

**Enter & View
Report**

**Dickens Ward
The Harbour**

**8th May 2026
10am-12pm**



DISCLAIMER This report relates only to the service viewed at the time of the visit and is only representative of the views of the staff, visitors and service users who met members of the Enter & View team on that date.

Contact Details

Harbour Hospital, Windmill Rise, Blackpool, FY4 4FE

Person In Charge on day of visit

Cathy Miller- Ward manager

Healthwatch Blackpool Authorised Representatives

Charlotte Knight

Tom Crowther

Emma Mcleod

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Blackpool would like to thank patients and staff for making us feel welcome during our visit to the Dickens Ward.

Announced Visit

General Information

- The Harbour is run by Lancashire & South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust.
- It is a male older adult functional ward
- 20 bedrooms all with en-suites on ward
- 18 patients were occupying ward at the time of our visit
- The latest CQC inspection and review confirmed that the Harbour Hospital is overall: GOOD.

What is Enter and View

We have the statutory right to carry out 'Enter and View' visits which allows trained authorised representatives of Healthwatch Blackpool to enter those premises where health and care is provided, to observe the nature and quality of the services. These visits are an opportunity to collect views directly from patients and to observe the environment and the quality of the service provided.

The visit was part of our programme of Enter and View visits to healthcare facilities in Blackpool. The aim of the visit was:

1. To find out about patients' experience of the hospital in relation to:
 - Daily Life
 - Quality of Care
 - Activities
 - Involvement of Patients
2. To identify examples of good practice
3. To highlight any issues or concerns from patients and any ideas for improvements



Service User Feedback

Healthwatch Blackpool engaged with **3** patients and **1** relative during the visit. It is important to note that patients within the ward had varying levels of capacity. Healthwatch representatives had numerous conversations on the day of the visit and below is some feedback directly relating to the ward and patient feedback.

Daily Life

Daily life on Dickens Ward can vary according to each patient's different routine. The staff facilitates morning walks at 10am everyday and afternoon walks as well for patients. Patients can spend time in the communal areas with staff members or in their rooms. Regular hydration rounds are conducted throughout the morning, afternoon and evening to encourage and maintain adequate fluid intake.

Patients spoke positively about aspects of daily life and their routines. One individual shared that they enjoyed smoking their pipe as part of their regular routine as well as enjoying walks, their garden at home, and future plans to have a BBQ following discharge. One patient also discussed their previous occupation as a builder.

"I smoke a pipe so I get to go out and do this, it's part of my routine."

"I have a little walk now and again. I have a huge garden at home. Before I came in here I bought a BBQ, when I'm out I'll have a huge celebration with the BBQ. I am a builder at trade."



Quality of Care and Staff Manner

Cathy explained to Healthwatch Blackpool that a baseline number of staff on shift looks like 6,7,6 during the day. Night shifts will consist of 2 nurses and 4 support staff members. There is a housekeeper available Monday–Friday and a health and wellbeing support worker. Staff shared that they would like to employ a peer facilitator for the ward but have been unsuccessful due to funding. With two individuals previously on the ward coming back as volunteers, this highlights the importance of a peer facilitator role.

Patients shared positive feedback about the quality of care and staff manner on the ward. The staff were described as caring, helpful, and supportive, with particular praise to the nurses and doctors. Comments highlighted that patients felt settled, listened to, and involved in decisions about their care, with one patient expressing gratitude for medication changes that better suited their needs. A relative also recognised the positive environment created on the ward and the beneficial impact it has on patients.

“Feel fortunate.”

“Couldn’t think of a better place, dad is very settled and assured. There is a massive difference since he was admitted and that is down to the environment he is in.”

“The care is really good. The Dr is very good. He reduced my medication to suit me much better which I’m really grateful for.”

“Helpful- make their job easier and always support you with decisions.”

“Pretty positive- love the nurses.”

“Very good in what they do, they have to do everything under the mental health act and abide by this.”



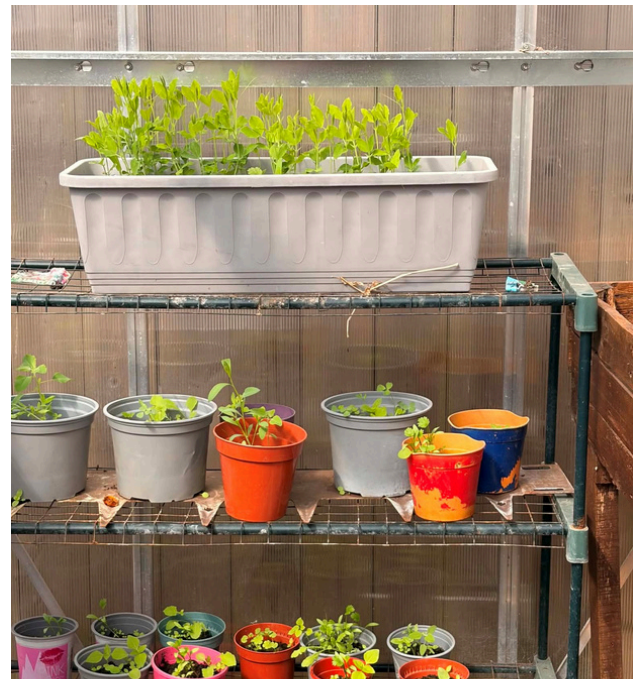
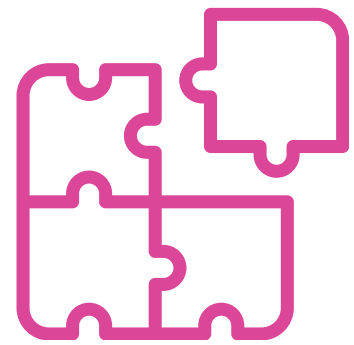
Activities

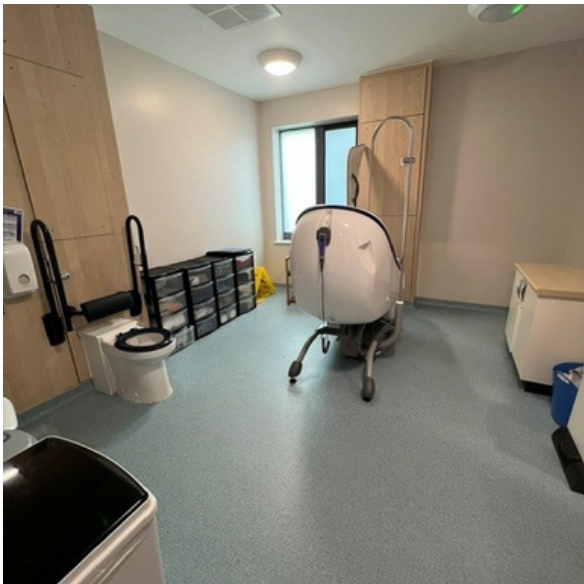
Cathy shared that the ward has a structured activity calendar led by a full time activity coordinator. There is a range of activities on offer whether that be playing games, arts & crafts or maintaining the outside garden. The ward organises planting in the garden for patients who can maintain the greenhouse and vegetable patches. There is an activity room on the ward for 1-1 activities or if patients need a quiet space and a pool table located in the main communal area. The Harbour has a sports hall which can be accessed by each ward and the timetable for this is displayed within the ward.

Feedback highlighted that patients valued the range of activities available on the ward with patients mentioning opportunities to take part in activities such as music quizzes and bingo, as well as trips out into the community including pub meals.

"Won the music quiz and do bingo."

"I went out for a pub meal."







Food

On the ward, breakfast can be provided across the morning with lunch provided at 12:30pm and evening meal at 5:30pm. The night staff provide sandwiches for supper around 9pm. Food can be ordered through Maple on the iPad system, allowing patients to select their meals in advance, however this has been challenging at times due to patients choice of meal changing.

Patients highlighted that there is a variety of food on offer with appropriate portion sizes and healthy options available. One patient highlighted that the overall taste of the food is ruined due to the food preparation. Patients highlighted that the snacks/sweets provided are good with a range of flavours available.

“Good selection- well cooked, good helping and feel a lot healthier.”

“Set meals and healthy balance.”

“They get good food and ruin it.”

“Soups are too thick.”

“Meat tastes of cardboard.”

“Sweets are alright, the flavours you get out of here are nice.”

Safety, Privacy and Wellbeing

One patient highlighted that they do feel safe on the ward, however the atmosphere can be “up and down.” One relative highlighted that the environment is maintained to a high standard with patient’s privacy respected and involved in all care decisions.

“Always clean and well kept- maintain privacy and very respectful with patient always involved.”

“I do but someday it can be quiet but sometimes its up and down.”



Patient Involvement

There are Friends and Family test forms distributed amongst the admission packs allowing feedback to be relayed back to the staff. There are 'you said, we did' detailed on the ward noticeboard. There are short weekly patient meetings allowing staff to check in with the patients care and wellbeing. Patients and their loved ones can attend weekly MDTs giving them an opportunity to share any feedback they may have.

Patients shared to Healthwatch Blackpool representatives that staff were very approachable and accommodating with patients feeling comfortable raising any issues. A relative highlighted that the staff are very accomodating if they are unable to visit and they also provide substantial information and support upon admission for patients and loved ones.

"Very approachable, any issues I can go and knock on door."

"Very open and accommodating- never had any issues."

"Always available and accommodate telephone calls if I can't make it to visit."

"Happy with information and don't feel fobbed off. They were fantastic with admissions with a lot of support."



Visits, leave, and contact with loved ones

Visiting times are very flexible on the ward, allowing loved ones to visit whenever. Staff shared if there were any concerns regarding visiting times, then these can be discussed at weekly MDT meetings. Some patients have leave so can go out with their family or friends. Staff can also take patients out on walks around the grounds. At the time of the visit, the activity coordinator was getting patients ready for their 10am daily walk.

Patients shared that family members visit often whether that be a few times a week or everyday, while others highlighted that family don't visit as often. One patient highlighted that they enjoy going out for meals.

"I went out for a pub meal with family."

"Son comes twice a week, my partner everyday."

"I have some family and see them now and again but im not local so I understand people are busy."



Visit summary & observations

Pre visit

The visit to was prearranged as per the Healthwatch Blackpool work plan. The ward was notified via letter ten working days before the visit. The ward was asked to display posters and make patients aware of the planned visit. The visit was conducted in line with current infection prevention control measures.

First impressions

Dickens Ward is located within the Harbour Hospital which is accessible via a main road and nearby to the motorway. The external signage is clear to see when approaching the ward via the main corridor of the hospital. The hospital has a front car park with designated disabled bays and extra overflow parking available. There is a locked-door policy on the ward and a reception area at the entrance. Healthwatch Blackpool representatives were signed in and greeted by Professor Paul Jebb (Associate Chief Nurse, Patient Experience, Engagement & Safeguarding) who facilitated the visit and then taken onto the ward where we were welcomed by Cathy the ward manager.

Environment and communal spaces

Dickens Ward has 20 en-suite bedrooms with swing beds as well as two escalated beds. The ward can be flexible with how many patients are on the ward at one time with it usually being between 16-20. The rooms consist of a bed, a table and any personal touches the patient wishes to add.

When entering Dickens Ward, there was a shared lounge/TV area where patients can socialise as well as a dining area used communally at mealtimes. There were quieter rooms for 1-1 conversations and activity rooms for arts or group sessions. There are rooms available for MDTs and meetings providing dedicated spaces for collaborative care planning and staff discussions. Away from the living spaces, there were patient bedrooms and bathroom facilities. There is a large secure garden which consists of seating areas, green spaces, birdwatching area, and a flower and vegetable patch, where patients are able to engage in gardening activities. Towards the rear of the garden, there is a secure space which houses the gardening shed and greenhouse which supports with gardening, maintenance, and growing of fruits and vegetables. The activity coordinator shared that they've previously grown tomatoes and strawberries.



Observations of patient and staff interaction

On the day of the visit, many of the patients were in the communal areas with staff members or in their rooms. During the visit, patients were given the choice on whether they would like to go on a morning walk with staff or relax in the communal areas. All staff members and patients were approachable and happy to give feedback regarding experiences on the ward.

Patient Support

All staff complete standard mandatory training courses like Immediate Life Support (ILS) with two nurses in particular undertaking professional nurse advocate PNA courses. Staff shared that there are plans to implement dysphagia training including face-to-face simulation training at Guild Lodge. This training will play an important role in reducing the risk of patient choking and supporting the safe management of eating and drinking.

Cathy told Healthwatch Blackpool that the ward has a good MDT set up in order to avoid long waiting lists and ensure an efficient flow of patients coming through onto the ward. There are wheelchair aids provided with patients with lesser mobility as well with two patients receiving tailored 1-1 support. Patients can also access support from advocates from Blackpool Advocacy Hub which is encouraged by staff members.

Challenges

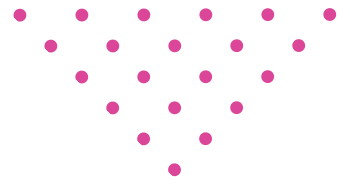
Cathy shared that staffing is a persistent challenge due to staffing capacity and demand on other wards within the Harbour as staff may have to move around on other wards to manage risk. There are staffing calls every day to ensure shifts are balanced out which has currently been working well. Staffing is reviewed regularly to ensure high quality care is provided throughout.

Oral Health

Healthwatch Blackpool ensure that as part of our enter and view visits, oral health is discussed. Cathy shared that on admission, packs are provided which outline the importance of maintaining good oral health, however more can be done to improve this. Future dysphasia training that the ward is undertaking will be useful in highlighting additional support to better oral health. Cathy shared that staff will always encourage patients back to their own dentists but in the case of an emergency, patients can attend the emergency dentist on Whitegate Drive.



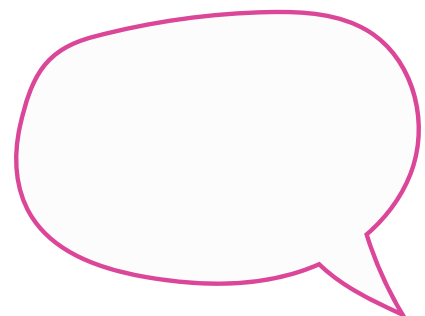
Overall visit summary



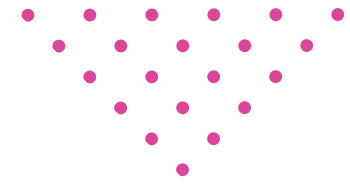
Healthwatch Blackpool had a very positive visit to Dickens Ward. Cathy and the team were very welcoming, approachable and accommodating. Patients engaged positively with the Healthwatch representatives and both feedback and observations reflected a high level of satisfaction with the care provided. Patients and relatives consistently spoke highly of the staff and expressed appreciation for the support, compassion, and care they receive.

Based on the overall experience and feedback gathered, Healthwatch Blackpool identified several recommendations for improvement. These included strengthening oral health awareness and supporting the maintenance of good oral hygiene among all patients. It is also recommended that a wider range of feedback methods be used for both patients and relatives to ensure feedback is captured in a more accurate, inclusive, and representative manner. It would be important to look at the role of peer facilitator as it would bring enhanced lived experience, trust, and community connection to the ward.

Overall, Dickens Ward can celebrate the many positives which are outlined in this report with a few improvements recommended. Healthwatch Blackpool would like to thank staff and patients for accommodating our visit and for taking the time to talk with the team.



Recommendations



Observation/Feedback

Improve feedback methods by using a wider range of methods to ensure patient and relative views are captured in a more accurate and representative way. Offering different feedback formats, such as suggestion boxes, or text messaging may encourage greater participation and allow patients and their loved ones to share their experiences more comfortably.

Mangement/Provide response

The ward regularly engages with friends and family tests and on average collect between 15 – 35 responses each month. They are done on admission/ discharge and routinely offered to carers and patients at Multidisciplinary meetings. Dickens ward Recovery Support worker will collect these weekly going forward and provide the Matron and Ward Manager with a spread sheet of compliance so we can prompt those that we can see haven't participated. This will then be displayed in a 'you said we did' format. Friends and Family test feedback does also get reported back to the team in staff meetings and ward governance.

Community meetings are undertaken weekly with varying agendas to try and capture everyone and to keep it varied for those with a longer length of stay. This is also displayed in a 'you said we did format'.

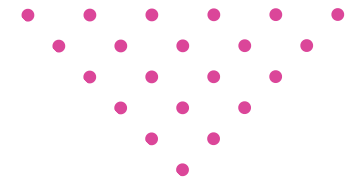
Healthwatch feedback around more varied feedback options have been noted. All nurses have a weekly one to one in depth discussion around progress and current mental state. We also use the DIALOG questions and care plan around these via interventions within the care plans. Nurses will be asked to ensure feedback for improvement is an area that they discuss as part of these one-to-one sessions as it is acknowledged not everyone may feel comfortable doing this in a group setting. Like wise a suggestion box is a good idea and this suggestion will be taken to the current patient group to gain their thoughts on whether this is something they think would be beneficial to themselves and their carers.

Dickens ward has a dedicated email address that is given to relatives if required on admission. Again, this is another format in which they are able to provide feedback and going forward they will be advised on this option also.

Action to be undertaken by/when?

Ongoing

Recommendations



Observation/Feedback

Improve awareness around oral health through prompts in bedrooms/bathrooms as well as encouragement from staff to maintain good oral hygiene.

Mangement/Provide response

We have a Preceptorship Nurse that is completing a Quality improvement Project on Oral health. They are currently in the study phase and he has been gathering information around 'usual practice' and staff insight into the importance of oral health through a questionnaire process. He will then use this to better improve focus on oral hygiene and reduce barriers to good oral health. Speech and Language Therapist will be supporting with the actions. The nurse has identified that he would like to support staff and patient education and information being provided in the admission packs. Prompts in bedroom and bathroom areas will form part of this work.

Action to be undertaken by/when?

Ongoing

Observation/Feedback

Recruit a peer facilitator onto the ward to support individuals by providing lived experience and create an safer environment where patients feel empowered and heard.

Mangement/Provide response

The network values Peer Facilitator roles and these are in post on the younger adult wards. We will continue to review staffing figures and liaise with Trust teams to source funding for peer roles on all ward areas as this is something we feel could benefit across the board. There is a Safer Staffing review scheduled for the 26th June with members of the Safer staffing team and members of the Exec Team. We will be taking this proposal to this forum.

Action to be undertaken by/when?

Ongoing



Managers Overall Feedback

Were you happy with the Enter and View arrangements prior to the visit?

“Yes, very happy, we had to move the day due to ward acuity and dignity of the patients but were happy to welcome to review.”

Please use this space to outline any positives aspects of the visit?

“Was a nice experience to welcome people to the ward and show case our ward and understand the expectations and focus’s that got us thinking of what’s next for Dickens ward. ”

Do you have any comments on staff conduct?

“No brilliant people who visited who listened and had a good understanding.”

Please use this space to outline any negative aspects of the visit

“None.”

Is there any way in which Healthwatch Blackpool can improve?

“None.”