



Enter and View Report – August 2024 Royal Sussex County Hospital

Service name:	The Fracture Clinic at the Royal Sussex County Hospital
Service Provider:	University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust
Date and Time:	Wednesday 28th August, 10am
Representatives:	Mazzie Sharp & Jo Dorey
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Acknowledgements

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

Disclaimer

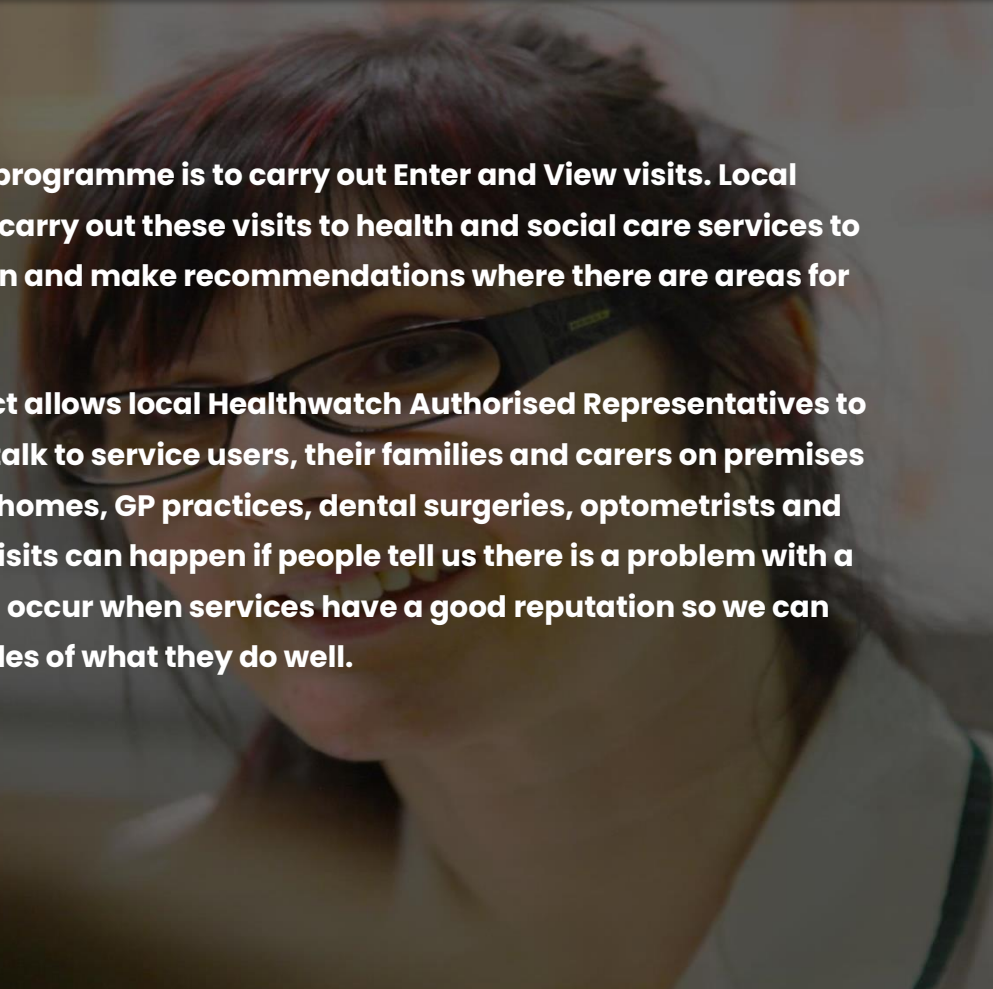
Please note that this report relates to findings observed on the specific date set out above. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all service users and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.



What is Enter and View?

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

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





Purpose of the visit

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove have worked in partnership with our local hospital trust for several years to conduct regular Enter and View visits. These visits to wards and other units are carried out by trained volunteer lay assessors – ‘Authorised Representatives’ and are called Healthwatch Hospital Enter and View visits.

These Healthwatch visits:

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

Healthwatch Hospital Enter and View visits are intended:

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

We decided to visit the Fracture Clinic after receiving feedback regarding issues with booking appointments and outpatient letters:

- A patient reported having trouble on multiple occasions booking follow-up appointments.
- Receptionists could not access appointments for the times that the consultant had requested. On one of these occasions, the patient was asked to wait for an appointment letter, whilst the clinic found a suitable time. This never arrived in the timeframe it should have.
- The patient then had to advocate for themselves, chase up, and call several people to get their appointment booked. The patient was concerned that someone less able to advocate for themselves would have fallen through the cracks.



- The appointment letters did not specify whether you need an x-ray (when often you do). If you need an x-ray before your Fracture Clinic appointment, it is not clear when you should attend imaging and which reception you should present at.

• The staff were all very friendly and obviously working hard but they seemed let down by the online systems, and it seemed like more work was being created because of poor comms and appointment booking processes. •

Methodology

Two trained DBS-checked Enter and View Authorised Representatives visited the Fracture Clinic at the Royal Sussex County Hospital. They talked with five patients and their relatives and asked for their views on their experience of the Fracture Clinic including appointment booking, imaging, communication and appointment letters, the virtual fracture clinic, and their experience overall. They were also free to discuss any aspects raised by the people they met.

The Representatives were accompanied by Joseph Threlfall, Head of Nursing for Musculoskeletal and Abdominal Surgery & Medicine at the Royal Sussex County Hospital. They observed the environment in the Fracture Clinic including the waiting room, the plaster room, and a consultation room. The Representatives recorded their views of the physical environment and completed a checklist to capture positive findings, challenges, and concerns, in addition to, anything staff told us and our recommendations.

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

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



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



Results of visit

Healthwatch asks volunteers to give a score out of 10 for each area as a simple way to assess things. They do this via observation and through discussions with patients and staff. The scores represent the subjective views of our trained volunteers and are not part of a national scoring system. Healthwatch considers that:

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



(a) Welcoming environment Score awarded: 7 out of 10	
Positives	Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reception desk staff were warm and helpful. • Environment felt calm, clean, organised, and tidy. • The radio created quiet background noise which felt welcoming. If you were speaking, you didn't feel so aware of yourself, positive for privacy and discretion. • The staff team was written on the waiting area whiteboard (e.g. names and which rooms they were in). However, it wasn't that clear as a patient. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearer signage to the clinic on arrival is needed. There was an interim laminated sign on the wall rather than clear signage of where to go. • Signage had very small text and icons. • A digital screen in the corner of room was out of use and waiting to be fixed. It would be easier to read and a consistent resource rather than relying on someone to wipe the whiteboard and change the information throughout the day. • Patients said there was no reference to parking in their letters. Not much available information, only a laminated sign in the lift.

(b) Safe environment Score awarded: 8 out of 10	
Positives	Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well managed and clean with easily identifiable waste disposal bins. • Hand gels available and being used. • Security and fire procedures all displayed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One member of staff didn't have a name badge. • For patients with dementia, the space could be tricky to navigate. There was no real definition to the long white corridors and walls. It would help if there were some coloured separation markers where walls and doors are.



(c) Caring environment Score awarded: 8 out of 10	
Positives	Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff were very engaged, friendly and efficient. • A patient spoke of staff being empathetic, caring, and they always felt very supported with their experience of autism there. • Patients able to check-in electronically. • Wheelchair accessible. • Different types of seating for different needs. Low softer seating and high-backed chairs with arm rests. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was no evidence of a hearing loop. • Accessible resources such as different languages or large easy read print were not immediately evident. • There were no handrails. • Only a very small clock for the whole room. • On the day we were there, it felt very calm, safe & caring. However, we were told that it wasn't necessarily representative of a typical day, which can be far busier and more hectic.

(d) Well organised & calm environment Score awarded: 8 out of 10	
Positives	Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very calm and smooth. Turnover of patients arriving, seen, leaving was very efficient. • Uncluttered and tidy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considerations for patients with dementia (see Safe environment). • Signage could be improved (see Welcoming environment).

Further recommendations based on staff conversations:

1. Appointment booking:

- Staff demonstrated how they couldn't book appointments on the specific time and day that consultants wanted. They must go back to the consultant and try to figure it out. The system is confusing and inefficient.
- There are automated letter templates for follow-up appointments. Templates automatically state that you need to come for an x-ray before



the appointment, but it is not always necessary. You need to click a button to remove it from the letter. But some staff don't know how to do this and there has been confusion with some patients receiving the wrong information. Staff said the issue had been flagged but not changed.

Recommendations:

- Ensure that all staff are trained in the IT systems so that the correct information is sent out on patient letters (e.g. x-ray requests).
- Booking system needs to be adapted. A staff member spoke of the process causing a lot of confusion for patients, and some have even become aggressive towards staff.

2. Staff resources:

- Plaster room technicians were concerned about the use of space. There are only three couches in the room so only three patients can be seen at any given time, however, there are five technicians employed who can use the space and move between there and other buildings. Ideally, there would be additional couches.
- There is a push from management to go paperless but there is only one computer in the room, with five technicians and three patient couches. This is challenging when they need to be able to access patient information on the computer to suggest the next stages of treatment. They are happy to go paperless but do not have the tools to do so.
- They requested a change from management and are still waiting for action.

Recommendations:

- Review the use of space in the plaster room.
- Ensure staff have enough access to computers to be able to go paperless.



Conversations with patients

- 👤 Although there were issues with the signage, it has only been a good experience. Good efficient service. 🗨️
- 👤 Connecting through from the old building was difficult and we got lost. 🗨️
- 👤 We arrived at 10:30 for the X-ray appointment, came into the Fracture Clinic, and were called at 10:50. 🗨️
- 👤 Front entrance (Atrium) staff are always very helpful. 10/10 for service. 🗨️
- 👤 It is a nice environment, and I've had excellent service so far, but I had to ask for directions. 🗨️
- 👤 I am autistic and don't like enclosed spaces. But the imaging team has always been very supportive, although it's a difficult process, they have always been aware of my needs and made it as easy as possible. Staff are aware, engaged, and supportive of neurodiversity. 🗨️
- 👤 I sometimes find it hard to come to appointments due to debilitating pain, but we [patient and carer] find it easy to reschedule over the phone. 🗨️



Overall

Overall, the Authorised Representatives reported that the Fracture Clinic provides a good service, with a few areas that could be improved. The environment was scored highly for being welcoming, safe, caring, well-organised, and calm, with scores ranging from seven to eight out of ten (average score 7.75).

Representatives spoke to five patients who were generally very positive about their experience. The clinical care, the efficiency of the service, and the environment (aside from signage) were praised.

Based on environmental observation and patient feedback, the Authorised Representatives recommended clearer signage to find the clinic, more parking information on letters, considerations for patients with dementia (such as clearer distinction between walls, doors, and floors), a hearing loop, handrails, and a larger clock.

The feedback that prompted the visit was not replicated during patient conversations. However, the staff knew exactly what the issues raised related to and gave further input to help improve the service. Recommendations like increasing staff IT training to ensure the correct information is on appointment letters and some adjustments to the booking system would be valuable in improving patient and staff experience.

Additionally, staff provided feedback about how the space could best be used in the plaster room. They need more computers to be able to go paperless whilst treating patients. More patient couches would help increase the efficiency of the service, if this is feasible.

All in all, our Authorised Representatives thought it was a well-run service, with a very safe and calm environment. There are just a few adjustments needed, with the help of staff feedback, to improve care.



Next steps

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



Healthwatch Brighton and Hove

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