



St Leonard's Ward at Wallingford Community Hospital

Enter and View Report
February 2026

healthwatch
Oxfordshire

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Visit details

Service	
Service Name	St Leonard's Ward at Wallingford Community Hospital
Service Address	Reading Road, Wallingford, Oxfordshire, OX10 9DU
Service Provider	Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
Date and Time of Visit	25th November 2025 10am - 1pm
Authorised Representatives	Amier Alagab Katharine Howell
Visit Status	Announced visit
Contact details	Healthwatch Oxfordshire Office F20 Elmfield House New Yatt Road Witney Oxfordshire OX28 1GT T: 01865 520520

Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to findings observed on the specific date set out above. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all service users and staff; it is merely an account of observations and contributions made at the time of the visit.

About Healthwatch Oxfordshire

Healthwatch Oxfordshire works to make sure NHS and social care leaders, and other decision-makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve health and social care services. We can also provide you with reliable and trustworthy information and advice about local health and care services. We are an independent charity.

What is Enter and View?



Healthwatch Oxfordshire gathers information on people's experiences of using health and care services. One of the ways we do this is by visiting places where publicly funded health and care services are being delivered. This enables us to see and hear how those services are being provided.

These visits are called **Enter and View** visits and can be announced or unannounced. In an announced visit we will work with the service provider to agree the visit. As the local Healthwatch for Oxfordshire, we have statutory powers under the Health and Care Act 2012, and Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, to carry out Enter and View visits to local health and care services.

Enter and View visits are carried out by a team of trained and DBS checked volunteers and staff. We call these our authorised representatives. We use what we hear and see on the day of our visit to report to providers and others with recommendations to inform change for the health and care services we visit. Enter and View visits are not an inspection and will always have a purpose.

Purpose of the visit

- To observe how St Leonard's Ward operates and provides its services.
- To collect views from patients and staff on the service.
- To identify best practice and highlight any areas of concern.
- To report what we observe and hear about the quality of the services.

Strategic drivers

- These Healthwatch Oxfordshire Enter and View visits are part of a programme of visits to a range of services within Oxfordshire.
- These visits were planned and implemented in 2025 – 2026 with full support of Oxford Health.

Summary of findings

During our visit to St Leonard's Ward we heard from **11 patients and 11 members of staff** on the day and received one more feedback form from a member of staff next day by email.

Signage and information



The signage is very easy to understand and navigate. The name of St Leonard's Ward is highlighted in a different colour from the rest of the other wards, making it clearly stand out and easy to identify.

In general, the route from the car park to the hospital was clearly signposted, making navigation straightforward. Once inside, following the signage from the

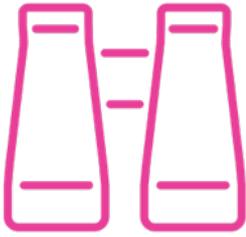
hospital's main entrance to the ward was easy, as all the signs were clear and well placed.

The ward had the following information on display:

- NICE guidelines
- Information for patients and relatives
- I want great care
- Patient experience
- Diabetes information
- How to raise a concern or make a complaint
- Advanced care and end of life information board
- Safeguarding, mental capacity and dols information
- Thank you board
- Infection control
- Estate and facilities board
- Incidents and sepsis board
- Health and wellbeing board
- Staff pictures
- Care Quality Commission (CQC) rating report
- Tell us what you think
- Language line (interpreting) information
- Healthwatch Oxfordshire poster.



The general environment



The ward is in good condition and features pleasant decoration. The wards/bays within the ward provide separate areas for men and women. The men's doors are adorned with photos of birds, while the women's bay doors display images of flowers.



The corridors and day room walls are decorated with artwork and large photographs of nature scenes, such as woods and fields. Laura's Day Room, named in memory of a colleague, is painted purple, her favourite colour. The room is light, spacious, and homely, with plenty of natural light and views overlooking the car park and courtyard garden. Residents have access to a variety of activities, including a full bookcase, a television, newspapers and art materials. A water cooler is also available.

The ward includes a gym equipped with specialist rehabilitation equipment, a courtyard garden and a family room furnished with sofas and snacks. A visitor's toilet is provided; however, it is unclear whether there is an accessible toilet available for visitors.

The ward was warm, quiet and clean, with all toilets in good condition. The garden, located in the middle of the ward and surrounded by the building, offered a peaceful and calming atmosphere. Additionally, a hearing loop device was available on the ward to assist patients with hearing impairments.

Patient and staff feedback

The staff were friendly, welcoming and appeared very approachable to patients. During our visit, patients expressed high levels of appreciation for the staff members, describing them as compassionate, attentive and professional:



'The staff are friendly and efficient. It is quite spacious.'

The patients we spoke to said they loved the facilities and support provided:

'Newspaper and TV, wordsearches. When I was here before, it was over Halloween and Remembrance Day, and we did craft activities like making poppies.'

Patients told us they had been given leaflets about pressure points, and we heard that staff are good at checking day and night for pressure and dealing with any problems immediately. The patients we spoke to praised the staff members for their attention and care. Overall, most patients told us they felt safe and well cared for, and they greatly appreciated the high quality of care provided by staff throughout their entire stay on the ward.

The staff mentioned that a better staffing level and patient to staff ratio, could help in driving better outcomes, and improving the break times, enabling the 15 minutes breaks twice for tea.

The staff team demonstrated a high level of dedication, and those we interviewed reported feeling well supported in their professional growth and training opportunities. This consistent support boosts their skills and confidence, which in turn fosters increased job satisfaction.

Recommendations

- 📺 It is recommended to provide individual television screens, if possible, in each bay to ensure all patients can comfortably watch television without disturbance or the need to leave their beds.
- 🍴 Explore providing different food choice and variety.
- 📄 Look at alternatives to plastic coverings of patient charts to improve confidentiality and reduce noise.
- 🎓 Consider additional training for staff working with palliative patients (carers) to enhance their knowledge and improve the quality of care they deliver.
- ⏰ Staff we spoke to felt reverting to two 15-minute breaks instead of taking a single one-hour break would better support their needs during shifts.

Service response to recommendations

Response received by email from the ward manager on 10.03.2026:

- It is recommended to provide individual television screens, if possible, in each bay to ensure all patients can comfortably watch television without disturbance or the need to leave their beds.

Individual televisions within the bays are not feasible in our current environment due to limited space and the inability to safely accommodate televisions at the bedside. However, televisions are available in the single rooms.

We can offer alternative options to support patient comfort and choice. A television is available in the day room for communal use, and patients who prefer to watch television without disturbing others can use a single room when it is available.

- Explore providing different food choice and variety.

We are exploring options to provide a wider range of food choices and improved menu variety for patients. As part of this work, we are discontinuing the use of Wiltshire Farm Foods and Apetito Pro Food has been identified as our proposed new supplier, with the transition planned to take effect from 13 April 2026

- Look at alternatives to plastic coverings of patient charts to improve confidentiality and reduce noise.

We are looking for alternatives to the current plastic coverings used for patient charts to improve confidentiality and minimise noise on the ward. The aim is to identify solutions that provide better privacy, reduce disruption to patients, and support a calmer ward environment while maintaining easy access to essential clinical information.

- Consider additional training for staff working with palliative patients (carers) to enhance their knowledge and improve the quality of care they deliver.

To enhance staff knowledge and improve the quality of care provided to palliative patients, additional training has been arranged internally for healthcare assistants. This training was organised and delivered by the Palliative Care Lead and has now been completed.

- Staff we spoke to felt reverting to two 15-minute breaks instead of taking a single one-hour break would better support their needs during shifts.

Breaks are currently provided in accordance with Trust policy. Staff working a short shift are entitled to a **30-minute break**, while staff working a long day shift receive **two 30-minute breaks** - one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

If staff require additional break time for spiritual, wellbeing, or personal reasons, this can be requested on the day with the shift coordinator. Flexible working arrangements are also available for staff with disabilities or individual needs, in line with Trust policy. Occupational Health recommendations are sought where appropriate to ensure staff are fully supported.

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Report

Methodology

When organising an announced Enter and View we follow the steps below:

- **Plan:**
 - Appoint an Enter and View lead for the visit.

- **Communicate:**
 - Inform the provider of the visit, and relevant details including the purpose, date, time, estimation of how long it will take, how many people will be carrying out the visit, and the name of the lead person.
 - Prepare visit posters including the purpose of the visit, time and date, and dispatch these to the provider for display, so that people using the service are clear why the visit is taking place.
 - Include information about how members of the public can contact Healthwatch Oxfordshire if they are not able to when the visit is taking place.

- **Prepare:**
 - Prepare resources such as surveys and questionnaires.
 - Identify any requirements for special support necessary to facilitate the visit such as access or security. This must be done before the visit, as you may be refused entry.
 - Meet with the service provider before the visit.

- **Report:**
 - On completion of the visit a draft report is shared with the service provider requesting comments on factual accuracy and responses to any recommendations within 7 - 20 working days.

- **Follow up:**
 - The final report is published on Healthwatch Oxfordshire's website and shared with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and service provider.

The visit took place from 10am to 1pm on 25th November 2025, with two trained Enter and View representatives. During the visit, the team were able to spend time observing the daily work of the St Leonard's Ward, noting the general environment, such as cleanliness, comfort and information displays and to speak to both patients and staff.

About St Leonard's Ward

The St Leonard's Ward at Wallingford Community Hospital is an 18-bed ward run by Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust.

The ward located at the ground floor, via the main entrance down the corridor, passed the reception the entrance to the ward is on the right.

The ward provides care and treatment for rehabilitation for up to 16 patients and two palliative patients.

More details about St Leonard's Ward and the services they offer can be found at the following link: www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

Our visit



During our visit, we were welcomed by administrative staff at the reception desk and escorted by the Ward Manager, who explained about the services offered. We had a tour around the building joined by the operation manager and then proceeded with the visit. On the day of our visit, we spoke to **11 patients and 11 members of staff**, and we received feedback from another member of staff by email next day.

Access and signage

From the hospital's main entrance, clear and consistent signage guides visitors toward the ward, and reception staff are readily available to assist by providing directions, making it straightforward for anyone to find their way to the ward.



The ward environment

The ward was clean and tidy, and the patient's rooms were clean and contained the required facilities. The hospital overall, including the entrance and the ward itself, was very clean and tidy.

Decor and theme:

The men's bay doors are decorated with photos of birds, while the women's bay doors feature images of flowers. Throughout the corridor and day room, large artworks and photographs of serene natural scenes – such as forests and open fields – enhance the space, creating a peaceful and inviting atmosphere.

Laura's Day Room:

Named in memory of a colleague, painted purple (her favourite colour), and described as light, spacious and homey. It has plenty of natural light and views of the car park and courtyard garden. The room offers several activities for residents, including a full bookcase, television, newspapers and art materials. A water cooler is also available.

Facilities:

There is a gym equipped with specialist rehabilitation equipment, a courtyard garden, and a family room furnished with sofas, tea facility and snacks.

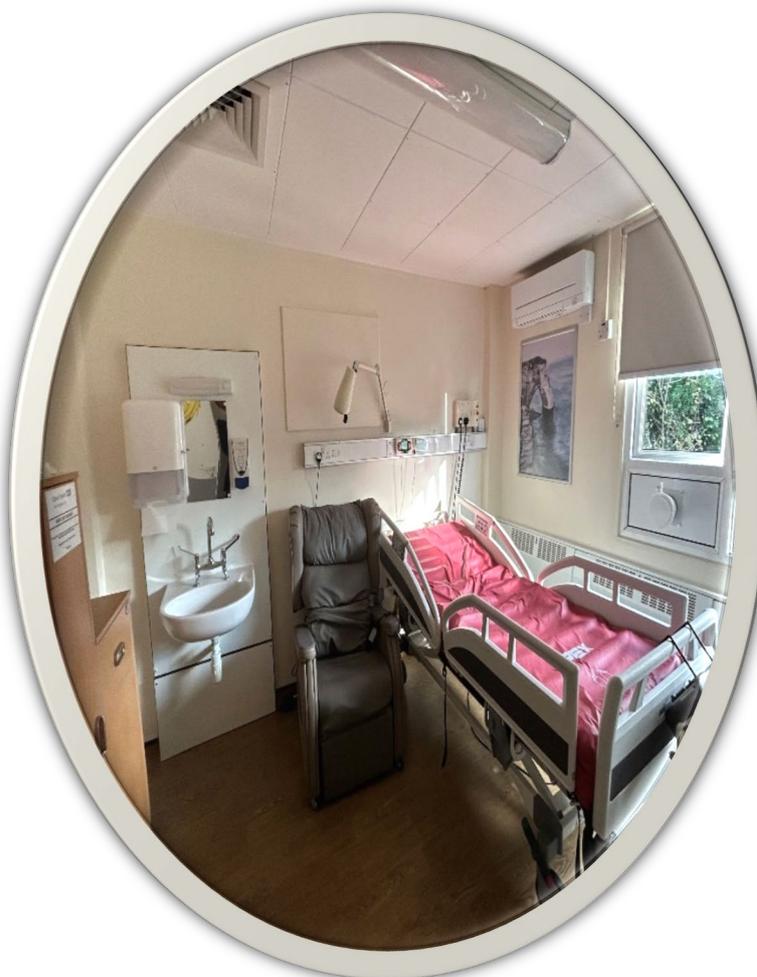
Visitor amenities:

A visitors' toilet is provided, but it is unclear if there is an accessible toilet for visitors.

The garden is situated at the centre of the building and is securely enclosed and accessible from multiple points within the ward, featuring a table and seating areas where patients can comfortably gather and socialise.



While touring the building, we observed several patients participating in activities at the gym with support from staff members. The staff actively encouraged and assisted patients throughout their exercise sessions, supporting rehabilitation and recovery.

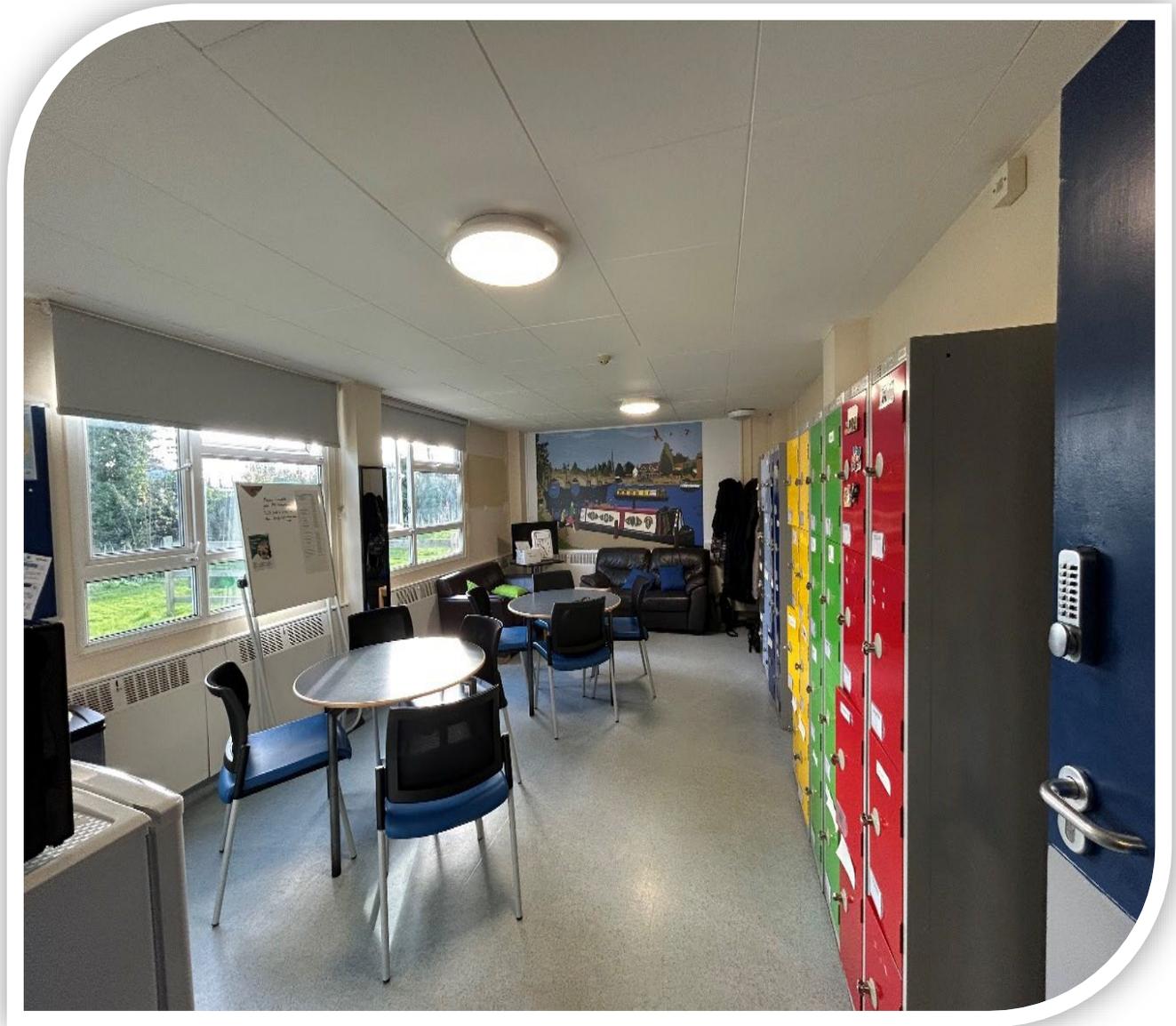


Patient room



Gym room

The patients' rooms were observed to be clean, well-organised, safe and with good ventilation.



Staff room

The staff room was noted to be well-organised and thoughtfully equipped to meet staff needs. It offers ample seating with comfortable chairs arranged to create a relaxed atmosphere for breaks. Individual cabinets are provided for each staff member, allowing secure and orderly storage of personal belongings. Overall, the layout supports cleanliness and maximises efficient use of space.



Conference room

The ward includes a conference room equipped with a projector and a large conference table, making it an ideal space for staff meetings, training sessions and collaborative discussions that support effective communication and professional development within the team.



Visitors' room

There was a visitors' room which is comfortably furnished with sofa set, table and a television for entertainment. It is equipped with amenities such as tea and coffee facilities, a refrigerator and informational leaflets for visitors. This provides a welcoming and convenient environment for patient's families.

The ward has an effective feedback system in place to support continuous improvement.

A feedback box is available for patients comments and feedback, located at the reception, while a separate box is in the staff room to collect staff input. This approach ensures that both patient and staff perspectives are regularly gathered and reviewed for service enhancement.



Staff suggestion box



Patients' feedback box

Laura's Day Room is well-furnished and provides a comfortable seating area. It includes a television screen for entertainment and a selection of books to support relaxation and quiet activity.

There was a water fountain in the room.

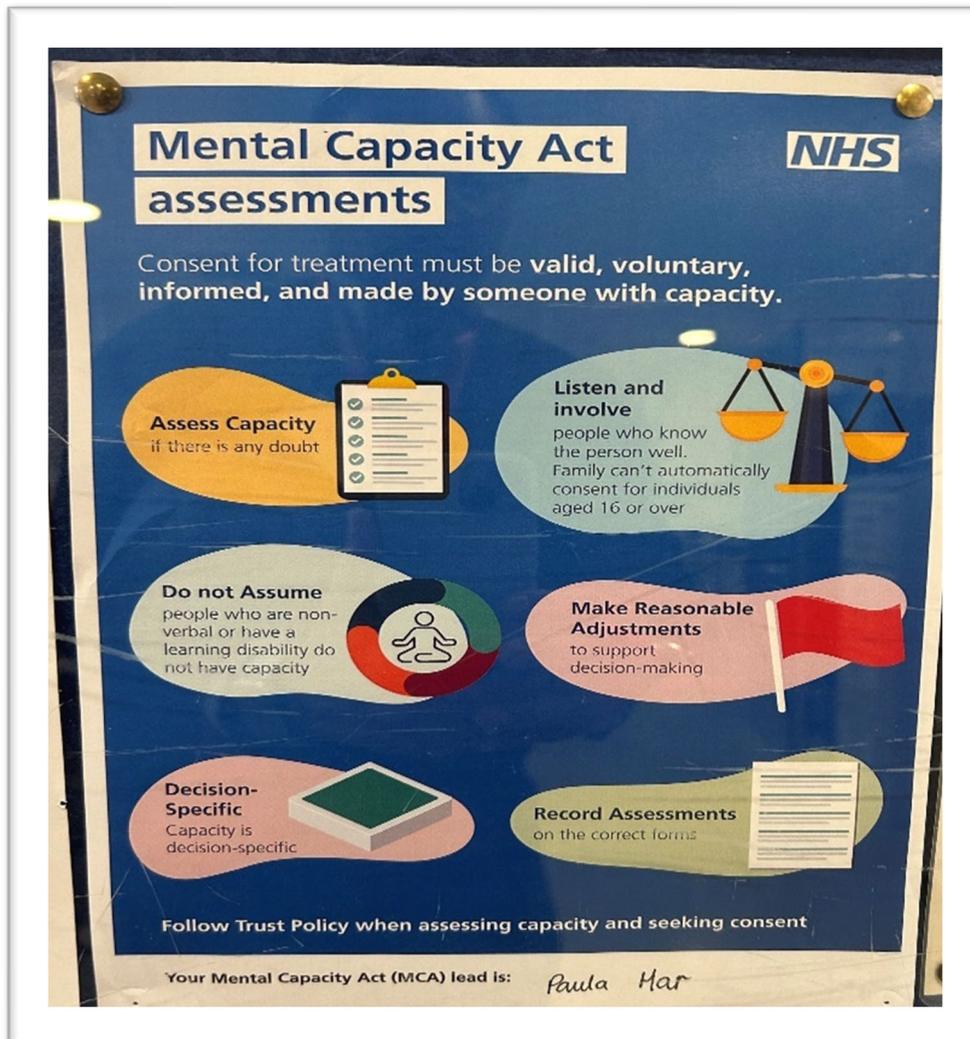




Laura's day room

Information on display

The ward had a variety of information materials and leaflets on display, including: diabetes, infection control, "You said, we did" feedback, end of life support, grief and bereavement, interpreting services and information about a hearing loop. Thank you cards were also on display.



Mental capacity act

The information materials and leaflets around the ward were well organised, reflecting the good effort made to maintain their neat and presentable appearance.



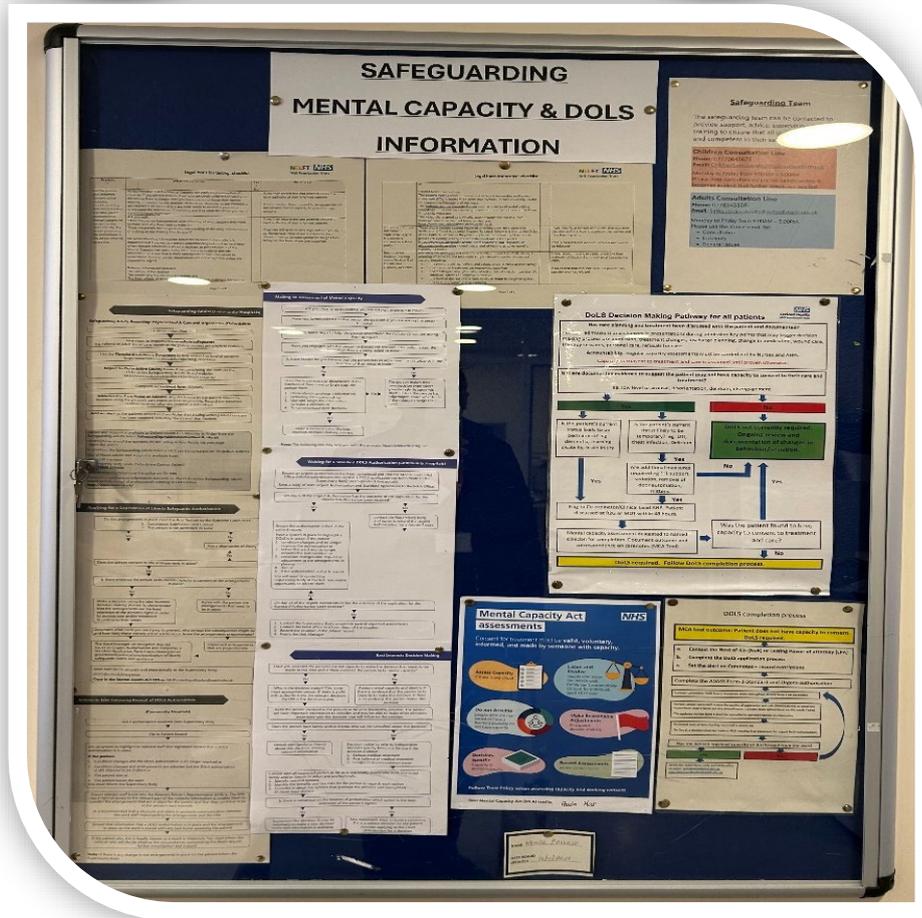
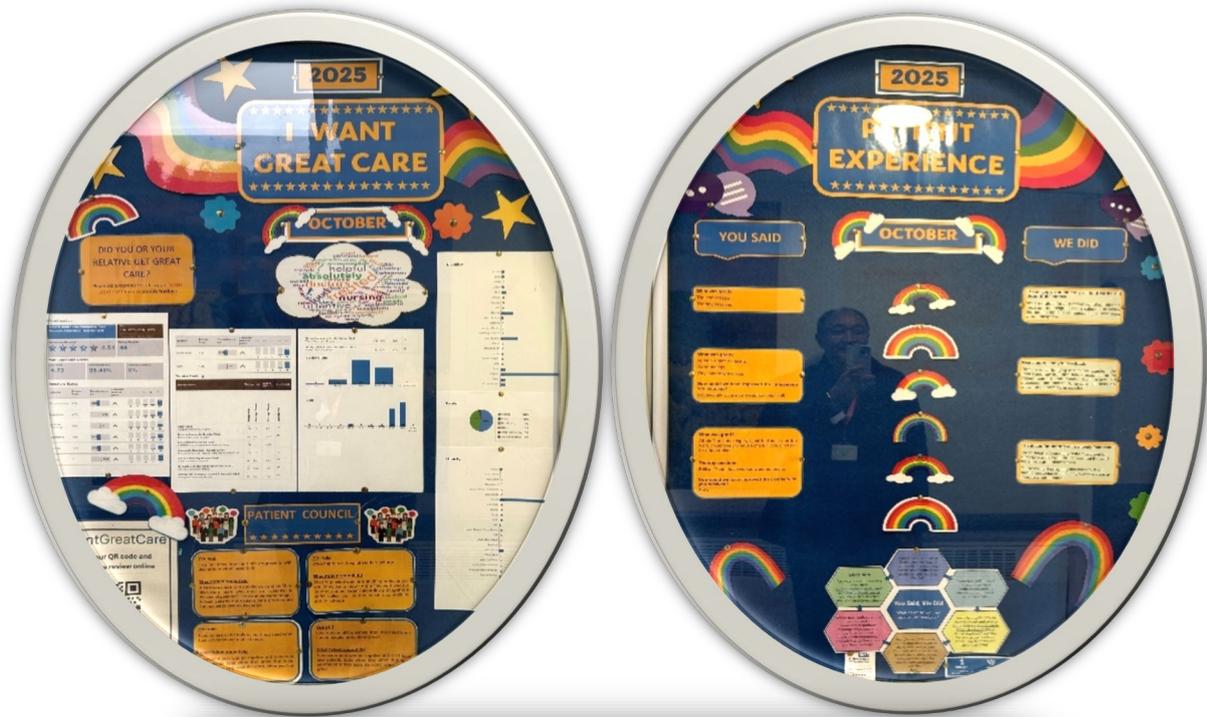
Leaflets on display



CQC board



The ward offers a range of information for patients and relatives, including the management of patient choice policy.



'I want great care' posters with QR code were on display and in the visitors' toilet. The ward also has a monthly patient council to hear from patients directly about their experience.



Information boards on incidents and infection control were clearly displayed throughout the facility, keeping staff and visitors informed and promoting a safe, transparent environment.

Summary of patient and staff feedback

Patient feedback

During the visit we spoke to 11 patients.

We asked patients to tell us about information provided in the ward.

The patients said they were given information about the services available and their stay. We heard praise for the efficiency of the service provided and the staff.

We asked the patients, when speaking with health and care professionals, how involved they felt in their care plan? If they had any concerns, were they listened to?

'Yes, it varies a bit, but I can usually find someone who will listen.'

'Yes, everyone is so friendly. Just about all the staff live and work in the local area so they know what you're talking about, and another patient's visitor is friends with my friend. It's a small world, it feels less anonymous, more like community. Everyone knows your name and the staff all know each other and work together as a team.'

We asked the patients to tell us what it is like for them being here on St. Leonard's Ward? We heard:

'It's just lovely. I'm billeted with nice ladies, I have a view of the garden, and it feels airy - like you can breathe. I couldn't imagine anything better, they've been superb. It feels homely, there are lovely pictures of nature on the wards.'

'The basics are good, there is plenty to do like read the paper [provided in the day room]. You can just ask for anything, and they bring you a midday snack.'

'Compared to the John Radcliffe and the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre it's like paradise. It's the feeling - it's small, and there are caring and attentive nurses. The ambience of the place - you're treated as a person rather than someone who's got a bad leg.'

When we asked the patients about the noise level, we heard:

'It's very noisy, especially at night. It's quiet in here [bay] but the door always seems to be open and there's noise in the corridor.'

'Reasonable, you can't expect it to be quiet, it's a hospital.'

'There are plastic sheets over the charts at the ends of our bed saying 'confidential', but it's clear plastic so you can see through it, and it makes a lot of noise when they're checked at night.'

We asked patients whether they receive the help they needed from staff, was communication clear, and if they were treated with respect throughout the visit?

Patients appreciated the care and support provided by the team members. The patients we spoke to said:



'The physios are excellent, very efficient and push you well. I hate them a lot of the time in the nicest way, they won't let you get away with anything, which is good.'

'They could do with more staff, they are a bit short staffed, but they're there if you want them.'

'The team make it what it is. They care about what they're doing. I went yesterday evening to the JR, and the atmosphere was totally different, not a relaxing feeling, they were very quick. Here they have time and that's really important.'

'Nothing is too much trouble, you ask for anything and they'll get it, they are always good.'

The care is very good, they keep you informed. No complaints whatsoever.'

'Very good, they are always checking are you OK, are you in pain. I get confused but they look after me well, I'll miss them when I go home because they're all so nice.'



We asked the patients if they knew about how to give feedback and make complaints.

Most people we spoke to were happy about the service and said they wouldn't have any complaints, but most were not sure how to make a complaint. This could be made clearer.

'Not really, maybe the chief executive if I could find out how to contact them.'

'Given a form the other day - tick what we thought of the place.'

We asked the patients about what support they would have and who from when leaving the ward (discharge) and whether ward staff had spoken to them about this.

We heard:

'Yes, I had a chat with them about this as my family are away at the moment, and an Occupational Therapy assessment.'

'Yes, I'm being supported by a social worker. Waiting for my care at home to be arranged.'

'I desperately want to go home but am worried about being sent home too soon. I've not had a conversation about it yet, but they keep me so well informed. I've only had one dip when I couldn't see an end to anything. There are two doctors who come round twice a week and have a good chat with you.'

When we asked the patients about the food and their dietary preferences, and whether they have any comments, we heard:

'I'm vegetarian and they have good choices, there is always a vegetarian option (which isn't always the case in hospital), or you can have a sandwich.'

'They'll make you a cup of tea 24/7. I only sleep reliably from about 12 -4 am, and when I woke up this morning, they made me a cup of tea no bother. The food is very tasty and hot.'

'It's spot on. But it would be nice to have more choice of food.'

'I'm coeliac and the food is crap, the quality is okay but there's not a lot of choice. It changes week to week. I hate peas and they always give me peas. The pudding is all right.'

We asked the patients to tell us what activities they can take part in on St. Leonard's ward. We heard:

'I have books and crosswords and talk to the other ladies in here. I don't go to the day room, I'm not into communal stuff.'

'Newspaper and television, wordsearches. When I was here before, it was over Halloween and Remembrance Day, and we did craft activities like making poppies.'

'We have the radio on, and the girls come dancing in, it's something to talk about and livens the place up.'

'I have made friends, and we have a sing together, "Driving home for Christmas". We had a lovely soprano who visited and sang all the old songs.'

'I'm not bored, the nurses are chatty, I've got my iPad, visitors can come 11am-8pm and the rules are bendable. You're allowed to bring your dog to the Day Room on Sundays, and it was so lovely to see my little dog again.'

'I go to the gym every day and use the parallel bars. They make me go round the other side of my bed so it's like how I get into bed at home, and they've got the bed set at the same height as my bed at home.'

When we asked the patients if they have any ideas and suggestions for improvement, we heard:

'The television in bay, not everyone can watch it at once, if it's facing a bed on the other side, you just get noise. I had to have a confrontation with the other lady about it, I couldn't get out of my bed to see the television in the day room. It would be better to have your own television screen.'

We asked the patients if they have anything else to add? We heard:

'The gym is quite well equipped for a small place.'

'I was looking forward to being able to go to the hairdressers and coffee shop, but these closed during COVID.'

'The nurses are good, and (physio), we have a bit of banter, and she encourages me to move around.'

Staff feedback

On the day of our visit, we received feedback and comments from 11 staff members, and one feedback received by email next day, representing a variety of roles. Staff showed a positive attitude about their work, their care for patients and the high quality of care they provide. This positive outlook helps make the centre a friendly and supportive place.

All staff also told us they had received the necessary training to do their jobs well.

What did staff say is the best thing about their job?

Staff indicated that they are satisfied with their jobs. We heard:

'Meeting people and being involved in patient council, it's relevant of my duties to be involved, it is held every three weeks. The people I work with are amazing. I have been here for over 10 years.'

'It is very rewarding to me. Patients get better and able to get back on their feet again.'

'Variety, very rewarding as it involves managing, helping, supporting staff and patients. Newsletter - celebrating our accomplishments. Outpatients' renovations. Christmas and events for patients.'

'I consider it as an opportunity to make a difference in patient's lives during their most vulnerable times. It also gives me a strong sense of personal fulfilment.'

'Seeing progress with our patients. The therapy team colleagues.'

'It is a wonderful place to work, and a very close team, it is evident that the NHS is under considerable strain.'

'Working with such a supportive and kind team.'

'I'm able to perform my duties and responsibilities with care, compassion and love.'

'Engaging with patients and feeling a sense of worth in my work.'

What are the challenges staff raised?

We asked about any frustrations or challenges that staff might experience in their work and the service they provide. Comments we heard included:



'Time management.'

'Lack of staff if you have sickness, annual leave. Flexible administration.'

'Short span of time with patient in the ward.'

'Other services not meeting standards. Poor communication especially with acute hospitals. Lack of input from adult social care. D2A pathway does not offer patient choice or use information, goals provided for discharge.'

'Working with complex patients, struggling to complete work due to being short staffed or poor staff to patient ratio.'



We asked staff if they would raise concerns. We heard:

'We are in the process of recruiting more staff to manage safety.'

'Yes, have helped improve spreadsheets.'

'Yes, I feel comfortable with my managers, confident to bring up any issues.'

'Yes, we feel able to, however many suggestions take a considerable time to be achieved, despite ongoing follow up.'

We asked the staff if there was anything else they wanted to tell us. We heard:

'Most patients not using the NHS App, due to age and knowledge of technology, I think the app not helpful for the old generation.'

We asked how staff thought the St. Leonard's Ward and service they provide could be improved? We heard:

'Better staffing levels/patient to staff ratio, improve break time, one hour break on long day, return of 15 minutes tea break.'

'More staff, change of physio room, it's very small.'

'Yes, more staff. The rota could be revised, sometimes long shift for continuous days.'

'More staff, the rota, three long days is really hard to manage.'

'Yes, more training to palliative patients (for carers).'



If you would like a paper copy of this report or would like it in a different format or language, please get in touch with us:

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