

Wexham and Frimley Park hospitals- service users' views.

A 6 Month review



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What we did

Our monthly hospital visiting program has been running since September 2023. We have spoken to 240 patients, visitors, volunteers, and staff at Frimley and Wexham Park hospitals.

The program has complemented the work we have done through Enter and View visits, community engagement and other project work. It has also supported our promotion of local Healthwatch and has served to encourage more people to talk to us and to get involved in our activities.

We are committed to seeking out examples of best practice so that we can shine a light on 'what good looks like' and help our system partners to learn from it. Alongside this we have shared examples of feedback that highlights improvements that patients wanted to see at our acute hospitals in East Berkshire.

We are passionate about ensuring the voices and experiences of local people influence decisions and improvements across the sector.

With this in mind, we are providing this summary of service visits at the 6 Month mark. We have shared immediate updates with the patient experience lead at Frimley ICS and other partners.

Who did we speak to?



At Wexham Park we spoke to 145 people over 4 visits in 6 Months.

At Frimley we spoke to 95 people over 2 visits in 6 Months.

We asked people to share their feedback about any health services they had used including the hospital where they or a loved one had recently experienced treatment.

What did we hear?

Below we have shared key themes from the feedback received at each visit.

Wexham Park, September 2023

Communication

Patients told us that they had received multiple methods of communication and sometimes they gave different information, so they weren't sure which was most recent. For example, one patient had a text to say their appointment was cancelled but received a letter the next day with details of when and where the appointment was.

There were also cases of information not getting through.

"I get a letter or text for appointment but when I arrived the consultant is not here today. I didn't get a cancellation notice."

Some patients told us that they would like to set a preferred method of communication.

Positive feedback

On this visit 6 patients shared messages of congratulations to the team at Wexham.

Just been seen at clinic 3. The plaster nurse was so lovely and helpful to my 2-year-old. We were seen very quickly, and I was happy with our experience.

Access to GP appointments

4 patients shared the difficulty they had getting an appointment with their GP.



Frimley Park October 2023

Transport and parking issues.

Patients and visitors told us that it is difficult to get to Frimley and the parking costs are too high for those on a limited budget. When planning the hospital re-location, Healthwatch will continue to raise the issue of public transport from East Berkshire to any planned location.

We shared information about Frimley's free parking scheme with some individuals, including people who regularly attend outpatient appointments.

Transport to Frimley Park hospital needs to change and improve. Travelling from Bracknell can be difficult if you can't drive. Train isn't feasible, taxi is very expensive, so bus services need to be better.

Accommodations for children with additional needs.

We spoke to a mother who is a carer for her son with additional needs. We shared information about the 'My Care' passport.

I have a 10-year-old autistic child who needs regular appointments. I would like autistic children to have a document which includes things they like, don't like, things they struggle with in hospital and includes their medical history. It would also help if doctors knew that the stress of waiting means my child might have a 'melt down' during the appointment. He isn't a naughty child he just hates new environments and hospitals. Getting him here is a challenge.

Communication about appointments was good.

During this visit we asked patients for feedback about communication received. The majority of the feedback was positive with patients telling us that they had received their appointment letters by text, email and by post.

Some patients told us that communication between health teams and social care could be improved.

Positive feedback

We received a moving piece of feedback from a breast cancer patient.

I've had amazing treatment at Frimley, 99% absolutely incredible. The breast care nurses, and radiology treatment was fantastic. They have a very holistic approach. They look after their patients, including mental health and financial wellbeing. The nurses are like gold.

Wexham Park November 2023

Communication feedback was mixed.

We received mixed feedback about communications. 3 patients were happy that they got all the information they needed.

2 patients had difficulty including a missed cancellation notification which resulted in an un-necessary trip to hospital.

The problem is that appointments keep getting cancelled (because of strikes) Sometimes they call but other times I get a text and then you can't

ask about when it is going to be re-scheduled or any other follow up questions.

In line with previous feedback, patients would like to be kept informed about progress during long waits for appointments and treatment. A check-in call to understand if the problem had worsened was requested.

Discharge

We spoke to a carer who was concerned that her relative's discharge was not being managed well. We referred the individual to PALS.

Positive feedback

We received 7 positive stories of care including the message below from a patient.

The care at Wexham is good. I saw the doctor yesterday and she was lovely. I know the hospital are trying to do their best and I am happy with my care.

Wexham Park January 2024

We received largely positive feedback during this visit, patients wished to pass on their thanks to the following services.

- Paediatrics
- Cancer care
- Accident and Emergency
- Diagnostics
- Fracture clinic.
- Cardiology
- Orthopaedics
- Paramedic service

I came here to see the doctor as my son had an appointment. We had a good experience at this hospital. All thanks to the reception staff, nurses, and doctor. They were helpful and explained very well about the condition.

Frimley Park February 2024

Communication

Patients told us that they wanted to be kept informed about progress when there was a long wait for treatment. They also wanted a check in to see if their need had increased.

Here for a follow-up appointment after I had a haemorrhage during a procedure 2 years ago and nearly died. What is the point of doing it 2 years later? I needed their help in the first few weeks but never had any communication.

We were told by a patient that they are often contacted outside of the window they have been given to expect a phone call and that the phone does not ring long enough for them to answer it. The patient then finds it difficult to get through and arrange another call.

If they say they are going to ring at a certain time, then they should. I can't be available on my phone all day as I work.

Volunteers

Volunteers play an important role in keeping the hospital running and their service is appreciated by patients.

There are a large number of volunteers at Frimley. When I was on the ward there was one young man who sat and chatted with an elderly gentleman who was at the end of his life for hours. I'm sure it made a big difference to the patient. It's really good to see the community spirit.

Using apps

Patients mentioned using the NHS app and My Frimley Health app. These were considered to be very useful, especially by patients who were managing multiple health conditions, disabilities or appointments. There was a suggestion for improvement.

I would appreciate it if you could see the name of the lead doctor or nurse who treated you. It would make it easier if problems re-occur as you could ask to be referred to the same person.

Car park and traffic issues

Difficulty parking and accessing the hospital site during rush hour was an issue for many people we spoke to. The car park did seem to be especially busy on the day we attended. People welcomed the future re-location of the hospital and hoped that access will be considered as a priority when selecting the site.

Wexham Park March 2024

Priors Close urgent care

We were told by a patient who had been to see orthopaedics that their treatment has been slow because of difficulty getting a GP appointment. They did not know about the same day service at Priors Close. They said this would have helped them greatly.

The general awareness of this service is not good. Why not put-up signage at Upton Park or on the roundabout nearby to direct people to the new centre. My GP could have told me about Priors Close when I called for an appointment instead of waiting all day for a callback. We are always being told not to go to A&E unnecessarily, so I was waiting for my GP to call back, but I needed to have been seen more urgently. The walk-in centre would have been perfect for my needs, if only I had known about it.

We spoke to a patient who had been seen in A&E last week and was waiting to see a consultant. On their visit to A&E it was extremely busy, and in their opinion, there were many people there who could have been seen in primary care. They suggested a person stationed by the door to A&E to direct people towards the Priors Close Urgent Care Centre during opening hours.

Thank you for this feedback. Through Covid with various service changes in place, the road signage changes have not caught up with the rapid changes in service provision we have had to step up in a short space of time.

We will work with Slough Borough Council and the Highways Agency to improve the signage to ensure visibility of the services we offer to our residents. Frimley ICB

Visiting patients

We spoke to a couple visiting their daughter who is seriously unwell on an in-patient ward. The person in the next bed has large amounts of visitors (10 plus) throughout the day. This has made it very difficult for their daughter to rest as there is a lot of noise from these visitors. The couple have raised it with ward staff who don't feel that they can act. They suggest some signage or guidance for maximum amount of visitors at one time.

Positive feedback

We received praise for the cardiology department, A and E, diabetic services, and physiotherapy.

Congratulations to all the staff in the trauma and orthopaedic department at Wexham, particularly Aaron and Priya. I got great care from the whole team, thanks for brilliant experience.

Concerns about care

2 visitors did not feel that their relatives had received good care on in-patient wards at Wexham.

I often have to change my daughter's incontinence pad when I visit her. I am concerned that nurses are not looking after her well and do not understand how to use the specialist equipment she needs.

GP Services

We received feedback from 3 people who have difficulty getting access to their GP.

Outcomes

- Following patient feedback about communication issues, we raised this with the patient communications task and finish group. The aim of the group is to "[...] develop an overarching communications strategy [...]. The scope should remain focused on strategy rather than specifics of execution." They were grateful to receive this input which helps them in planning future patient communications. The feedback we provided was part of the early 'information collection' work of the team. The final strategy paper was published and submitted to the internal Electronic Patient Record Board in December where it was well-received.

We continue to monitor this during visits to Wexham and Frimley Park hospitals and during other community engagement work. The trend has been to see increased satisfaction with patient communications. Thank you to those who shared their feedback with Healthwatch and enabled improved patient communications.

- Following feedback about signage directing patients to the new urgent care centre at Priors Close, Frimley ICB have committed to working with Slough Borough Council to improve visibility of services.
- We shared Positive feedback and congratulations with the patient experience lead to be passed on to individuals and teams, contributing to increased morale in the NHS workforce.
- Positive feedback for volunteers was shared with the volunteer manager. Recognising the contributions of volunteers is important for volunteer retention and satisfaction. We hope that those who give their time to improve patient experience continue to do so.
- Healthwatch will use patient feedback received as part of this project to inform our work streams and priority planning for the coming year.
- For individuals who had concerns about their care or their relative's care, we provided information about feedback to PALS or how to raise a formal complaint. We sign posted to advocacy services where appropriate and offered further listening and support through our Healthwatch hub.
- Healthwatch will ensure that concerns regarding access to the Frimley Park site are raised as part of the engagement process for planning the hospital re-location.



Response to Healthwatch report from head of patient experience, Frimley Health

We welcome patient feedback as a way of capturing what we're doing well, as well as areas for improvement. It was wonderful to read the positive comments about our staff and volunteers, and the difference they can make to a patient's experience. It was also great to hear that patients are using the My Frimley Health Record app and value the benefits it offers.

The content of the Healthwatch report is in keeping with feedback that we have received through other methods and supports the current improvement workstreams. In particular, the work reviewing our communication with patients, where we have already seen improvements, and there are further changes planned which will enhance the communication between patients and the trust. It was great to hear that patients are being directed to the trusts Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) which offers a valuable role in helping to resolve issues for patients and their relatives or carers.



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