

# Listening events report

**January – July 2025**

Whiston Hospital

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## About Healthwatch Halton

Healthwatch Halton is the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Halton. We are one of more than 150 local Healthwatch across England. We exist to ensure that people are at the heart of care.

We help people find the information they need about services. We also go out and speak to local people about what they think of local care and share what people like and what could be improved with those running services.

We have the power to ensure that people's voices are heard by the government and those running services. As well as seeking the public's views ourselves, we also encourage services to involve people in decisions that affect them.

Our sole purpose is to help make care better for people.

## About this report

This report highlights the public feedback received during outreach sessions held at Whiston Hospital between January and July 2025.

During these 'Listening Events' we use a short questionnaire to gather people's experiences of each hospital.

## Whiston Hospital Listening Event feedback

This report shares what people told us during Healthwatch Halton's Listening Events at Whiston Hospital between January and July 2025. We spoke with 101 people—most were patients (78%), with some visitors (20%) and a small number of staff (2%). We heard from people in a wide range of departments and wards, including A&E, maternity, plastics, cardiology, and radiology.

Due to the overall number of responses received the views and experiences expressed cannot be considered representative of all patients. This report is presented to provide a snapshot of the experiences of those who took part and to highlight areas for consideration by the Trust.

### Please rate the treatment and care you received today

<b>Excellent</b>	<b>72%</b>
<b>Good</b>	<b>21%</b>
<b>Fair</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>Terrible</b>	<b>1%</b>

The majority of people at Whiston Hospital rated the care they received as excellent or good. A small number gave lower ratings, which suggests that while the overall picture is very positive, not everyone had the same experience.

### What do you think is good about this hospital?

Many people spoke positively about their experience at Whiston. Over 70% highlighted kind and caring staff, short waiting times in some clinics, and high standards of treatment. 93% of respondents rated their care as 'Excellent' or 'Good'.

Several patients expressed gratitude for specialist treatment, such as stroke care, end-of-life care, and paediatric services. One person shared, *'The Heart specialist my wife saw this week was very good and explained everything very clearly.'* (2B, 13/01/2025).

#### Specialist Care

- *'It is worth the travel from North Wales to come to this hospital.'* (Dressing

*clinic, 13/01/2025)*

- *'I am a cancer patient and always get excellent care here and at St Helens Hospital. We have the best hospitals here in Merseyside!'* (Oncology, 17/03/2025)

## **Appointments and Waiting Times**

- *'I have had no issues with my appointment today. they were very efficient and on time. I am now waiting for a follow up later today.'* (Radiology, 13/01/2025)
- *'Today was my fifth appointment at the fracture clinic. I always receive fantastic care. There was no waiting around today and I have always been seen quickly.'* (Fracture Clinic, 28/01/2025)
- *'It was great at the outpatients today. I was in and out in no time. I received great care and have now been diagnosed.'* (Outpatients, 13/01/2025)

## **Staff, Treatment and Care**

- *'My wife passed away here after end of life care. She received first class treatment. They could not have been better.'* (IC, 13/01/2025)
- *'I was an inpatient for 3 weeks after having a stroke. The staff on the ward were lovely to me.'* (Stroke Ward, 28/01/2025)
- *'The staff were very good with me in the A and E department. I arrived in an ambulance and was put on a drip quickly.'* (A&E, 13/01/2025)
- *'The nurses are lovely. I just had an ECG today. The nurse from the clinic was very good and brought me out in the wheelchair to wait for my ambulance home.'* (ECG, 28/01/2025)
- *'Staff are absolutely amazing. Just lovely and friendly.'* (Plastics Clinic, 25/03/2025)
- *'My son is an outpatient in the paediatric unit. We were late today and they still saw us. The staff are good.'* (Paediatrics, 13/01/2025)

## **Facilities and Environment**

- *'The foyer is spacious and airy which makes it feel nicer and we are less*

*likely to catch germs.'* (Burns Unit, 28/01/2025)

- *'The hospital is clean, spacious and well signposted. It is all great.'* (General Outpatients, 25/02/2025)
- *'It is clean, modern, tidy and friendly.'* (Outpatients, 22/07/2025)

## **Volunteers**

- *'The volunteers are really good at giving directions. They asked me as soon as I came in and helped me to find the way.'* (Audiology, 25/03/2025)

## **What could be improved?**

While most people were happy with their care, some raised areas that could be better.

The most common issues related to waiting times, particularly in A&E, where patients reported long delays and stays on trolleys.

Communication was another recurring theme, with some saying information about treatment or discharge was unclear.

A few people also felt it was hard to get through to the hospital by phone. One patient noted, *'Waiting times in the clinic can be very long.'* (Urology, 24/06/2025)

## **Appointments and waiting times**

- *'The waits in A and E are very long.'* (A&E, 13/01/2025)
- *'I was in the ambulance outside the hospital for 5 hours and then on a trolley on the corridor for 6 hours which was very hard for me and my husband.'* (A&E, 28/01/2025)
- *'I had to wait for 8 hours yesterday and some patients looked so poorly I was concerned for them.'* (A&E, 25/02/2025)

## **Communication**

- *'There is no continuity of staff which means I have to keep repeating my history.'* (Physiotherapy 28/01/2025)
- *'Communication about my condition from A and E and the ward have not been consistent.'* (A&E/B1, 13/01/2025)

- *'The communication has not been good over the last week.'* (2C, 22/07/2025)
- *'I had an ultrasound after my Physio referred me for a test. This was four weeks ago and I have not had any results back or been able to talk to someone who can help. I called the Ultrasound department who put me through to A and E (as I had the scan in their side room), but they do not answer the phone at all. I need to know if I need an operation or not to move forward.'* (Physio, 22/04/2025)
- *'The post system needs to be better. I missed my hospital letters and still haven't had the information about today's appointment.'* (Gynae/3E, 28/01/2025)

### **Parking and Accessibility**

- *'The car park does not have enough disabled spaces.'* (X-ray, 27/05/2025)
- *'Finding a disabled bay is hard and again patients need to be told the blue badge parking is free.'* (A&E, 28/01/2025)
- *'My husband was never told he could park for free with a blue badge. He came every day for 14 days and paid.'* (A&E/Inpatient, 28/01/2025)

### **Facilities and Comfort**

- *'The food was awful, you couldn't eat it.'* (Stroke Ward, 28/01/2025)
- *'The chairs in the waiting room are so uncomfortable. I was on them for four hours which was not nice at all.'* (A&E, 25/02/2025)
- *'Free water fountains would be helpful.'* (Dressing clinic, 22/07/2025)

## **Do staff have enough time to spend with you and other patients?**

Most people said staff made time for them, even when they were clearly very busy. Patients on wards felt particularly well supported.

- *'The doctor spoke to me today for 15 minutes and really reassured me.'* (Plastics, 22/07/2025)
- *'The staff were always willing to talk and help with any worries. The night time was good too.'* (Coronary care 25/02/2025)

However, a few patients felt staff were overstretched, particularly in A&E.

## Have you been given enough information about your treatment by the hospital?

Most people said yes, they felt well informed. But a few told us they didn't always get updates when moving between departments or waiting on test results.

Many praised the clear explanations and helpful leaflets or follow-up calls.

- *'My specialist in Urology actually called to check in on me and discuss my treatments.'* (X-ray, 27/05/2025)
- *'The Gynae nurse rang me up to check on me whilst I was waiting and sent me for bloods.'* (Gynaecology, 27/05/2025)

Some felt updates were confusing or incomplete.

- *'I was not told that my recovery would take so long initially. 6–8 weeks is normal but I was not informed of this.'* (Dressings clinic, 24/06/2025)

## How accessible do you think the hospital is in terms of getting around?

Many people said they had no issues getting around the hospital and praised the volunteers who gave directions.

- *'The volunteers at the door are brilliant.'* (Dressings clinic, 13/01/2025)
- *'The volunteers are helpful. It is fine to get around.'* (ECG, 24/06/2025)
- *'The signs around the hospitals are good and clear. I find the coloured zones helpful.'* (Dressings, 25/02/2025)
- *'Whiston is good as hospitals go. The staff are all fine, very pleasant. There are good facilities here and I appreciate the offer of decaf coffee which I have to drink. The hospital transport service has been helpful as I have come from Formby and have a bad leg.'* (Dressings, 25/02/2025)

But some found it difficult to walk long distances or locate disabled parking.

- *'More wheelchairs are needed as well as places to rest. More chairs around the hospital.'* (Gastroenterology, 25/03/2025)
- *"Finding a disabled bay is hard and again patients need to be told the blue badge parking is free in all areas of the hospital.'* (A&E, 28/01/2025)
- *'It is a long way for me to travel from Formby to be at Whiston for 9.50 am.'* (Plastics, 22/04/2025)



## Have you been treated with dignity and respect by the staff at the hospital?

Nearly everyone said yes, they felt respected and treated with kindness. Staff were often described as friendly, helpful and reassuring.

One person said, *'The A&E staff carefully covered me up with cloths to keep my dignity.'* (A&E, 25/03/2025)

One visitor felt their relative hadn't always been treated with dignity and respect saying, *'Not always. The toilet is not accessible, and no commode was given leaving them to go in bed.'* (Ward 2B, 13/01/2025)

## Have you been moved here from another ward or have you been told you may be moved to another ward?

A few people mentioned being moved, and most said it went smoothly. However, some were unsure why they had been moved or said they weren't told clearly in advance.

## Any other comments

Finally, we asked people if they had any other comments to make about the hospital.

Many people expressed their gratitude for the care they received, saying they felt lucky to have Whiston Hospital nearby.

- *'This hospital saved my husband's life, so 5 star to me!'* (Ward 3D, 20/01/2025)
- *'Feel lucky to have this hospital in my area. The hospitals in Wales do not offer anywhere near the care we get here.'* (Outpatients, 13/01/2025)
- *'Wonderful work is done here. We are lucky to have such excellent services in this area.'* (Oncology, 17/03/2025)

Some mentioned how far they'd travelled or how long they'd waited for transport. Others shared feedback on specific areas—both good and bad—that added detail to the themes above.

- *'There needs to be more sitting in the main entrance area. All the seats are full with staff having their lunch so we have had to wait by the lift with my family left standing by the wheelchair.'*

- *'The maternity staff here are amazing. My first birth in 2023 went well too so I came back for my second. The Student Midwives have been very good too. They are respected by the staff and are allowed to be hands on so they can learn.'* (Maternity, 13/01/2025)

## Summary

Thank you to everyone who took the time to speak with us.

Most people we spoke to told us they'd had a positive experience at Whiston Hospital. They especially praised the staff for being kind, caring and professional, and told us they felt listened to and well treated.

At the same time, several people shared suggestions about what could be better—particularly around waiting times, communication, car parking, and basic comfort. These comments have informed the recommendations we've set out in this report.

## Balancing what we hear

Most people rated their care very highly and praised staff for being kind, professional and caring. Our role is to reflect the full range of what people told us — celebrating these strong positives while also fairly highlighting the smaller but recurring frustrations. These are not criticisms of care, but practical issues that, if addressed, could make already strong services even better. We believe this balanced approach recognises the Trust's strengths while also highlighting where improvements could make a real difference.

## Recommendations

Based on the feedback people shared with us, and observations from our team, we have the following recommendations:

### 1. Staff and volunteers

Patients repeatedly praised staff for their kindness and professionalism, and highlighted the vital role volunteers play in welcoming people and helping them find their way. Sharing this positive feedback internally and ensuring both staff and volunteers are supported will help maintain morale and sustain these high standards of care.

### 2. Communication

- a. Some people told us that communication about their care could be clearer – whether it was about treatment plans, test results, or discharge arrangements. Patients said they sometimes didn't know what was happening, when they would be discharged, or when they would get their results. Making sure information is given in a timely and consistent way would help patients feel more confident and reduce anxiety.
- b. A number of people said they found it difficult to get through to the right department by phone, which left them feeling frustrated or delayed their care. The Trust could explore how the switchboard supports patients and whether there are practical steps, such as clearer call routing or spot checks, to make sure people reach the right department first time.

### 3. Address long waits and corridor care in A&E

Some patients described long waits in ambulances or on trolleys in corridors before being admitted. While pressures in emergency departments are a national issue, practical steps could improve the patient experience, such as clearer updates on waiting times, stronger triage communication, and staff or volunteers who check in with patients while they wait.

### 4. Parking

Parking remains a concern, particularly for disabled patients and visitors.

People said they often struggled to find Blue Badge spaces and were not always aware that parking is free for badge holders. Clearer signage in car parks, alongside better information in appointment letters and leaflets, would help reduce stress and unnecessary costs for patients and their families.

## **5. Seating**

Patients travelling long distances, or waiting for transport, highlighted that the recent removal of seating in the main entrance made waiting uncomfortable. Reintroducing seating in entrances and other high-use areas would make a practical difference for those who need somewhere to rest.

## **6. Pharmacy**

Long waits at the pharmacy and occasional shortages of medication were raised as a source of frustration. This was particularly difficult for patients with caring responsibilities or limited mobility. Improving communication about expected wait times and ensuring medicines are available when needed would help reduce these pressures.

## **Mersey & West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust response**

We would like to thank Healthwatch Halton for undertaking outreach events to meet with our patients at Whiston hospital between January and July 2025 and St Helens hospital between May and July 2025.

The reports have provided the senior team with an additional method of feedback that has highlighted both the positive feedback we receive to enable us to share the gratitude of our patients with the wider team, as well as affording us the opportunity to make ongoing improvements where required.

We have noted the content and are pleased to see that 93% of our patients receiving care at Whiston and 97% of patients receiving care at St Helens hospital rated care as excellent/good. We were pleased to see evidence in the report that our staff are viewed as having a strong commitment to providing patient centred care and that our staff were commended for being kind, caring and professional, and that patients felt listened to and well treated.

We apologise to those patients that have not been fully satisfied with our services, we are happy to investigate individual cases if those patients would like us to.

Although Listening Events only offer a snapshot of the experiences of patients who attend our hospitals on a given day, they allow us the additional opportunity to receive, acknowledge, and use feedback from our patients into our robust improvement plans. Thank you for sharing recommendations within the report, all staff are committed to making the improvements needed to ensure a positive patient experience is achieved.

We look forward to welcoming Healthwatch again in the future to work collaboratively in the support a positive experience for our patients.

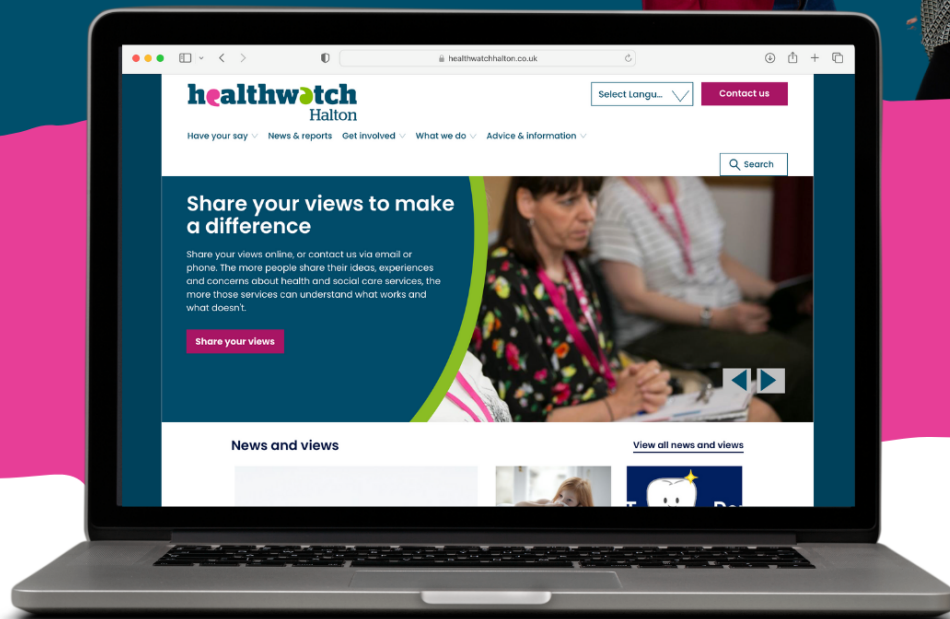
**Yvonne Mahambrey, Quality Matron – Patient Experience**

**Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust**

# Have Your Say

Share your experiences of health & social care services in Halton on our website or with your mobile phone.

Visit our webpage:  
**[www.healthwatchhalton.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchhalton.co.uk)**  
click on the tab 'Have Your Say'



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Halton

**Scan the QR code  
or call us on 0300 777 6543**





We are committed to the quality of our information.  
Every three years we perform an in-depth audit  
so that we can be certain of this.



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