



Paediatric Enter and View at Conquest Hospital

Published: March 2024



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What we did & why

In September 2023, Healthwatch East Sussex (HWES) visited the paediatric department at the Conquest Hospital in Hastings over a two-day period.

A mixture of HWES staff, adult volunteers (over 21) and young volunteers (13 to 18) visited the outpatient area, Short Stay Paediatric Assessment Unit (SSPAU) and inpatient ward (Kipling Ward) and engaged with patients and their parents/carers to gather their views on the department, what worked well, and what could be improved.

HWES decided to undertake an Enter and View of the paediatric department at the Conquest after a request to do so from East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (ESHT). ESHT were keen to better understand what patients and their carers thought of the provision available for children and young people in the paediatric department.



What is Enter & View?

Healthwatch have a legal power to visit health and social care services and see them in action. This is called **Enter & View**.

The purpose of an Enter and View visit is to collect evidence of what works well and what could be improved to make people's experiences better.

Healthwatch can use this evidence to make recommendations and inform changes both for individual services as well as system-wide.



Who we spoke to

During our visits to the paediatric unit, we engaged with **3** staff members and **10** patients and their parents/carers, with patients ranging from 4 months to 15 years old.



Unfortunately, we were unable to speak with patients and their guardians inside the inpatient unit (Kipling Ward), due to a rise in infections which hospital staff felt may put our staff and volunteers at risk.

We were able to speak with patients in both the outpatient waiting area and the SSPAU.

Area	Patients engaged with
Outpatients	5
SSPAU patients	3
Inpatients	1
Unrecorded	1



Parent/Carer Survey Results

HWES chose to primarily engage with the parents/carers of patients using the department during this activity.

As the department caters for paediatric patients, many patients were too young for us to engage with on a meaningful level, and many of those who were old enough to engage with were very unwell, or in pain.

Where possible, questions were posed to both parents/carers **and** patients.

Although a total of 10 patients and carers were consulted, not all participants answered all questions, which is reflected in the numerical data.





We asked: Is your young person under the care of a consultant?

Is your young person under the care of a consultant?		
Yes	80%	8
No	20%	2

- **5** of the patients told us that they were visiting outpatient clinics and attend the hospital regularly (every 3 to 6 months).
 - **3** patients told us they were attending for investigations.
 - **1** patient told us that they were there for a 'food challenge' allergy test.
- 



We asked: Is it challenging to attend appointments/and organise your young person's care?

Most of the parents/carers we engaged with told us that they **did not** find it difficult to attend or organise care and appointments for their young person. Any issues that were identified were out of the control of the trust to change.

YES - 3

“It’s difficult to find time for the appointments”

“We live far away from the hospital”

NO - 6

“Well organised”

“We get reminder texts a few days before”

“We get letters telling us what we need to know”





We asked: Do you feel staff keep you informed and involved in your young person's care?

All 10 of the parents/carers we spoke to felt that hospital staff **did** keep them well informed and involved in their young person's care.

“Clear and timely”

“Always really good, happy to answer any questions”

“Staff have been very good”

“Staff have been really clear on what is happening. We get a text a few days before the appointment as a reminder.”





We asked: How has your young person's condition and care affected you?

5 parents/guardians felt that their young person's condition had an effect on their physical and/or mental health.

They told us that they felt:
Tired / Anxious / Busy

2 parents/guardians told us that hospital staff had offered them support while in the department.

"Staff ask if I was okay and offered to get me food"
"Physically tired but hospital staff very helpful."





We asked: What do you think about the ward/waiting areas/treatment room environment?

Outpatient

There's not enough things for older children to do, so they [their child] are bored. Activity booklets for older children would help.

Keeps them entertained, there's always something to do.

Loves the toys, Eastbourne waiting area is a bit bigger though.

Good waiting area, my child enjoys the colouring table.

Plenty of space for pushchair.





We asked: What do you think about the ward/waiting areas/treatment room environment?

SSPAU

All fine.

Could be more child centered (better decorated), comfy and private, but plain.

Works for us, things to do.

Wifi working well.

Inpatient (Kipling)

Had a room rather than a ward. Nice.





We asked: What is the best part of your experience with the ward?

Outpatient

“Familiar faces – you usually see the same person”

“Doctors are really good, they keep me calm”

“The staff, reception and nursing”

“Haven't had any bad experiences, everything has been good”





We asked: What is the best part of your experience with the ward?

SSPAU

“Friendliness of staff”

“Quick, supportive staff”

“Friendly staff”

Inpatient

“Staff listened to us, felt like they recorded what we were saying when looking for a diagnosis”





We asked: If there is one thing you could change about the ward, what would it be?

Improve access for older children - give them things to do etc

Clearer letter instructions

Nothing

More cheerful decorations on the ward

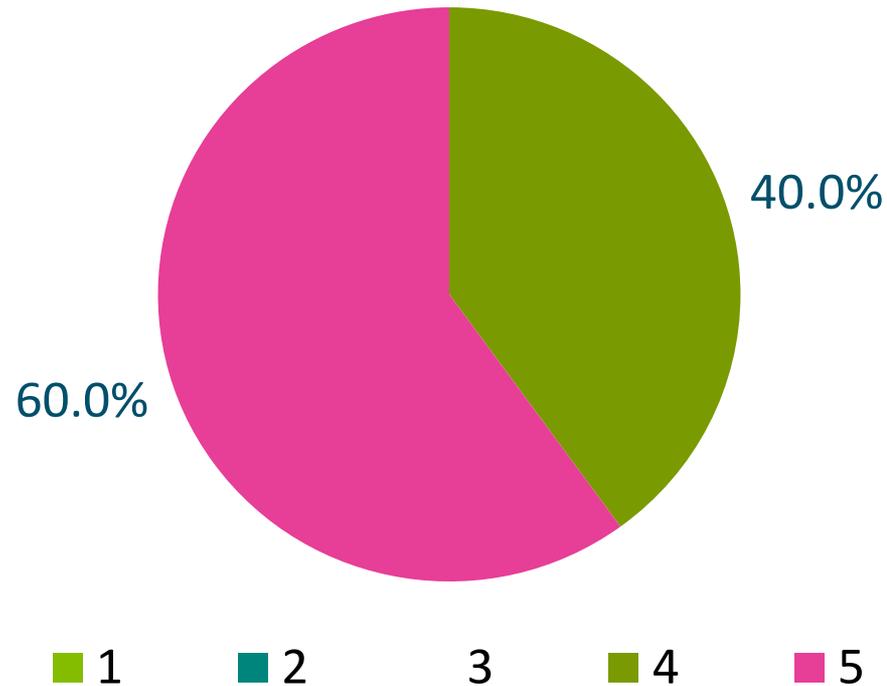
Free TV

Can't think of anything to change



**We asked: Overall, how would you rate the ward?
(1 = very bad, 5 = very good)**

6 parents/carers gave the ward a rating of 5, and 4 gave the ward a rating of 4.





Staff Survey Results

In addition to patients and their parents/carers, HWES also engaged with staff in the department. We felt that department staff were well placed to understand some of the challenges patients and their parents/guardians face and what could be done to improve patient experience.





We asked: Do you feel that the ward is appropriate for all patients?

No. Wants to redo the playroom for all ages as it is too geared towards younger children.

Jungle book is too young - would redecorate in pastel. Needs to be age appropriate for the 10 - 16-year-olds too.

Courtyard needs sorting.

No. The decorations are Disney themed and are aimed towards young children only.

The decorations (Disney themed) are all over 10 years old.

Toys are for babies.

More games.

The TV plays DVDs (outpatients) which can be changed to be more age appropriate.

Each room has toys.

Patients bring their own iPad.





We asked: What is the transition process like for young people moving from children's healthcare services to adult healthcare services?

There is the Roald Dahl transition service. Diabetes service works with adult service a lot to get young people ready for the transition

There are transition clinics – mainly diabetic and epilepsy. Adult team do come to support.

We asked: Do you feel that you are supported to provide the best possible care for patients?

They are supported, but there are not enough staff. There is a lack of staff for 1 to 1s.

Would be nice to have a play therapist to support patients.

Not enough staff





We asked: Do you feel that you are able to support patients with mental health needs? Is there a member(s) of staff with the training needed to support CYP mental health?

All staff can support if needed. The CAMHS link nurse does work with the mental health patients and gives training to staff. But staff on the ward are not mental health nurses and can't function as though they are.

Not able to offer the routine mental health patients need. There are often lots of CAMHS patients on the ward.

All staff have some training. Do have neuro clinics.





We asked: What do you feel is the best thing about this ward?

The family atmosphere - everyone has each other's backs and will help where needed.

Outpatients – we get to see the whole life process from children to adults.



We asked: How could the ward be improved?

For the ward to be repainted (all rooms, and playroom)

Scheduled activities (including sensory activities)

High Dependency Unit

A play therapist

CAMHS unit

Separate drug and treatment room



We asked: How could the ward be improved?

SPAL in A&E

There is currently no play therapist so staff are trying to fill the gap as best they can

The ward needs to be better decorated

More staff would help

Outpatients - More room

A nurse for each clinic





We asked: What do you think excellent quality of care looks and feels like to patients?



Staff give a high standard of care – children walk out of the ward well and smiling

For staff to be well educated

Positive feedback

Team building

Good, clear communication

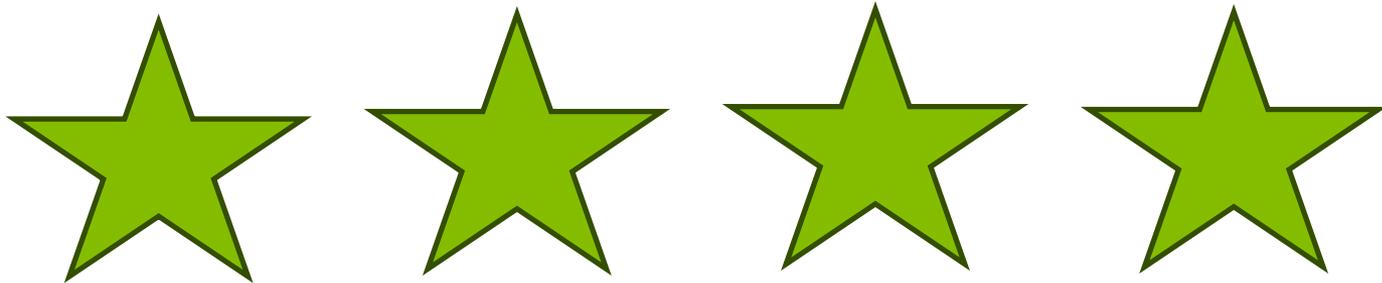
Enough staff to do everything they want and need to do





We asked: Overall, how would you rate the ward?
(1 = very bad, 5 = very good)

All 3 staff members rated the ward a 4 out of 5.





Recommendations

HWES would like to make the below recommendations based on the information gathered from patients, parents and carers and department staff during our visits.

We recommend that ESHT should:

1. Update the décor in the department to make it more appealing and appropriate for a wider age range. This could include a simple theme and colour palette which could be adapted for both older and younger children.
 2. Ensure that there are enough activities and entertainment options available for older children and teenagers, as well as younger children.
 3. Consider having more staff available in the department so that patients can be given the best possible care; this may include more clinical staff and/or a play therapist.
 4. Ensure that there are enough trained staff able to offer young people appropriate and robust support for their mental health needs.
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Conclusion

From our observations, it appears that patients, and their parents and carers, are overall very happy with the care they received during their visit to the department.

Patients and their parents/carers told us that they felt **listened to** and **cared for** by department staff, and that they were **kept well-informed**.

The main issue identified from all those engaged with, was that the department was more geared towards younger children and did not feel as suitable for older children and teens.

We would like to thank all the staff at ESHT and the patients, parents and carers who engaged with us for making the report possible.





Response from ESHT

Response from East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (ESHT):

"We'd like to thank Healthwatch East Sussex for working with our Paediatric services at Conquest Hospital on this review, which continues to support our objective to work in partnership with Healthwatch East Sussex to improve our services for local communities.

Work has already begun to address the recommendations made by Healthwatch and this report will be revisited and used as a measure for a second enter and view later this year."

