

Thame Community Hospital

Enter and View Report



June 2025

Table of Contents

Visit details	3
Summary of findings.....	3
Recommendations.....	4
Patient referral pathways and communication	4
Patient transport service	4
Catheter Passport	5
Estate and facilities management	5
Service response to recommendations	5
What is Enter and View?	8
Methodology	8
Background	8
Building tour	9
Main reception area	9
CATS area.....	9
Pulmonary rehabilitation (PR) area	11
Physiotherapy and ultrasound diagnosis service areas.....	12
What we heard.....	12
Feedback from patients	12
Care and treatment.....	12
Referrals and communication	13
Challenges.....	13
Feedback from relatives.....	13
Feedback from staff	14
Best things.....	14
Challenges.....	14
Acknowledgements.....	14
Disclaimer	15

Visit details

Details of visit	
Service Provider	Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
Service Address	East St, Thame OX9 3JT
Date and time	10th June: 9.30am – 12.00pm
Two Authorised Representatives	Oonagh Browne (Lead) and Deborah Tymms

Summary of findings

We heard from eight patients, two relatives and three members of staff.

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

- + The hospital hub was very clean and communal spaces were tidy
- + Most patients were positive about their care and treatment and told us that it was excellent. 'You said, we did' posters reflected these opinions with 100% of respondents saying that they were likely to recommend the service
- + Some patients said that it took a long time to get referred from primary care (General Practitioner) to community clinics. Two patients said that communication could be better for first time appointments. One told us that their appointments had been cancelled and rebooked. The other said that they received information about their appointment by text message and thought they were attending a different type of appointment until they arrived and were told otherwise
- + Some patients, staff and relatives said that parking could be tricky and stressful to find a free space
- + When we asked for suggestions for improvements, one patient said more privacy as they shared a consultation room with another patient who was being treated during previous appointment (with a curtain divider)
- + One relative who had driven the patient to their appointment said that they would like help with transport due to the patient's physical requirements
- + Staff said that they liked working as part of a small team with colleagues that have great attitudes. When asked about challenges they told us:

- Patients needing support with urinary catheter changes after being discharged to the community from acute emergency departments without enough information being passed to district nurses about their needs e.g. size of catheter etc. We heard that the hospital will be using [catheter passports](#) at some point in the near future. They said that this information would be helpful for both the Community Assessment and Treatment Service (CATS) staff and patients. Also, we heard that **sometimes** there is not enough privacy when changing catheters, this happens when more than one patient is being seen in the big consultation room (Room 4)
- Patients can get confused about the location of the main entrance to the hospital when approaching from the car park behind the building and try to walk through the pulmonary rehabilitation entrance
- Due to an update with internal security on doors leading to different areas of the hospital hub, some staff need to ask colleagues to help them to enter parts of the building where they need to work as they have not been given new key cards

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been suggested to Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust (BHT) based on our conversations and observations during the visit.

Patient referral pathways and communication

- ☑ Working with [Bucks Integrated Neighbourhood Teams](#) look at strategies to help speed the referral process for patients coming from their local GP practice and wider primary care team
- ☑ Continue to provide clear information to patients about what to expect from their first appointment including details about the healthcare professional they will be seeing. Also, ensure that patients have details about travel and parking (both onsite and behind the hospital building)

Patient transport service

- ☑ Promote the [non-emergency patient transport service \(Emed\)](#). This transport service is available for **eligible** patients registered with a Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire West or Frimley GP

Catheter Passport

- ✓ Continue to support the introduction and timely roll out of catheter passports so that CATS teams are given key information to best manage patients' urinary need

Estate and facilities management

- ✓ Look into updating signage to guide patients from the car park behind the hospital to the main entrance
- ✓ Where possible provide regular clinical staff with key cards for the new internal security locks to access consultation areas
- ✓ At some point in the **future** consider funding possibilities to update the staff kitchen and recreation area similar to the improved staff facilities at [Marlow Community Hospital](#)

Service response to recommendations

The following response was received by email on 25th July 2025.



Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust

Stoke Mandeville Hospital
Mandeville Road
Aylesbury
Buckinghamshire
HP21 8AL

25 July 2025

Dear Oonagh

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

Date of Visit: 10th June 2025

Thank you for your detailed report on Thame Community Hospital. Your feedback is vital in helping us improve patient care and experience.

We are pleased that most patients had positive experiences and found the hospital clean, tidy, and well-equipped with seating and service leaflets. We strive to maintain these standards.

We recognize the need to reduce wait times for community services and improve appointment details, directions, and signage from the parking area.

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
Working with Bucks Integrated Neighbourhood Teams look at strategies to help speed the referral process for patients coming from their local GP practice and wider primary care team	Be involved with the INT and development of strategies to support faster referrals to local services	Ongoing
Continue to provide clear information to patients about what to expect from their first appointment including details about the healthcare professional they will be seeing. Also, ensure that patients have details about travel and parking (both onsite and behind the hospital building)	Current appointment letter process within CATS is being updated Contact leads for other services to request review and update of letters used for Thame based clinics	7 July 2025 30 June 2025
Promote the non-emergency patient transport service (Emed). This transport service is available for eligible patients registered with a Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire West or Frimley GP	Continue to provide patients with EMED information and ensure this information is available for all services	30 June 2025
Continue to support the introduction and timely roll out of catheter passports so that CATS teams are given key information to best manage patients' urinary needs	Catheter passport has been developed and approved and are in the process of being printed.	Timeline for rollout is to be confirmed
Look into updating signage to guide patients from the car park behind the hospital to the main entrance	Review to be undertaken by estates colleagues	30 Sept 2025

Where possible provide regular clinical staff with key cards for the new internal security locks to access consultation areas	Access has been arranged for relevant staff	Completed
At some point in the future consider funding possibilities to update the staff kitchen and recreation area similar to the improved staff facilities at Marlow Community Hospital	Review to be undertaken by estates colleagues	30 Sept 2025

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

We appreciate Healthwatch Bucks' insights and will implement the recommendations to improve the Thame Community Hospital experience for patients and staff. Our action plan shows our commitment to these positive changes, and we will keep Healthwatch Bucks updated on our progress.

Thank you for your valuable input and support in enhancing our care.

Yours sincerely,



Raghuv Bhasin

Chief Operating Officer

Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust

OUTSTANDING CARE

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

AND A GREAT PLACE TO WORK

Providing a range of acute and community services across Buckinghamshire
Chair: David Highton Chief Executive: Neil Macdonald

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/carers 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 announced with BHT community nursing team leads and an explanation of the purpose of our visit was also provided.

On arrival we (Authorised Representatives) were greeted by the CATs manager who briefed us on clinics that were happening during our visit.

We used a semi-structured conversation approach to gather feedback from patients, relatives 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

[Thame Community Hospital Hub](#) provides community health services including prevention services, assessments and outpatient appointments. Managed by BHT, the hospital provides services to patients from Buckinghamshire and surrounding areas in Oxfordshire.

The League of Friends of Thame Community Hospital support projects and initiatives to improve the hospital environment, patient care, and community well-being. They also

help to provide equipment i.e. the ultrasound diagnosis equipment and height adjusting desks and chairs for staff.

Building tour

We were given a tour of the hospital hub by the CATS manager. All areas were airy and very clean with the monthly cleaning audit score on display (May – 92%).

Main reception area

The main reception area was tidy and had enough seating for patients. There was a good selection of service information leaflets including care service directories for Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. There was also a veterans community support pop-up banner by the door of the main entrance.



Picture 1: Displayed information in the main reception area

CATS area

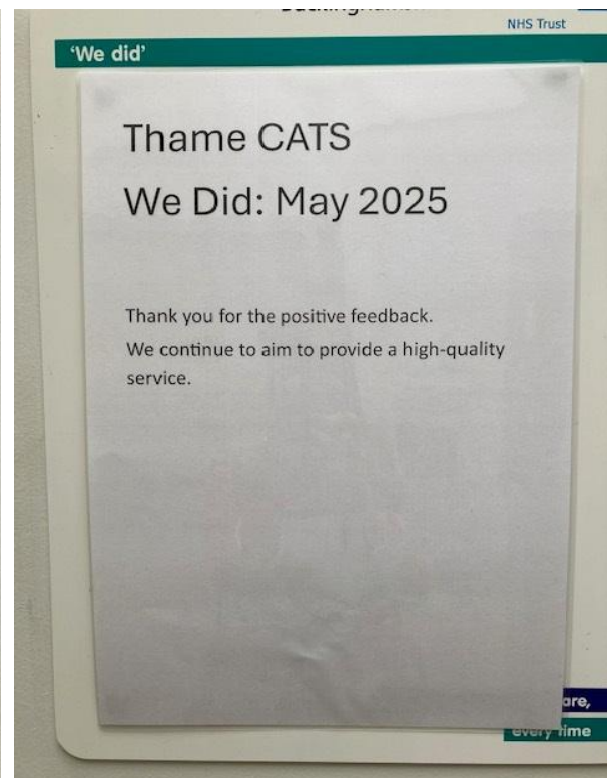
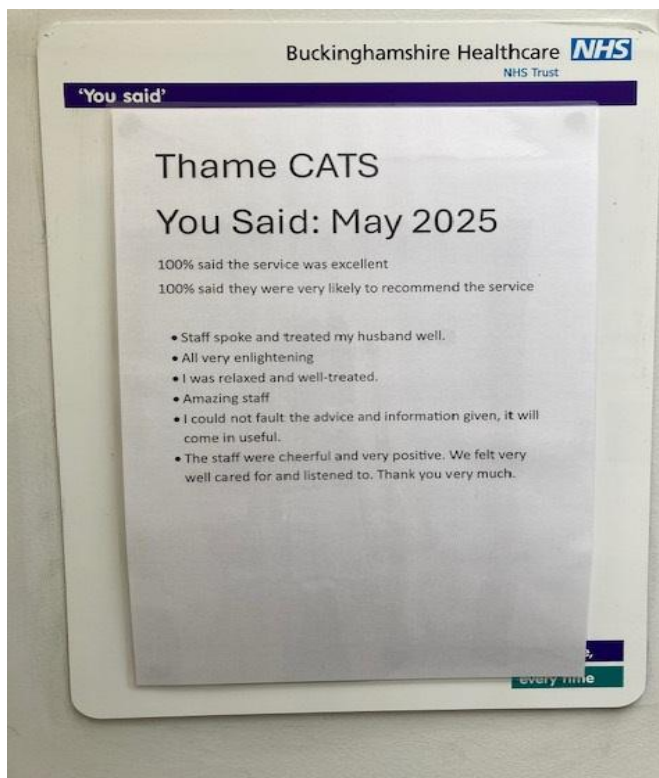
This service area has both single consultation rooms and one large consultation room where patients can be treated in the same space with curtain dividers for privacy.

There is a staff kitchen in this area with facilities for heating food and preparing hot drinks.



Picture 2: The staff kitchen

'You said, we did' information posters in the CATS area showed that patient feedback was **100%** positive.



Picture 3: 'You said, we did' posters

Pulmonary rehabilitation (PR) area

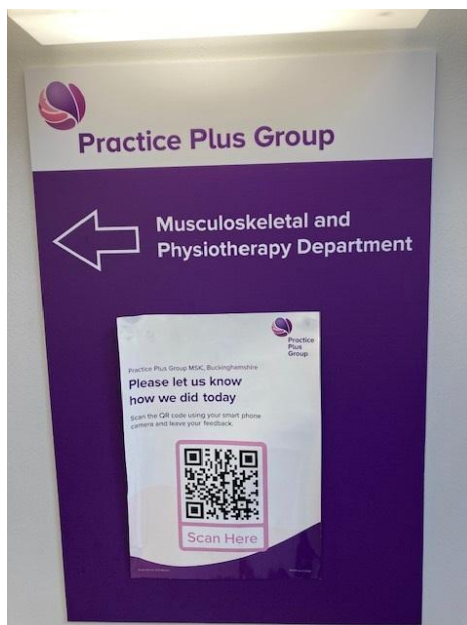
PR is an exercise and education programme designed for people with lung disease who experience symptoms of breathlessness. There is space in this area for patients to have group exercise classes as well as individual consultations/assessments. Bucks Integrated Respiratory Service (BIRS) teams were doing assessments with patients during our visit. There is access to outdoor spaces from this area of the building – the garden and the exit to the rear car park.



Picture 5: Garden space notice for patients not to enter through the PR area

Physiotherapy and ultrasound diagnosis service areas

These areas are used by the [Practice Plus Group](#) (for NHS patients) and the ultrasound diagnosis service. There is a display board in this area with a QR code for patients to leave feedback to the Practice Plus Group about their experiences of care and treatment.



Picture 6: Practice Plus Group information for patients to give feedback

What we heard

Feedback from patients

We spoke to eight patients, most said that they had been to the hospital before and were registered with a GP in Bucks.

Care and treatment

They were mainly positive about their care and treatment:

"It's very good. I'm very pleased [with treatment]. Its definitely helped with my breathing. It's perfect and the people [staff] are magnificent"

"Excellent care, very helpful. The don't take any prisoners in a good way. Good at motivating and making suggestions."

Speaking about the hospital environment, one patient said:

"It's all pleasant, not crowded. Don't have to worry about germs. It's a small unit, don't have to go all the way to High Wycombe Hospital or Stoke Mandeville Hospital. Its less stressful."

Referrals and communication

Although patients were happy with their care at Thame Community Hospital, they were less positive about the waiting times for referrals to clinics. One patient said that they would like quicker access to community treatments and better scheduling of appointments. They said that they waited four months to get an appointment. They were given appointments which were cancelled and then rescheduled.

One patient said that they were invited to their first appointment by text. They would have preferred a letter with more information. They told us that they thought they had an appointment with a physiotherapist but instead it was an appointment to see a consultant.

Challenges

Some patients told us that parking is tricky especially on certain days, for instance market day in Thame. One patient said:

"Parking is a worry when you're not well...Can I park? When? Where? How can I pay?"

Another patient said that it would be better to have more privacy in consultation rooms as during one visit there was another patient being treated in the same room (separated by a curtain).

Feedback from relatives

We spoke to two relatives who had driven patients to their appointments. Both were positive about the hospital environment. However, one of them told us that it would be helpful to have patient transport support due to the patient's physical needs or to have home visits instead. They said that had made enquires with their GP into support with transport:

“We’re waiting one month now, everything is slow.”

Feedback from staff

All staff were friendly and very helpful as we looked around the hospital hub. Different teams explained their service area to us. We asked three members of staff questions about the working environment, all seemed passionate about their roles. We heard:

Best things

- Being part of a small team who have great attitudes and get on with the job
- Staff help and support each other
- Quality over quantity approach, being able to spend 2 – 3 hours with a patient
- Accessible site which is not too big for patients who might feel nervous

Challenges

- Administrative challenges when patients who need assistance with urinary catheter changes are referred to a district nurse from Emergency Departments without necessary information for care e.g. size of catheter. However, this challenge will be overcome when the hospital introduces catheter passports (which is on the horizon). Also, it can sometimes be uncomfortable for patients having their catheter changed in a big room (consultation room 4) if other patients are in the next cubicle separated by a curtain screen
- There is a staff kitchen, but this is not a comfortable space for staff to have lunch together
- The signage for the hospital entrance is not clear for patients approaching the hospital from the car park behind the building. Sometimes patients can mistake the entrance to the pulmonary rehabilitation area as the main entrance
- Some staff members do not have access to all areas of the hospital due to recent updating on internal security systems. This means that they must wait for colleagues to let them into areas where they need to work

Acknowledgements

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

Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to findings observed on 10th June 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