

# Kingston Hospital NHS Foundation Trust Emergency Department Enter & View Visit

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Report & Recommendations

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Healthwatch Kingston upon Thames

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25th & 26th February 2016

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 About Healthwatch Kingston upon Thames**

Healthwatch Kingston upon Thames (from hereon referred to as Healthwatch Kingston) is the local, user-led organisation for involving local people in the design and development of local health and social care services and help improve patient experience. It was established in April 2013 under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, following on from the work of the Local Involvement Network (LINK) for Kingston upon Thames.

It provides reports and updates about local services to Healthwatch England, a body that campaigns on national issues and raises concerns to the NHS and the Department of Health.

Healthwatch Kingston gathers information and feedback from patients and service users about the experiences they have of health and social services, and use this to make improvements and influence the development of those services. It works with health and social care services to make sure that the voice of local people is heard, and it goes out into the community to listen to what people have to say.

In addition, Healthwatch Kingston signposts people to local health and social care services and provides information on how to make a complaint or give feedback about those services.

Healthwatch Kingston is a registered charity (no. 1159377), funded by the Department of Health through the local authority, the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames. It is independent, and led by a Board of Trustees, who are local people with a keen interest in improving the health and social care system for local people.

It is supported in its work by Parkwood Healthcare Ltd, which employ the staff and provide HR, finance and office support.

### **1.2 Enter & View**

One of the methods Healthwatch can use is Enter & View, which is a statutory function. This means that Healthwatch can visit any health or social care service in the borough of Kingston upon Thames or any that serves people in the local borough and observe how this service is delivered.

During an Enter & View visit, Healthwatch will talk to patients or service users and members of staff and make observations of the environment to ensure it is safe and clean. After a visit, Healthwatch will prepare a report which will list its findings and any recommendations made.

Where there are serious concerns, such as a health and safety issue or a safeguarding issue, this will be reported immediately to the service provider, the commissioner of the service or a relevant body such as the Care Quality Commission.

Enter & View participants receive full training, based on recommendations from Healthwatch England, and are DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checked.

### **1.3 The Enter & View Team**

Our visits were carried out by three Healthwatch Kingston volunteers:

- Marianne Vennegoor
- Nigel Spalding
- Pippa Collins

The visits took place on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2016 2pm-4pm, and Friday 26<sup>th</sup> February, 10pm-12am. This report reflects the views and observations gathered for these specific dates and times only.

## **2. Methodology**

We talked to patients about their experience at the Emergency Department with the following prompts:

- General overview: such as waiting time, general impression of the department, has everything been explained well
- Staff: such as whether patients were treated with dignity and respect and staff attitude.

### **2.1 Patients**

We introduced ourselves to each patient and where applicable to their family members or carers, and explained the purpose of our visit. We used the same set of questions for each patient (see appendix A). A brief overview of Healthwatch Kingston was provided.

### **2.2 Kingston Hospital Emergency Department environment**

As well as speaking to individuals, we also looked at the environment and made observations about facilities, cleanliness and staff interaction.

## **3. Findings**

Our findings revealed that patients were overall happy with their patient experience at A & E Minors.

### **3.1 Minors Department - Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> February, 2pm-4pm**

#### **Waiting times**

It was found that patients felt the initial admission into the Emergency Department was fairly fast (approximately a 15-minute wait), however the waiting time in between having examinations completed, and waiting for results took longer. It varied amongst the patients we spoke to from one hour to nearly four hours.

Patients commented that there is a lack of communication about how long they can expect to wait. Patients reported that they had no idea how long the wait would be and it was unsettling as they had been waiting a long time and worrying

about how severe their condition was. They said it would be good to know approximately so they could go for a short walk or have a coffee.

We observed that there is a water cooler in reception, however there was no water available in the other waiting areas. This also caused patients to have to disturb staff to request water.

The Matron explained that they acknowledged patient boredom, and explained that the staff team had discussed having a screen with waiting times displayed. They had also considered producing and handing out leaflets to patients, with information about expected waiting times.

### **Staff interaction**

Out of the 12 patients spoken to all said they felt they had been treated with respect and dignity. All patients said they felt they had the details of their treatment explained very well to them and staff members were caring.

### **Car parking**

It was raised by patients that parking had caused them distress and anxiety during their visit. As they were not aware of how long they would be waiting for their examinations and results they also said that knowing their car park costs were escalating all the while was adding to their unease.

It was raised by a family member that they were lucky to get a parking space when bringing their relative in, and wondered how they would have got the patient into minors if they had to park over the road.

## **3.2 Reception area - Friday 26<sup>th</sup> February 10pm-2am**

Our volunteer noted the good-sized information screen and was informed by staff that it was updated every two hours as situations and numbers came through on the A&E computer. It was considered difficult by our volunteer to distinguish staff by their uniforms.

The average wait time was two hours and there were approximately 50 people receiving treatment. The atmosphere was quiet, and the area was clean and tidy.

### **Staff interaction**

Reception staff interaction with patients was very good, with one clerk helping an elderly man with transport issues, and another helped a patient with a broken hand to go to the lavatory as she was in too much pain to manage her clothing. Our volunteer spoke with four patients and only one had a minor issue about an unsympathetic manner from one of the doctors.

## Our recommendations

- Make water available for patients in the waiting area for Minors. Although there seemed to be a lack of availability of space for a water dispenser there is enough room for a jug of water and cups to be made available on a side table. This would prevent staff members from having to interrupt their duties to fetch water.
- Consider providing a TV/magazines in the Minors waiting room to help alleviate patient boredom and anxiety.
- Publish an information leaflet with approximate waiting times.
- Display different uniforms on the information screen in Reception.
- Provide an emergency parking bay for people bringing patients into Minors if they are unable to find a parking space and are unable to walk a distance.

## 4. Next Steps

This report will be presented to Kingston Hospital, giving 20 days to respond and correct any factual errors. We expect that not all recommendations will be implemented straight away, but we anticipate that the management will provide us with a plan to address these issues.

## 5. Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Kingston would like to thank all the patients and their families/carers who we spoke to us during our visit. We very much appreciate their time and recognise that without their valuable input we would not be able to produce this report. Their comments and insights have helped us to build a picture of the patient experience at the Emergency Department at Kingston Hospital.

Secondly, we wish to thank staff for full co-operation during our visit and ensuring our visit went smoothly. We would also like to thank our volunteers for their time and commitment in helping us carry out the visit.

## 6. Further details

This report was produced by Healthwatch Kingston upon Thames and will be made available to the public on our website, and hard copies will be made available on request. Should you require this report in a different format, please contact the Healthwatch Kingston office at:

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### The Healthwatch Brand

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Appendix A

**Enter & View visit to Kingston Hospital**

<p><b>General overview:</b> How long have you been waiting? What is your general impression of the department? Has everything been explained to you about your treatment?</p>
<p><b>Staff :</b> Have you been treated with dignity &amp; respect? What do you think of the staff here?</p>
<p>Is there anything else you would like to tell us today?</p>
<p>Can we contact you to follow up on your experience here? Could you give us your contact details (phone number, email address?)</p>