
Kingston Hospital Outreach report

Communications and appointments
(11/2016 - 01/2017)



CONTENTS

Introduction:

1.About Healthwatch Kingston upon Thames pg. 2

1.a. Our Enter & View powers pg.3

2. Method

2.a. Our Team pg.4

3. Findings pg.5

3.1 Physiotherapy - Friday 4 November 2016 pg.5

3.2 Pain Management Clinic - Tuesday 15 November 2016 pg.5

3.3 Maternity Department - Tuesday 15th November 2016 pg.6

3.4 Eyes, Nose, Throat/Oral - Friday 18th November 2016 pg.6

3.5 William Rouse Unit, Breast Cancer and Haematology- 21st November 2016 pg.7

3.6 Royal Eye Unit - Friday 25 November 2016 pg.7

3.7 Kingston Hospital Main Outpatients-5th December 2016 pg.8

3.8 Radiology Department - 17th January 2017 pg.9

3.9 Radiology Department - 20th January 2017 pg.10

3.10 Findings across all department visits pg.10

4.0 Suggested recommendations pg.11

5.0 Next steps pg. 11

6.0 Acknowledgements pg.11

7.0 Further information pg.12

1. About Healthwatch Kingston upon Thames

Healthwatch Kingston upon Thames (from here on 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.

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, and is 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.

1.a. Our Enter & View powers

One of the methods Healthwatch can use to gather patient experience is through Enter & View, which is a statutory function. Through Enter & View Healthwatch can visit any health or social care service in the borough to observe how the 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.

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. Upon completing this process, they are then allocated status as Healthwatch Kingston Authorised Representatives.

We used our Enter & View capabilities to carry out the visits within this report, however this report is classified as an outreach report as it was a “light touch” Enter & View. The visits were spot checks only, snap shots of patient experience received within a small time period.

In total we spoke to 137 people and gained many varying experiences and viewpoints, for the purpose of producing recommendations we have picked out the themes and trends which appeared most prominently amongst the patient feedback.

2. Method

Healthwatch Kingston Authorised Representatives participated in 9 outreach visits between 4th November 2016 and 20th January 2017. The departments visited were; Physiotherapy, Pain Management Clinic, Maternity Department, ENT (Eyes, Nose, Throat) Royal Eye Unit, Main Outpatients, Radiology and the Cancer Unit.

Our priority was to gather patient experience, each interview opened with a broad question asking patients to talk about their experience. Our volunteers were given a feedback sheet with a number of prompts to initiate conversations with patients and relatives/carers around topics such as appointments processes, communications/ information and staff attitudes.

Visits

1. Physiotherapy - Friday 4 November 2016, 10 - 4pm. Patients spoken to:20
2. Pain Management Clinic - Tuesday 15 November 2016. Patients spoken to:6
3. Maternity Department - Tuesday 15th November 2016. Patients spoken to:18
4. Eyes, Nose, Throat/Oral - Friday 18th November 2016. Patients spoken to: 7
5. William Rouse Unit, Breast Cancer and Haematology- 21st November 2016. Patients spoken to: 19
6. Royal Eye Unit - Friday 25 November 2016. Patients spoken to: 14
7. Kingston Hospital Main Outpatients-5th December 2016 People spoken to: 28
8. Kingston Hospital Radiology - 17th January 2017. People spoken to: 10
9. Radiology Department - 20th January 2017. People spoken to:15

2.a. Our Team

Our teams were made up of the following volunteers: Glenn Davies, Marita Brown, Jo Boxer, Rahel Fikremariam, Helen Haywood, Pippa Collins, Marianne Vennegoor; Graham Goldspring, Pippa Collins, Jackie Coles, Tony Williams and Diva Shah, Healthwatch Kingston Staff member.

3. Findings

3.1 Physiotherapy - Friday 4 November 2016

Patients spoken to: 20

Within the Physiotherapy Department Authorised Representatives spoke to 20 patients and a Senior Physiotherapist. The appointments process was explained by

the Senior Physiotherapist; all appointments come from within Kingston Hospital, either through Rheumatology, Orthopaedics or A&E.

On the whole patients commented that the care provided to them was good.

Staff attitude

On the whole staff were positively commented on, the physiotherapists were described by patients as being kind, respectful, concerned and conscientious.

Information provided

On the whole patients said the explanation of treatment is very clear and provided in a supportive manner.

Appointments

Patients commented they can email easily to cancel appointments however the Department are not able to provide individual responses due to confidentiality risks, appointment letters provide this information.

Patients waiting time from referral to be seen for an appointment were very varied according to the severity of their condition, ranging from 2 weeks to 5 months.

3.2 Pain Management Clinic - Tuesday 15 November 2016

Patients spoken to: 6

Environment

It was observed by Authorised Representatives that the department is within an old building, the waiting area felt very cramped, however at the time of the visit there was only one Consultant seeing patients with a maximum of only 3 patients waiting at one time. Staff appeared polite and pleasant.

Communications and waiting times for referrals

Out of the 6 patients spoken to, 3 said that they had waited a long time for their appointment, this varied from 12 weeks to 12 months. Other patients said the waiting times for referrals were adequate. Patients commented that phone calls from the Department regarding their appointments had been very helpful.

Information provided

5 patients said they had received good information and advice, it was noted that patients said information was clearly provided, and the treatment was effective.

4 patients said the service seemed well organised and efficient in organising follow up appointments and communications.

Staff attitude

3 patients praised the staff, they were noted as being kind and respectful, 2 of those patients said they never felt rushed by the staff.

3 patients expressed disappointment in the lack of car parking availability, it was also commented that it is expensive to pay for.

3.3 Maternity Department - Tuesday 15th November 2016

Patients spoken to:18

Environment

Authorised Representatives noted that the environment within the ward was pleasant, relaxed and modern, with plenty of seats available for patients and accompanying people.

There were however only 2 toilets, one of which is for baby changing so this led to queues at the time of the visit. There was a board which displays waiting times however this did not seem to be working at the time and there was no visible call system, nurses called patients verbally.

Reception area was spacious; people were seated away from the reception desk so patient's confidentiality was preserved. Staff did appear rushed as the clinic was very busy. It was noticed that water was the only form of refreshments available.

Waiting times in Hospital

Out of 18 patients spoken to, 5 said they felt waiting times to be seen were longer than they would like, they ranged from having to wait 1 hour up to 3. The majority of patients said that staff seem rushed and very busy, it was commented that "time is very important to staff", "they are constantly short of staff", one patient commented that they felt rushed during their consultation. Some patients said there can be waiting times at reception depending on how busy they are.

Information provided

It was raised that the amount of information provided and time taken for this depends on how busy the department is; it can be variable. Approximately half of the 18 Patients spoken to were positive about this and half were negative.

It was noted that staff direct patients to online resources where there is more information available when they are busy. One patient said they had only written information about treatment, it was not verbal and they did not understand the information. It was noted by a few patients that it is easier to speak to nurses or midwives than consultants for information. Other patients spoken to said they felt they had received good information.

Attitude and staff service

Of the 18 patients spoken to, 14 said they were happy with the attitude and service from staff. It was commented that staff are always polite, patients said they felt they were treated with respect. Reception were commented as being helpful and it was said that the consultants are sympathetic. One patient said they had mixed experiences from staff, on one occasion the staff member had been dismissive of them.

3.4 Eyes, Nose, Throat / Oral - Friday 18th November 2016

Patients spoken to: 7

Out of the 7 patients spoken to, ease and waiting times for appointments were varied, 4 said they had a long waiting time, others commented they were happy with it, they ranged from 2 to 6 weeks. It was said by 2 patients that they had problems with their appointment dates being changed, and 1 patient said this was not communicated well.

3.5 William Rous Unit, Breast Cancer and Haematology - 21st November 2016

Patients spoken to: 19

Appointments and information provided

11 patients from haematology and 8 patients from the breast cancer service were spoken to. 15 patients said appointments have been swiftly provided and there had been clear communications through letters which were often supported by follow up phone calls. Patients from both Haematology and the Breast Cancer unit said if they need a different appointment it is easy to call up and rearrange. 3 people from Haematology and 1 person from the breast Cancer Unit said they had not been happy, as their appointment had been changed and this was not corresponding with information on their letter. It was commented by 1 patient from Haematology that there is more than 1 booking appointment system and this was confusing. 1 patient at haematology said their appointment had been cancelled at late notice and there was no reason given for this in the cancellation apology letter, the person explained that re-arranging an appointment was difficult and took 2 months which disturbed the course of treatment.

Attitude and care from Hospital staff

People regularly commented that consultants are clear at explaining information, and are sensitive to their feelings. People said that staff members are respectful and reception are friendly and helpful. It was commented on by some that consultants can be very quiet when calling in patient, it can be hard to hear when their name has been called if they have a hearing impediment.

3.6 Royal Eye Unit - Friday 25 November 2016

Patients spoken to: 14

It was noted by Authorised Representatives that the procedure for calling patients was not very audible, particularly for people who are hard of hearing. At the time of the visit the check in machines were not working, signage for this did not seem to be clear.

It appeared that it was not clear to all patients where they should wait sometimes, it was observed that one patient missed his appointment because he sat in the wrong area, however the receptionist was able to resolve the situation. It was observed the side room where patients wait for surgery is small so patients' family cannot sit in the room with the patient.

Appointments and communication

2 patients said that they would prefer written communications to be in large print as with their eye conditions they struggle to read the information.

7 people commented they were happy with the appointment letters; it was frequently raised they provide good information. 2 patients said they had their appointment confirmed by phone, but it would be helpful to get a follow up confirmation letter by post.

Provision of information and discussion with Health professional

8 patients stated the information provided by staff members was adequate and helpful. One patient said they had felt quite anxious at initial appointments but once they had voiced their concerns the Doctor had been very good at easing their anxieties. Another person stated they had a similar experience and the aftercare and follow up information provided for their relative was excellent.

Attitude and care from Hospital staff

9 people stated they were very happy with the attitudes of staff who were frequently been commented on as polite and friendly. Patients also said they had been “well looked after”, and “Doctors are easy to talk to,”

It was however raised by 2 people that staff members can often appear rushed; it was stated they are still polite but the REU appears short staffed.

Access and car parking

Authorised representatives asked patients to provide their opinion on the newly designed signs at the REU, in the majority comments were positive, people said the signs were helpful, however it was raised that it can be unclear where to sit and wait within the REU.

3.7 Kingston Hospital Main Outpatients - 5th December 2016

People spoken to: 28

Appointments and communications

23 people said they were happy with the referral and appointment process, the majority of those said they had received the letter in plenty of time and people commented that the appointment letter had adequate information to inform them about the appointment. Most patients were referred by their GP, but 2 people were admitted to the department through attending A&E- one of which was accompanying their child and stated they were very well treated throughout the process. Patients who said they were unable to make the allocated appointment date by letter were able to call and easily rearrange an alternative appointment slot. One person said they had to wait a month for an appointment and did not receive it by letter but had a telephone call.

Provision of information and discussion with Health professional

Out of 27 people spoken to, 23 people said they received good information about their condition and treatment. One person had not yet been seen so could not comment. Most of those said they were very happy, they felt they received plenty

of information. Patients who said they were prescribed medication stated it had been explained to them very well. One family member was accompanying a relative who had memory problems, they commented that although verbal information was well provided, it would be helpful to also receive written information to take away.

Attitude and care from Hospital staff

11 patients used the self-service check in point, out of those 10 said they are happy using it and it was straightforward, one had difficulty using it. It was regularly commented that the self-service check in is not always in working order. 20 patients stated that they were happy with their greeting at reception, the comments used to describe the service were frequently “Helpful,” “friendly,” “efficient”

When patients commented on Doctors and nurses they said they were treated with respect and dignity, and the service was professional. No patients commented negatively about staff members.

Access and car parking

9 patients said that accessing the Hospital was an issue for them, 8 of those people said the parking was difficult, it was described frequently as being a “nightmare” to try to find a space. Other people commented they used public transport or got a ride in from someone else as they knew it was not easy to navigate. 3 people negatively commented on the parking meters, it was raised by one patient that they had their money taken by one machine, the other two patients said they are too expensive and confusing to use.

3.8 Kingston Hospital Radiology - 17th January 2017

People spoken to: 10

Out of the 10 people spoken to 7 patients said overall, they were very happy with the service received. 3 people had been referred through A&E.

Staff attitude

3 patients gave particular credit to the customer service provided by the reception team and healthcare staff, commenting that they were friendly, helpful and respectful. It was observed by Authorised Representatives that the receptionist was friendly and helpful, and most patients were called in fairly quickly after arrival.

A member of staff commented that management is very good and will listen to feedback from the department. They also stated that staff were encouraged to put forward ideas for improvement without fear of reprisal, constructive criticism is welcomed.

Environment

Several patients said the radiology Department was hard to find, and that a map would have been useful.

It was noted that signage for toilets was not visible from the Radiology waiting area. Self-check-in screens were not clearly marked.

3.9 Radiology Department - 20th January 2017

Patients spoken to: 15

Referrals for appointments

Most patients had been referred by their GP, the average waiting time was noted to be 2 weeks which the majority of patients were happy with. Patients said they had received their appointment by letter, which all patients said provided good instructions on what to expect. There was a mixed range of opinions on information provided in the appointment letter, some people were happy with the content. Some patients said there could have been better instructions on which department to go to as they initially went to the wrong reception area. One patient said they had received conflicting information in 2 letters.

Staff attitude

Out of 15 people spoken to 12 people said they were very impressed with the way they were treated by staff members. Patients said they were treated with dignity and respect and felt that staff were kind and helpful.

Environment

It was observed by Authorised Representatives that there was a TV screen in the waiting room with health messages being projected such as flu alerts, safety, volunteering opportunities etc. it also had BBC news headlines at the bottom of screen. Within the time of their visit 3 people felt they were seen very quickly.

3.10 Findings across all department visits

- The majority of patients we spoke to said they found communications around appointments satisfactory.
- Communication and appointments systems at the Hospital varied widely across the different departments visited. Some departments offer choice of date and time for appointments, others do not. Most people were willing to accept whatever date/time they were given, recognising that there is the opportunity to call if not suitable; but some people would have liked more choice in at least one department.
- People who said they had received reminders by phone call or text said they found this useful.
- Most people who called the Hospital were spoken to but a minority were not able to get through.
- Signage when arriving from Kingston Hill and Norbiton Station was raised as a problem for 18 people.
- People frequently raised parking at the Hospital as a problem, availability of spaces is a challenge and people commented on the pay machines being difficult to use.

- The self-check in machines were commented on with varying feedback positive and negative viewpoints, they were commented on being unreliable and not always in service.

4.Suggested recommendations

- Kingston Hospital should investigate standardising their appointments system so it is more effective consistent across all departments, this would streamline communications and prevent patients getting confused by negotiating different processes.
- Kingston Hospital should work to Improve verbal and visual communication, and ensure there is provision for patients with visual and hearing problems.
- Kingston Hospital should ensure that patients do not receive contradictory information regarding their appointments.
- Kingston Hospital should implement text and phone call appointment reminders across all departments.
- The Self check in machines should be monitored to assess their efficiency.
- Kingston Hospital should put a sign directing people from Kingston Hill and Norbiton Station.

5.0 Next Steps

This report will be presented to Kingston Hospital and we will provide adequate time for staff to respond. We expect that not all recommendations will be implemented straight away, but we anticipate that the management will address the findings and recommendations. It will be presented to the Care Quality Commission to share information.

The Healthwatch Kingston Hospital Services Task Group aims to build on our positive partnership with Kingston Hospital, to be fully involved in ensuring patient and carer views are always at the heart of the service.

6.0 Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Kingston would like to give great thanks to members of the Hospital Services Task Group for their work throughout these Outreach visits, throughout the pre- visit planning, participation on the day and the production of this report. It would not have been possible without their teamwork and effort.

We would also like to thank the staff at all the Departments who took the time to explain the service and answer questions on the day.

7.0 Further information

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 on 0203 326 1255.

Kingston Quaker Centre, Fairfield East, Kingston, KT1 2PT.

Email: info@healthwatchkingstonuponthames.org.uk.

Website: www.healthwatchkingstonuponthames.org.uk