrookes have provided an overview of their clinics:-

'The three ophthalmology clinics, located in different outpatient departments, work collaboratively to provide comprehensive care to patients. Each clinic is staffed with specialised ophthalmologists and support teams, ensuring that patients can receive expert care regardless of which location they visit.

While each clinic may focus on specific types of eye conditions or treatments, they are all integrated into a shared system, allowing for seamless coordination of patient referrals and follow-up care. If a patient needs a more specialized treatment or second opinion, they can be easily transferred to another clinic within the network, ensuring continuity of care. This setup allows patients to access a wide range of ophthalmic services, whether they are visiting for routine check-ups, diagnostic tests, and invasive treatment such as lasers, intravitreal injections, or surgical procedures, all within a convenient location for them'

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About the visits

Why we visited

During September 2024, we visited Ophthalmology departments in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Our report has been published and can be found on Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough website [here](#).

Following our visit to Addenbrooke's Clinic 14, we were invited to carry out additional Enter and View visits to observe the other two eye clinics within their site.

We visited the Ophthalmology departments to find out about people's experience of eye clinics in Cambridgeshire. We wanted to find what worked well during their appointment, what could be improved, and whether they had access to signposting and information to support their eye care.

What we did

During our visit, we viewed the public areas to gain an understanding of a typical day in an eye clinic.

We spoke to people waiting for appointments, carers, and staff.

We asked the same questions as in our previous visit to Clinic 14.

Please note that this report relates to findings observed on the specific date set out above. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all service users and staff, it is merely an account of observations and contributions made at the time of the visit.

Key findings

It was noticeable that the service environment and care provided in both clinics had similarities when compared with those found in our initial visit.

People were happy with their care.

We were told the clinics could have a combined average of 300 appointments a day.

Addenbrooke's three clinics share resources and clinicians. Sometimes people must leave one clinic and attend another as part of their appointment.

During our visit, we observed staff were assisting people to other clinics. This drew away Health Care Assistants and nursing team members from their designated clinics.

The Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLO) informed us how they involve patients in improving their services e.g. updating their guide dogs' policy following

recommendations from patients and volunteers. They also provide a Glaucoma support group which is held online twice a year.

This service has a lot to offer, although the people we spoke to at the time of our visit had no awareness of the service, or other support groups. However, these patients may not be at the point of requiring additional help or signposting.

Clinic 3

During our visit, we spoke to 10 people waiting for treatment.

We were told that this clinic has an average of around 100 appointments a day.

We were told due to staff shortages clinics sometimes use specialised agency staff to ensure smooth running of busy clinics.

People are advised to expect appointments to be around two hours in duration. This includes waiting time between tests and results given by consultants.

During our visit, there was sufficient seating in the adults Waiting Area 1 next to reception, but not sufficient seating in Waiting Area 2 near the consultation rooms. At the time of observation, Waiting Area 2 was nearly full whilst Waiting Area 1 was near empty.

Positives

- Patients have a positive experience with the clinical teams within the Ophthalmology Departments.
- Some long-term care patients can maintain care with established teams even when not living locally.
- Water and cups are available in the main reception area.
- We were told people have access to in-person language and BSL translators if requested.
- The department is working hard to develop a specialist children's eye clinic.
- There is a designated children's area and quiet room.
- A vending snack machine is available in the corridor outside reception area.

Challenges

- Addenbrooke's have a smart phone app which provide directions to clinics and other areas. Clinic 3 is not on the app currently.
- The clinic area can be approached by foot, lift, or stairs. The clinics are not signposted if approaching from car park two and the central concourse.

- Some TV monitors were working and displaying waiting times. One in the busiest waiting area was not. The staff had provided a handwritten board showing delays as you entered the clinic reception area. This could not be seen from the end waiting area.
- People told us that they were sometimes advised of delays to their treatment by staff, but at other time this does not happen.
- Patients check in at eye clinic reception. There is a self-check in screen but broken at the time of the E&V.
- There is no clock in the end waiting room.
- There are no signs within waiting areas to the toilets.
- This clinic is clean, but tired. Narrow corridors connect treatment /consultant rooms which are difficult to navigate if a wheelchair user.
- During our visit, we did not see any information in other languages. There was no signage informing people interpreting services are available on request.
- The flooring within this area had a slight pattern and slightly shiny. People with dementia may interpret shiny floors as being wet and speckles look like litter.
- Healthcare staff have to take wheelchair patients to other parts of the hospital to access tests and consultants. This could leave a shortage of trained staff in clinic.
- There was no foot pedal on the green recycling bin (from a patient hygiene angle all hospitals should have foot pedal bins).

Clinic 3 - What people told us

What works well with your eye care here?

“Really good support, I am quite happy.”

“The timings of the clinic, the availability of appointments is good and they have emergency slots.”



What could be better?

“The information I get in my appointments is quite overwhelming and there is too much to take away. It would be better to have clarity in the contact numbers like one contact point for the eye clinic and another number for any other information. There are too many numbers and its overwhelming. “

“Knowing how long I will be waiting. Why don't they display the waiting time on the TV screens? Or someone could tell me.”

Clinic 14, Cataract department

We spoke to 9 people. Some were waiting for biometric tests and others to be admitted for cataract surgery.

This clinic also provide appointments for people being treated for Wet Macular Degeneration.

Positives

- Patients have a positive experience with the clinical teams within the Ophthalmology Departments. Some long-term care patients can maintain care with established teams even when not living locally.
- The facilities are clean and well-maintained in terms of functionality and patient safety.
- The directional signs and the toilets are mostly dementia friendly with signage.
- Cataract patients are referred by their GPs and any accessibility requirements should be provided at the time of referral. Interpreters can be booked in person, or via online services.
- People undergoing cataract operations are given a comprehensive yellow booklet with easy-to-read information about their operation and aftercare. This also contains help and support phone numbers.

Challenges

- If approaching the clinic via the lift from the main concourse/outpatients, the button to the floor states "for staff only." This messaging in close proximity appears contradictory and people told us they have been confused by this.
- The access from the lift to the corridor leading to the clinic had three wheeled cages and a large bin to one side. This was next to the stair well area which could be a fire hazard if partially blocked.
- Although mainly a clinical area for cataract patients, there is no signage displaying any delays.
- There is no information how to access translation services, or information literature in other languages.





Clinic 14 - What people told us

What works well with eye care here?

People told us they were happy with the professional and friendly treatment they receive from the teams.



"I am very happy with the communication around appointments."

What could be better?

"I would like the option for weekend appointments as my daughter has to take time off to bring me."

"A map of how to get to clinic 14 with my appointment letter. I don't use the app. If it wasn't for the help, I got the first time I came to this clinic I would not know how to get there. Now I only use the outside route."

People told us they would like the appointment to be clear which clinic to attend. One said they often went to one clinic and was informed they needed to go to the other.

People were worried about missing their appointments due to the traffic and parking issues within Cambridge. We were told people try to contact the reception desk to inform of a traffic/transport issue, but calls go to an answer phone. People do not know whether their calls have been received or if they may miss their appointment time.

Recommendations

- **Provide basic information at reception area in different languages advising translation is available on request.**
- **Include information leaflets in other languages at information points.**
- **Review the storage of equipment in the route to the eye clinic from the lift area within the hospital.**
- **Provide ways to communicate delays – either by TV monitor or regular staff announcements.**
- **Utilise hospital volunteers or porters to take people to other areas of the hospital.**
- **Add signage for people approaching from main hospital area.**
- **Ensure each waiting area has signage to toilets.**
- **Provide easy to read information to people using eye clinics about support and help available (such as ECLO service, RNIB, Camsight).**
- **Provide a clock in each waiting room.**
- **Add directions to Clinic 3 to Wayfinding phone App.**

Service Response to report

“Thank you for the recent visit and the valuable recommendations provided by the Healthwatch team. We appreciate the time and effort taken to assess the services within our ophthalmology department, and we are committed to improving the experience for our patients and visitors.

We are committed to addressing the recommendations in a timely and efficient manner and will monitor progress against the action plan through our Patient Experience Group”.

Thank you once again for your valuable input.

We will share the action plan in due course

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all the staff and people in the waiting areas for talking to us and sharing their experiences.

We would also like to thank Senior Sister Dorita Plichowsha and Senior Sister Ogechukwu Osuchkwu, for their welcome.

Thank you to our Authorised Representative volunteers for their work and time dedicated to gathering the feedback from people using the service needed for this Enter and View.

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