

Enter & View

Pendennis Ward
Royal Cornwall
Hospital, Treliske

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1 Introduction

1.1 Details of visit

Service provider	Pendennis Ward, Royal Cornwall Hospital
Service Address	Treliske, TR1 3LJ
Date and time	10 th March 2025 9am-12pm
Authorised representative	Abi Harding-White

1.2 Purpose of visit

This visit was conducted in response to feedback received about the service. Our goal was to observe the service in action, hear directly from patients, and make recommendations for improvement.

1.3 Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Cornwall would like to thank patients and staff for providing a warm welcome and their positive contribution to this Enter and View visit and the subsequent report.

1.4 Disclaimer

This report relates to findings observed on the specific date above and is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all patients and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time of the visit.

1.5 About Healthwatch Cornwall

Healthwatch Cornwall is an independent organisation committed to amplifying the voices of Cornwall's residents in the planning and delivery of health and social care services. Through public engagement, we gather their views and experiences with these services. We ensure these perspectives are represented in decision-making processes both locally and nationally, driven by the belief that community feedback is vital to improving standards of care.

1.6 What is Enter and View?

As a local Healthwatch we are authorised to "Enter and View" health and social care services through the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and Local Authorities Regulations 2013 (part 4). These services can include hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists, and pharmacies.

Enter and View visits are an opportunity to see services in action, listen to and understand the experiences of individuals who use them, and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement. The visits are organised based on information received about individual services or in response to themes identified in our research.

2 Visit Summary

Introductory meeting with the Ward Sister

At the beginning of the visit, Healthwatch Cornwall met with the ward sister to discuss the visit. They assisted in identifying patients who were well enough and willing to discuss their experience of care.

One to one conversations with patients

During the visit, six patients were asked individually about their experiences during their stay on the ward.

Observations

Observations were made throughout the visit, focussing on the interactions between staff and patients, general atmosphere of the ward and the condition of the facilities.

3 Service Overview

Pendennis Ward is located on the second floor of Trelawny Wing in Royal Cornwall Hospital, Treliske. It provides post-operative care to patients who have undergone emergency surgery. Pendennis Ward aims to offer a supportive environment where patients receive the care and attention they need during their recovery process.

4 Observations

Staff and Patient Interactions

Upon arriving at the ward, there was no ward clerk present, and the staff appeared busy. A nurse asked about the purpose of being there but, possibly due to their ongoing task, did not offer further assistance in finding the correct person to speak with. The doctor at the desk did not respond to being greeted, possibly due to being focused on their work. It was necessary to draw attention from another passing staff member who could assist in locating management to begin the visit (*recommendation 1*).

Healthcare staff were consistently observed or heard to be treating patients with kindness and dignity. They appeared to have a strong understanding of their patients' needs, personalities, and preferences. Staff communicated in ways that positively engaged patients and helped put them at ease, often incorporating humour where appropriate. Patients seemed to be as comfortable as they could be and attended by staff quickly when needed.

The environment

The ward consists of three main bays, each with its own bathroom, along with additional toilets located in the corridor. All facilities were consistently clean, tidy, and free of clutter or unused medical equipment. The ward was fairly spacious, with a layout that allowed for easy movement. Overall, there was sufficient space between bed areas and equipment. However, in at least one bay, an extra bed appeared to have been added, reducing the space available for the others. A few patients were waiting in the bays for their assigned bed spaces, but they appeared comfortable. The environment was quiet and calm, with minimal background noise, and the temperature was pleasant.

5 Patient Feedback

The Healthwatch Representative spoke with six patients during the visit. They all had some positive feedback about the ward with a couple areas of challenge.

How has your experience of care been?

Six patients praised the exceptional care they received, with three stating they “can’t fault them”, and two describing the staff as friendly, kind, and attentive. Two patients highlighted that staff are quick to respond when needed, with one patient understanding that there were occasional delays due to staff workload.

One patient said they experienced poor bedside manner from doctors very rarely but now felt more confident raising concerns when it occurred.

Four patients spoke positively about the food quality, describing it as delicious, varied, and nutritious.

A patient described the ward as quiet and calm, though they occasionally found other patients noisy. One patient expressed frustration with having to wait for doctors' rounds to be completed before being able to go for a walk, which they found boring.

One patient, who had been in the hospital for nearly a year, valued the mental health support they previously received. They praised the professional for being empathetic. While they were not in high spirits, they did not want any further mental health support, but they appreciated that it continued to be offered to them (*recommendation 5*).

Four patients highlighted the clear communication from staff, feeling well-informed about their care, with one patient expressing that the doctors discuss things with you. One patient also valued the regular visitor access.

What could improve the care you receive?

Several patients raised concerns regarding comfort and facilities. Two patients reported that the beds were uncomfortable, with one describing them as lumpy (*recommendation 2*). Additionally, one patient expressed frustration with the availability and cleanliness of the bathroom. They noted that patients from other areas were using the bathroom due to theirs being out of order, which made it less accessible, and a mess was left uncleaned for some time (*recommendation 3*).

Three patients commented on staff availability and responsiveness. One patient mentioned that some staff refused to apply cream to their skin, which was needed multiple times a day (*recommendation 4*). Another noted delays in staff response when ringing the bell, suggesting there may be insufficient staff. A third patient shared that while the staff were described as lovely, it would have been comforting if someone had sat with them during a distressing moment when they were unwell the previous night. However, the staff were busy attending to other patients, and only two staff members were available at the time (*recommendation 5*).

One patient raised concerns about noise levels, specifically mentioning difficulty sleeping due to noise from other patients (*recommendation 6*). Finally, one patient expressed dissatisfaction with the food, particularly the sandwiches, which they found dry and lacking butter, making them difficult to eat, especially when struggling with appetite (*recommendation 7*).

6 Manager Feedback

We were able to speak with management about the ward, gaining valuable insights into both the strengths and challenges the team is currently facing.

Strengths

The ward benefits from a new, supportive management team that has successfully filled all vacancies and retained staff since their arrival. The team as a whole is highly supportive of one another.

Challenges

Currently, the team is made up mostly of junior staff, and there is ongoing pressure on bed availability. Typically, there are two patients waiting for a permanent bed during the day, though this issue is usually resolved by the end of the day.

Improvements

Although the team meets the required staffing levels, if they could make changes, they would ideally have more staff available on the ward to further ease current pressures.

Supporting Staff Wellbeing While Ensuring Care Quality

Management is available on the ward every day to support the team. All staff participate in one-to-one practice education sessions, which are conducted during work hours. New staff

members are considered floating staff and do not count towards the required staffing numbers for shifts, allowing them to observe and learn without adding pressure. The team has a culture of encouraging staff and provides hampers for each shift during celebratory periods, such as Easter. The Professional Development Review System (PDRS) is also in place to ensure staff feel supported and valued.

Ensuring Patients are Informed and Involved in Their Care

Although doctors work separately, nurses introduce themselves to patients each morning, help explain the doctors' plans in an understandable way and engage with patients to address any concerns they may have. This approach ensures patients are informed about their care and feel involved in decision-making.

7 Recommendations

Healthwatch Cornwall have offered some recommendations based on observations and feedback from patients to improve patient experiences at the home.

1. Implement a clear protocol or designated staff on shift to acknowledge and assist visitors when a ward clerk is unavailable, even during busy periods. Acknowledging and assisting visitors, such as family members, helps build trust, reassures them, and gives people confidence in the care being provided.
2. Ensure patients are made aware of alternative options, such as the airflow mattress, if they are experiencing significant physical discomfort with foam mattresses.
3. Promptly repair any out-of-order bathrooms to maintain accessibility and functionality for all patients.
4. Evaluate whether some tasks may be overlooked and ensure that patients are informed about the different roles within the ward, so they understand what each staff member can assist with.
5. To better identify and support patients struggling with their mental health, consider implementing a system where staff routinely ask about emotional well-being and offer support based on connection and empathy, leaving clinical mental health care to professionals as needed. When staffing is limited, prioritise frequent, brief check-ins or comforting gestures until more support can be provided.
6. Consider providing earplugs to patients who are having trouble sleeping due to noise.
7. Forward the feedback regarding food to the relevant department for review.

8 Provider Response

1. We have a ward clerk on 7 days per week unless we have sickness or annual leave. Unfortunately the shifts don't always get covered when we put them out to bank so we have the odd day which we don't have cover. During these times we always try and greet visitors as promptly as we can but due to the ward pressures/acuity it's not always possible to get to visitors straight away.
2. Airflow mattress's are done on a priority basis, we have limited numbers across the

trust so we are unable to offer them out to every patient. If a patient is deemed at risk of developing pressure damage and they are reporting pain we will always offer an air mattress.

3. We report any problems with bathrooms as soon as we are made aware and keep a log book. Unfortunately our estates department can't always get to jobs the same day as the jobs are done on a priority basis. We always offer patients another bathroom in a different bay whilst there's is out of order.
4. It would be easier to understand the tasks if it was more specific. We always strive to deliver outstanding care and take a holistic approach. Unfortunately, due to hospital pressures, staffing and patient acuity we do have prioritise our workload. Whilst we don't set out to overlook tasks sometimes they can get missed or handed over to the next shift. We will take this on board.
5. We endeavour to do so when staffing allows. We have a quiet room that offer to patients when they need quiet time alone or with family. This is a fairly new room on the back of previous feedback.
6. Earplugs are offered to all of our patients, we have the stocked on the ward as well as eye masks.
7. Escalated to catering department.

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