

Buckingham Community Hospital

Enter and View Report



February 2025

Table of Contents

Visit details	3
Summary of findings.....	3
Recommendations.....	4
Service response to recommendations	5
What is Enter and View?	7
Methodology	7
Background	8
The environment.....	8
The day room	9
Outdoor space.....	10
Physiotherapy area	10
What we heard.....	11
Patient feedback.....	11
Visitor feedback.....	13
Staff feedback.....	13
Best things.....	14
Challenges.....	14
Suggestions for improvements.....	14
Acknowledgements.....	14
Disclaimer	14

Visit details

Details of visit	
Service Provider	Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
Service Address	High St, Buckingham MK18 1NU
Date and Time	5 th February: 10.30am – 1pm
Authorised Representatives	Oonagh Browne and Alison Holloway

Summary of findings

There are 14 beds on the inpatient ward, **12** were occupied during our visit. We heard from eight patients, two visitors and two members of staff (although all staff were happy to answer ad hoc questions).

These findings represent an account of what we observed and heard on the day that we visited:

- + The hospital ward was clean and tidy with cleaning in progress during our visit. Notice boards displayed useful information for patients and staff i.e. how to get up from a fall
- + Each patient bay has a shared bathroom, one of the baths was out of order and required fixing. We were told by staff that patients could still use the toilet in that bathroom. We heard from one patient that everyone wants a bath/shower at the same time although they did not find this a problem and thought staff managed the situation well
- + There was a selection of newspapers in the day room provided by the League of Friends of Buckingham Hospital, a registered charity that works with the local community to support the Hospital's patients and staff. There is a wall-mounted whiteboard in the day room which had information about gentle group exercises (Monday – Friday). Although we were there at the displayed time for this group, there was no session in progress. A member of the ward team told us that sessions take place when staff or volunteers are available to facilitate them
- + Patients were very positive about the staff, environment, food, guided exercises and manual therapy

- + Most patients said that they could ask questions about their care, however, only two of them could tell us when they thought they were going home. One patient told us that there was a lack of information about their discharge
- + Visitors were happy with the care provided for their relatives. One said that the hospital was hard to find as they could not see any signage for it
- + Staff were positive about their working environment including having friendly colleagues. One said that the team was like 'a family'
- + Staff told us that the location of the hospital could be a problem for colleagues and visitors as the bus routes had changed. Also booking hospital transport for patients could be difficult e.g. transport with South Central Ambulance Service must be booked weeks in advance. They said that being away from an acute hospital is sometimes challenging e.g. if something is needed from the pharmacy it could take a day to arrive. A pharmacist visits the ward once per week. Staff are also supported by GPs at The Swan Practice although this does not include out of hours support

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been suggested to Buckinghamshire Healthcare Trust based on our conversations and observations during the visit:

- ☒ Fix/replace the broken assisted bath in the bathroom close to the male patient bay
- ☒ Update the activities noticeboard in the day room when activities are changed or cancelled so that patients and visitors are kept informed of daily schedules
- ☒ Consider offering group exercise sessions at weekends for patients to keep active and encourage more social connections
- ☒ Further explore ways to develop better communication with patients about their length of stay on the ward
- ☒ Assess the possibility of having a pharmacist on the ward more than once per week
- ☒ Continue to work with patient transport services and explore ways to reduce the required notice period for booking patient collections

Service response to recommendations

The following response was received by email on 20th March 2025.



Stoke Mandeville Hospital
Mandeville Road
Aylesbury
Buckinghamshire
HP21 8AL

20 March 2025

Dear Oonagh,

Response to Healthwatch Bucks Enter and View Visit Report – Buckingham Community Hospital

Date of Visit: 5th February 2025

Thank you for your detailed report following your Enter and View visit to Buckingham Community Hospital. We greatly value the insights and feedback you have provided, which are critical in helping us enhance the quality of care and overall experience for all our patients.

We are pleased to note the positive feedback regarding the staff, environment, food, guided exercises and manual therapy. We are committed to maintaining these high standards.

We acknowledge the concerns highlighted, particularly regarding the replacement of the bathroom by the male bay and regarding our communication with our patients relating to their treatment and discharge plans.

Below is our response to the report's findings in the form of an action plan addressing the recommendations:

Action Plan in Response to Recommendations

Recommendation	Action	Timeline
Fix/replace the broken assisted bath in the bathroom close to the male patient bay	Project manager to visit and plan refurbishment. Plan to be given to league of friends (who have agreed to fund the refurbishment) to agree the final costings.	19/03/25 – completed 27/03/25 (League of Friends meeting)
Update the activities noticeboard in the day room when activities are changed or cancelled so that patients and visitors are kept informed of daily schedules	Ward Clerk/ Lead Therapist/ Ward Sister to ensure that the board is updated daily	21/03/25 - completed
Consider offering group exercise sessions at weekends for patients to keep active and encourage more social connections	Review group exercise plan. Engage all professionals with the plan where exercise groups/ activity groups can be delivered by any HCP following training	19/03/2025 – completed 31/03/2025
Further explore ways to develop better communication with patients about their length of stay on the ward	Staff to attend discharge planning study day. Discussion at ward meeting to explain responsibilities of the nurse to ensure all patients are aware and included in discharge planning. Confirm process that nurse caring for patient each day should ensure patient is updated regularly	Ongoing – 10 staff to attend over the coming year 30/04/2025
Assess the possibility of having a pharmacist on the ward more than once per week	Review current provision with Rachel Cox, Deputy Chief Pharmacist and determine whether additional pharmacy support is required	30/03/2025
Continue to work with patient transport services and explore ways to reduce the required notice period for booking patient collections	New transport provider from 1st April 2025. New guidance to be circulated. Review new contract specifications to ensure appropriate support for patients in BCH.	01/04/2025

We value the insights shared by Healthwatch Bucks and are committed to implementing the recommendations to improve both the patient and staff experience in the Buckingham Community Hospital. The action plan outlined above reflects our commitment to making positive changes in response to the feedback received. We will continue to monitor the progress of these actions and keep Healthwatch Bucks informed of our developments.

Thank you once again for your valuable input and for supporting us in improving the care we provide.

Yours sincerely,



Raghuv Bhasin
Chief Operating Officer
Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust

What is Enter and View?

Enter and View visits are carried out by local Healthwatch to find out how health and social care services are being run. They make recommendations where there are areas for improvement.

The law allows local Healthwatch to see how a service is delivered. We can visit hospitals, care homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies. We talk to the people who use the service and their families/caregivers and sometimes staff.

We talk to these people to help us understand what is done well and what could be done better. We then share this learning with others.

We do not look for issues around the safety of people (safeguarding) during our Enter and View visits. We report any concerns as set out in our policy. We tell members of staff who want to raise an issue about where they work to talk to the CQC. This way they are protected by legislation if they raise a concern.

Methodology

The visit was prearranged with Buckinghamshire Healthcare Trust community nursing team leads and an explanation of the purpose of our visit was also provided.

On arrival we (Authorised Representatives) introduced ourselves to the Ward Sister, we discussed details of the visit. During this conversation we checked whether any patients should not be approached for any reason.

We used a semi-structured conversation approach to gather feedback from patients, visitors and staff. Conversations and observations were recorded via hand-written notes.

A risk assessment was completed before the visit in accordance with Healthwatch Bucks internal policies and procedures.

Background

Buckingham Community Hospital cares for older in-patients on a 14-bed ward. Patients are admitted from home or transferred from an acute hospital after a recent illness or injury, a change in health needs, or for post-surgery recuperation or palliative care. They can access a range of services i.e. physiotherapists and occupational therapists.

The League of Friends of Buckingham Hospital works with the local community to support the hospital's patients and staff. The League funds services at the hospital from day-to-day contributions to bigger projects.

The environment

The atmosphere on the ward was calm and quiet. The corridors and communal areas were clean. Notice boards displayed information for patients and staff e.g. how to get up from a fall for patients and things that staff should consider for preventing falls/recording falls.



Picture 1: Falls information for patients and staff

There are three bays each containing four beds and a bathroom. The assisted bath in the male patient bay bathroom was broken however patients could still use the toilet.

There are also two individual en-suite patient rooms. A further room is used for storage, we were told by a member of staff that this room is too small to be used as a patient bedroom.

The day room

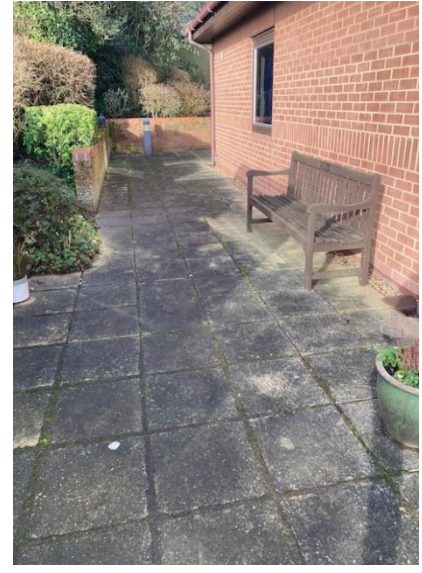
Some patients were sitting in the day room. There was a selection of daily newspapers on a table and ringing bells for patients to attract attention from staff. This room also has a television and book cupboard. A wall-mounted whiteboard displayed information about weekly activities. There was a poster for gentle group exercises, Monday – Friday from 10.45am to 11.45am. We noticed that this activity was not taking place when we there. We were told by a member of staff that group exercises do not take place every day due to staff availability/conflicting duties.



Picture 2: The day room

Outdoor space

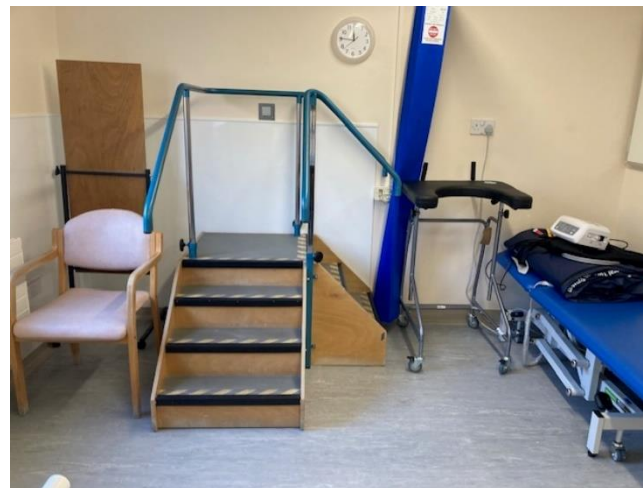
There is a patio area leading out from the day room which has garden furniture and a storage shed. Patients and visitors can access this area on request – for safety reasons the patio door is alarmed.



Picture 3: Outdoor space

Physiotherapy area

There is an area with equipment to help patients restore movement, regain confidence and regain mobility. One half is a kitchen area where residents can practice / demonstrate their everyday skills to prepare them to return home. The other half looks at skills around walking on the flat and up and down stairs. The physiotherapy team told us that the parallel walking bars can be raised and lowered according to the patient's height.



Picture 4: Physiotherapy area

What we heard

Patient feedback

We heard from eight patients, four women and four men. They told us that they had been referred to Buckingham Community Hospital from acute hospitals both inside and outside Buckinghamshire. However, most were referred within the county.

We asked patients to tell us about day-to-day life in the hospital. They mostly gave positive feedback about staff and the overall environment.

You ain't going to find a better community hospital anywhere...The staff are fantastic.

It's brilliant here.

It's [hospital] second to none. Perfect for me... I'm not at all worried about staying here and I thought I would be...Its going to be the place to get me home. They [the staff] almost know what you want before you know it...The staff feel your pain.

Folk is working their socks off. The staff are excellent.

Everything is spotless...and the bells on the tables, aren't they lovely.

Although one patient was positive about the staff and environment, they commented on waiting times for the bathroom.

Everyone wants a shower or bath at the same time.

Patients told us about regaining movement and exercise.

I would never have got back on my feet without the physiotherapists.

I have done exercises and got my confidence back.

They don't want you sitting around. It's important that I get exercised and mobile again.

The physiotherapists are very careful and give good, guided care.

We asked patients about their involvement in decision making for their care and about their length of stay in the hospital. Most patients said that they were happy to ask questions about their care/treatment. One patient told us that their experience of waiting for a decision was longer at Buckingham Community Hospital than other hospitals due to limited resources (equipment/staff). However, they were happy to wait on the ward rather than going to an acute hospital by ambulance.

Two patients said that they knew approximately when they would be discharged. However, the majority were unsure about their length of stay at the hospital.

Lack of knowledge about my discharge. You only know when it's time to go home [not in advance]. They should give you more notice.

I don't know when I'll go home yet. It depends on my progress.

Not a clue [about how long they'll be in hospital].

Most patients told us that they were happy with the quality of food and portion sizes of meals.

The food is better here than other hospitals. It's cooked in smaller amounts.

When asked about food choice, one patient said:

Choice is choice, you're not in a hotel.

Most patients were happy with time slot for visiting hours (10am – 8pm). One patient told us that staff were very good at providing private space for visits with young grandchildren.

Another patient said that sometimes they get lonely not having visitors due to the geographical location of the hospital in relation to their home.

Visitor feedback

We heard from two visitors during our visit. They were happy with the environment and care that their relatives were receiving. One told us that the onsite parking meters were broken. The other had difficulty finding the hospital and ward.

I didn't know where I was going when I was driving then I think I saw a little 'H' sign. Then when I came in the entrance, I didn't know that I had to go to Entrance 2.

We asked if they felt that they had enough privacy to speak to their relatives. One of them told us that there could be more privacy away from background noise.

Staff feedback

Staff were happy to engage in conversation and answer our questions. A young volunteer was also helping on the ward. We were told by a member of staff that volunteers come from nearby schools (16 –18-year-olds) for work experience. They help on the ward by speaking to patients and making refreshments.

We spoke to two members of community hospital staff team in 1-2-1 semi structured interviews. We asked them to tell us what they liked about working at the hospital, challenges that they faced and suggestions for improvements. We heard:

Best things

- Small and friendly team 'like a family'
- Being able to offer more personal care to patients due to size of the ward
- Good support network with district nurses
- Working in rehabilitation – can see the difference in patients from when they arrive on the ward until they leave
- League of Friends of Buckingham Hospital help with reading newspapers/afternoon refreshments and doing quizzes with patients

Challenges

- Arranging transport for patients when necessary
- Hard to recruit new staff because of the location and changes to bus routes
- Out of hours service – can wait between four and six hours to get a GP to call (during the daytime support is given by GPs at The Swan Practice)
- Pharmacy not onsite, a pharmacist visits once per week

Suggestions for improvements

- Bridge the gap between acute hospitals – quicker access to services that are not available at Buckingham Community hospital
- More frequent visits and support from pharmacists

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Bucks would like to thank the patients, visitors and hospital staff at Buckingham Community Hospital for sharing their feedback with us.

Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to findings observed on 5th February 2025. Our report reflects feedback from people **at the time** of our visit.

If you require this report in an alternative format, please contact us.

Address:

Healthwatch Bucks
PO Box 958
OX1 9ZP

Phone number: 01494 324832

Email: info@healthwatchbucks.co.uk

Website URL: www.healthwatchbucks.co.uk

X: @HW_Bucks

Facebook: HealthWatchBucks

Governance: Healthwatch Bucks Ltd. is a company (Registration number 08426201)

We confirm that we are using the Healthwatch Trademark (which covers the logo and Healthwatch brand) when undertaking work on our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

© Copyright Healthwatch Bucks 2025