



Enter & View Report

Gynaecology services at Ward 8 – Leicester
Royal Infirmary & Gynaecology Services Unit
– Leicester General Hospital

July & August 2024

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Report details

Details of Visits	
Service Address	Leicester Royal Infirmary (LRI) Infirmary Square Leicester LE1 5WW Leicester General Hospital (LGH) Gwendolen Road Leicester LE5 4PW
Service Provider	University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust (UHL)
Date and Time	Wednesday 31 July 2024 at 10am at LRI Wednesday 7 August 2024 at 10am at LGH
Authorised Representatives undertaking the visit	Kim Marshal Nichols, Moraig Yates, Debra Watson and Dulna Shahid (staff)

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire would like to thank the service provider, patients and staff for their contribution to the Enter & 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.

This report is written by volunteer Enter and View Authorised Representatives who carried out the visit on behalf of Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire.

Purpose of the visit

- To gather patient views of the service provided at Ward 8 – Leicester Royal Infirmary and at Gynaecology Services unit at Leicester General Hospital.
- To observe the facilities and operation of the service.

Methodology

This was an unannounced Enter and View visit.

We had presented ourselves as Authorised Representatives from Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire to senior staff and we had access to communal areas during our visit.

The visit was observational, involving the Authorised Representatives observing the surroundings to gain an understanding of how patients engaged with reception staff and the facilities.

To reach patients, we produced a survey for patients to share their experiences of accessing and using the Gynaecology services. We received **5** responses from Ward 8 at LRI and **12** responses from the Gynaecology Services unit at LGH.

At the end of the visit, we gave our initial findings to the senior team.

Summary of the findings

Summary

Ward 8 – GAU (Gynaecology Assessment Unit) Leicester Royal Infirmary (LRI)

- **Ward Location:** GAU located in the Balmoral building at LRI, shared with Early Pregnancy Assessment Unit (EPAU).
- **Purpose:** GAU handles emergency gynaecology patients alongside general gynaecology and works closely with EPAU.
- **Facilities:** Reception area, spacious waiting room with varied seating; no food available, water only. No children's play area, a quiet environment.
- **Patient Wait Time:** Short waiting times, patients are called in promptly.
- **Clinical Areas:** Termination bay, triage bay, general bay, single rooms and two quiet rooms.
- **Operating Hours:** 24-hour emergency ward, accepting patients from GP referrals or the Emergency Department.
- **Accessibility:** Clean, spacious toilets and fully accessible shower room. No hearing loop system available, some chairs in the triage bay are on wheels.

- **Information for Patients:** Notice boards are slightly cluttered; materials in other languages may be available on request. Leaflets available for bereavement, carer support and complaints. No information on LGBTQ+ or learning disabilities.
- **Staff Feedback:** Close-knit team with good communication. Challenges include lack of continuity due to consultant availability, inappropriate referrals from the Emergency Department, and waiting time issues. Communication issues with GPs regarding referrals also noted.
- **Patient Feedback:** One patient felt that the frequent changes in doctors leads to inconsistent advice, causing confusion and distrust. One patient was scheduled for surgery at 7.30am, but faced potential rescheduling due to unexpected issues, leading to panic before eventually proceeding with the surgery. Most patients were happy overall with the care given.

Gynaecology Services Unit – Leicester General Hospital (LGH)

- **Location & Access:** Gynaecology Services Unit at LGH, accessible via Maternity Unit or a back entrance. We noted that this was poorly signposted. Step-free access available.
- **Parking:** Adequate parking, with accessible spaces and a 20-minute drop-off zone at the Maternity Unit entrance.
- **Entrance:** The unit's opening hours are not displayed outside.
- **Layout:** Long corridor leading to reception in waiting room C; the unit has three waiting rooms (A, B, C) with comfortable seating, though wheelchair manoeuvring can be difficult. No bariatric chairs.
- **Patient Wait Time:** Minimal waiting time observed for patients being called by staff.
- **Facilities:** Clinic, treatment, and consultation rooms; coffee machine near waiting room C. Hand sanitisers available, and music playing in the background. Décor slightly worn.
- **Accessibility:** Accessible entrances, wide corridors and two accessible toilets (one larger). Wheelchairs were available for use.
- **Patient Information:** Posters and leaflets available in English and other languages. No health-related activities are displayed, but patients can be signposted.
- Patient Advice and Liaison Services (PALS) leaflets were available for feedback and complaints.
- **Support for Specific Needs:** Consultants available for patients with learning disabilities and transgender patients. We were told that Notice boards were awaiting installation.
- **Staff Feedback:** The team has good communication; many staff are long-term and well-known by patients. Appointments are arranged promptly with no delays.
- **Challenges:** Need for speakerphones to assist with language interpretation via the DA languages line.
- **Patient Feedback:** Some patients spoke about parking being an issue, as it can be difficult to get a space. Patients were happy with the service. One patient mentioned the waiting rooms could be a bit more spacious.

Results of Visit

Ward 8 Gynaecology Assessment Unit (GAU) Leicester Royal Infirmary (LRI)

Ward 8 – GAU is located at the Balmoral building at LRI and the ward is shared with the Early Pregnancy Assessment Unit (EPAU). GAU looks after emergency gynaecology patients alongside general gynaecology. GAU works closely with the EPAU which is situated next door to the ward.

Access to the ward from the main car park is good and easily accessible. There is signage for the ward on the wall by the lifts. Once on level 3, there is clear signage for ward 8 which is a short walk round to the ward.

You press a buzzer to enter the ward. As you enter, there a reception area and a waiting room opposite the reception. The waiting room is a spacious area with various seating options at different heights, some with armrests. Water is available, but there is no food. The environment is quiet, with no music or other background noise, and there is no children's play area.

The waiting room is shared with patients awaiting clinic appointments. Although there is a television, it was turned off during our visit. We also noticed that patients did not have to wait long before being called in by nurse or clinician.

There is a termination bay, a triage bay, a general bay, and several single rooms, all of which are adequately staffed.

Additionally, there are two quiet rooms equipped with bariatric chairs and a small sofa. Although these rooms are not very large, they are bright and airy.

The ward is a 24 hour emergency ward, patients can be sent to the ward via their GP practice, patients are also sent to the ward from the Emergency Department.

Accessibility

The toilets are clean and spacious, equipped with alarm cords. There is also a fully accessible shower room, which is well-lit, bright and clean.

Wheelchairs are available for patient transfers. However, there is no hearing loop system in place. Some of the chairs in the triage bay are on wheels.

Information available to patients

We observed some of the notice boards are a bit cluttered, but most are up to date. All the posters are written in English. We were informed that materials in other languages might be available in one of the drawers if a patient asked for it.

There are leaflets on bereavement and carer support, as well as information on the complaints procedure. However, there is no information available on LGBTQ+ or learning disabilities support.

Staff Feedback

We had given our initial feedback to senior staff. We were told the team is a close nit team, staff communicate well with each other and staff can always speak to senior staff **"doors always open"**. We were told patients can get one-to-one support if staff are available and there are students there to support.

When speaking about what challenges they face, we were told about the lack of continuity and this is a problem as the ward does not have consultants that are there all day. Sometimes the emergency department referrals can be a problem as some patients who are sent to the ward aren't always



appropriate and the ward is just “**expected to take them**”. Waiting times can be challenge as the ward has inpatients as well as patients who come in as emergencies.

We were told that there is no consistency in terms of procedures, some staff feel the ward is not given priority when scheduling patient procedures. Lack of communication between GPs was a challenge as some GPs will call up regarding patient referral and sometimes the patient will not require a visit to the ward. However, the GPs are not always willing to listen to staff at the ward and will send the patient to the Emergency Department.

Gynaecology Services Unit – Leicester General Hospital (LGH)

The Gynaecology Services Unit is located at LGH and can be accessed either through the Maternity Unit or via another entrance at the back. There is no clear signage to inform patients of the unit access via the back, however it is only a short walk around, and it is easily accessible with a wide door opening.

When entering through the Maternity Unit, the Gynaecology Services Unit is on the left. The unit is clearly marked with a sign hanging from the ceiling. There is step-free access at this entrance.

There is car park which patients can use with adequate space with accessible spaces available, there is a 20 minute drop off and pick up at the front of the maternity unit entrance. The unit opening hours are not displayed outside of the entrance.

Upon entering the unit, there is long corridor to walk down to reach the reception area which is located in waiting room C. The unit has 3 waiting rooms, A, B and C. Each waiting room has information posters displayed to inform patients about the purpose of waiting in the room. The waiting rooms are adequately spaced with comfortable seating, some with arm rests, however patients with wheelchairs may find it difficult to maneuverer around and there are no bariatric chairs. Waiting rooms A and C was observed as being the busiest.

We observed patients not having to wait too long to be called by nurse or clinician.

There are clinic rooms, treatment rooms and consultation rooms. There is a coffee machine near waiting room C. Hand sanitisers are available in waiting areas. There is a “message to Matron” box where patients can leave feedback. There was music playing in the background. The décor was looking a little tired with some paint chipping off the walls. There isn't a children's play area and the waiting rooms are not shared with any other units.

Accessibility

The unit is accessible on both entrances, the unit has a wide long corridor, free of clutter. There are two toilets, both are accessible, one toilet is a bit more spacious. Both are equipped with alarm cords and hand rails.

Wheelchairs are available for hospital use.



Information available to patients

There are information posters displayed all around the corridors and waiting areas. They are all in English, in different sizes and colours. There are leaflets available in English and other languages. There are no health-related activities displayed however we were told patients can be signposted. There are Patient advice and liaison services (PALS) leaflets, we were told patients are encouraged to share their experiences/ complaints.

There are screens available however they were not in use at the time of the visit. When asked about information given about LGBTQ+, learning disability support and we were told the unit has only women patients. Patients with learning disabilities, have consultants who help or can arrange for a learning disability team to help support them.

We were told a further 20 notice boards are waiting to be put up.



Staff Feedback

We had given our initial feedback to senior staff, we were told the team is lovely and all communicate well with each other and patients. We were told staff have been there a long time, and patients remember staff that have been there a long time.

We were told patients are seen and treated in the day when visiting the unit. If needed, further appointments are given before the patient leaves, so there is no waiting for appointments.

One challenge brought to our attention is the need for speakerphones, as some patients require language support. When interpreters are unavailable, staff often use the DA Language line, and speakerphones would make this process easier by eliminating the need to pass the receiver back and forth.

Patient feedback

A survey was completed during the visit. We received **5** responses from Ward 8 at the LRI and **12** responses from the Gynaecology Services unit at LGH. See **Appendix 1** for the survey responses.

Recommendations

We recommend that Gynaecology services at UHL:

1	Consider all the comments recorded from patients and what the implications are for the operation of the practice.
2	Make multilingual materials, including leaflets, more accessible and visible. Clearly label where non-English resources are stored or offer to display common languages in a more prominent place for easy patient access.
3	Introduce information resources and support materials related to LGBTQ+ and learning disabilities, ensuring inclusivity and a patient-friendly environment for all.
4	Establish clearer communication pathways with GPs to reduce inappropriate referrals and improve patient flow.
5	Collaborate with the Emergency Department and GPs to create clearer criteria for referrals to ensure that patients referred to the ward are appropriate, minimising unnecessary strain on the ward's resources.
6	Install clear and visible signage around the hospital grounds, especially near the back entrance, to guide patients easily to the Gynaecology Services Unit at LGH.
7	Display the unit's opening hours at both entrances at LGH to provide transparency and to help patients better plan their visits.
8	Reconfigure the seating layout in the waiting rooms at LGH to ensure there is adequate space for wheelchair users. Add bariatric chairs to accommodate a wider range of patients.
9	Refresh the décor at LGH by repainting the walls and conducting regular maintenance checks to keep the environment clean and welcoming.
10	Install speakerphones in key areas, such as reception and consultation rooms, to improve the efficiency and ease of communication when using language support services.

Service provider response

The report was agreed with the Service Provider as factually accurate. They have provided the following response to the report:

"I shared and we discussed at the Consultant meeting. I was impressed as to how they managed to collate this information - very useful insights." Dr Marwan Habiba, Consultant

"I would say it is an accurate account of their visit as I was on shift and spoke with them. The recommendations 4&5 are work in progress with bed bureau and ED, 2&3 are quick fixes." Ward Sister

I believe that a suggestion was made to approach charitable funding for the finance to refresh the environment.

Distribution

The report is for distribution to the following:

- University Hospital of Leicester NHS Trust (UHL)
- LLR Integrated Care Board (ICB)
- Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- Leicester City Council (LCC)
- Leicestershire County Council (LCC)
- NHS England (Leicestershire and Lincolnshire) Local Area Team
- Healthwatch England and the local Healthwatch Network
- Published on www.healthwatchll.com

Appendix 1: Survey Findings

Patients – 17 responses

Q1. How long have you been waiting for your appointment?

14 - Less than 1 month

2 - 1-3 months

0 - 3-6 months

0 - More than 6 months

1 - Unanswered

Q2. How easy was it to schedule your appointment?

12 - Very easy

1 - Somewhat Easy

0 - Neither easy nor difficult

1 - Somewhat difficult

0 - Very difficult

3 - Unanswered

Q3. How satisfied are you with the availability of appointment times?

10 - Very satisfied

3 - Satisfied

0 - Neutral

0 - Dissatisfied

0 - Very dissatisfied

4 - Unanswered

Q4. Who referred you to the gynaecology service?

15 - General Practitioner (GP)

0 - Specialist healthcare provider

1 - Emergency Department

1 – Other (Please specify) – Urgent care

0 – Unanswered

Q5. How satisfied are you with the communication and information provided by the department?

11 – Very satisfied

0 – Satisfied

5 – Neutral

0 – Dissatisfied

0 – Very dissatisfied

1 – Unanswered

Q6. How helpful are the support staff in answering your questions or directing you to the appropriate resources?

12 – Very helpful

1 – Helpful

1 – Neutral

0 – Unhelpful

0 – Very unhelpful

3 – Unanswered

Q7. How confident do you feel in the healthcare provider's ability to care for your health?

12 – Very confident

1 – Confident

1 – Neutral

0 – Not confident

0 – Very unconfident

3 – Unanswered

Q8. What aspects of the service works well?

"the procedure, the care given – food, water provided all the time and can ask for it anytime, nurse call button so can call nurse at any time but I hardly use as the nurse are often here doing checks."

"Friendliness of staff and information given."

"Speed of referral and appointment. Option given for testing to speed up process."

"Very good, speed of referral."

"Speed at which appointment was made."

Q9. What aspects of the service could be improved?

"Always when we come there are different doctors, so always get a different answer, it gets confusing and don't know who to trust. What the different doctors say does not match the statement."

"The waiting time - scheduled for surgery for 7.30am, I had already prepped for it but now it could be rescheduled for another time as they can't do it as something came up. This added panic but eventually I went for the surgery."

"Wanting to be told each stage of the process."

"Direction could be clearer in the letter about the nearest car park to the ward."

"More seats in the waiting room."

Q10. Is there anything else you would like to share about health and care services in your area?

"GP - Hard to make appointment and for referrals."

"Tried to contact GP - not given right number, I was given multiple numbers but not much online on how to register for midwife. We were in the process of registering with GP but we couldn't fill out the LRI form for midwife we needed to be registered to a GP and we had no access to details. This process should be made easier, midwife phone number or email to access whenever."

"Prefer face to face consultation. Unfair to elderly patients who cannot access the internet - GP."

"Don't answer telephone calls."



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