

**Environmental audits of the Brighton and
Sussex University Hospitals Trust
(April 2017- March 2018)**

An annual Healthwatch report

Published June 2018



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1. Acknowledgements

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2. Executive summary

Since December 2016, Healthwatch Brighton and Hove (Healthwatch) has been making dedicated monthly visits to the Brighton and Sussex University Hospital Trust (BSUH) estate, which includes the Royal Sussex County Hospital (RSCH) and Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital (RACH). These monthly visits are called Environmental Care Audits ("audits"). This is the first Healthwatch annual report which summarises the findings from these audits; and specifically those undertaken from April 2017 to March 2018.

During this time period Healthwatch volunteers undertook 10 separate audits, and provided BSUH with 114 recommendations. Healthwatch audited the following areas within the RSCH and RACH: the adults and children's Accident & Emergency departments; 3 departments within the Eye Hospital; 10 individual wards; and a further 9 clinics, departments or units. Our team of volunteers also audited several areas of the Newhaven Day Hospital which is located in the Hill Rise Hospital¹. Three of the audits undertaken in 2017 were 'follow-up' visits where our volunteers were able to assess the hospital environments against data gathered from previous Healthwatch audits. These follow-up visits were made to the Eye Hospital, Claude Nicol and Lawson Units and the main adults A&E department; and in all instances Healthwatch observed tangible improvements to the physical environments, although a smaller number of issues appeared not to have been addressed.

In addition, during December 2016 to March 2017, Healthwatch volunteers audited a further 7 wards, and 4 units or departments, and also conducted semi formal inspections of the environment whenever it entered a public health setting e.g. whilst conducting patient surveys. The findings from these visits are not included within this annual report.

Overall, the number of audits conducted during this 12 month period means that Healthwatch has audited a good proportion of the BSUH estate, and means that our findings represent a reliable and robust picture of the physical environment of our local hospitals, especially that of the RSCH estate.

¹ Hill Rise Hospital is part of the Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

3. Partner comments

Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust

Although the Royal Sussex County Hospital campus has seen significant developments over the last 40 years, much of the infrastructure and many of the patient facilities on the remaining half of the campus have been outgrown and do not provide modern standards of privacy and dignity. The Trust currently also does not have the capacity to treat all the patients in the region who require specialist tertiary care for neurological and neurosurgical conditions, nor for all the patients needing radiotherapy or chemotherapy for cancer.

BSUH has benefitted greatly from the close working with Healthwatch; the clear objective is to ensure our environment meets the needs and expectations of our patients at all times. We acknowledge that there have been significant challenges over the years, which has resulted in some items highlighted not being undertaken in a timely manner for a range of reasons. With the new Executive Team, who have been in post for a year, BSUH has a clear vision to put patients and carers at the centre of all we do and there is a drive to improve the patient environment and engage all stakeholders. There are planned inspections each month with Healthwatch representatives, which have a very positive impact on our hospital. Healthwatch are invited and attend the Trust's formal monthly PLACE meeting and are represented on the Food Improvement Group; and this gives an opportunity for us to incorporate the public's view into our decision making and conversations.

Healthwatch's input is invaluable and promotes engagement with clinical colleagues, reinforcing that things are always considered and viewed from a patient's perspective. There have been a range of projects that have been delivered successfully - some of which have been highlighted in this paper - which have had a significant impact on our environment, all of which Healthwatch has been instrumental in the delivery of. These include: the upgrading of the public toilets with our Main Outpatients Building; refurbishment of Bristol ward; providing adequate compliant storage for linen and cleaning equipment along with a dedicated secure waste room thus promoting correct segregation of waste; an increase in clinical storage space, and a dedicated room for the multi-disciplinary team to base themselves in within the environment. All of these initiatives have had a positive impact on our patients and staff.

There are other projects that have commenced but not yet been fully delivered, such as new signage across BSUH which remains incomplete and remains challenging due to the building works. BSUH recognises that there are pieces of furniture that require attention and bids have been submitted to address this and are being considered. BSUH operates a 'Dump the Junk' system which enables staff to have broken kit removed and also promotes recycling of items no longer required by one area that are of use to another.

We look forward to the continued involvement of Brighton and Hove Healthwatch in working with us our improve services and environment.

4. Findings summary

The table below provides a summary of the locations audited by our volunteers from April 2017 to March 2018, with further detail given in Annex A.

Table A: Dates and locations of audits undertaken by Healthwatch

Date	Location
May 2017	Newhaven Day Hospital
June 2017	Paediatrics, Main X-Ray, MRI and CT units (RSCH)
July 2017	Early Pregnancy Unit and Day Assessment Unit (RSCH)
August 2017	Stroke wards (Donald Hall and Solomon wards , RSCH)
September 2017	Claude Nicol and Lawson Unit (Sexual Health and Contraception, RSCH))
October 2017	Digestive Diseases Centre and Endoscopy Unit (RSCH)
November 2017	Eye Hospital (RSCH)
January 2018	Respiratory (Catherine James, Overton and Egremont wards, RSCH)
February 2018	Main Accident and & Emergency department (RSCH)
March 2018	Royal Alexandra Children’s Accident & Emergency department (RSCH)

The outcomes from these 10 audits included a total of 114 recommendations made to the Trust, together with a large number of positive observations. We identified a number of improvements that the Trust could take which Healthwatch considered would improve the environment of the various wards, departments, clinics and units. A number of issues were regularly reported by our volunteers, which we have grouped together under nine themed headings (see Table B, and also Table E for additional detail). In making these recommendations Healthwatch acknowledges that the current building works at the RSCH makes the working and patient environment challenging. We consider that good quality environments nevertheless help to improve safety and dignity for patients and improves the working environment and morale for staff.

Table B: Themes and recommended actions identified by Healthwatch

	Theme identified	Recommended improvements
1	Improve the quality of patient information	For example, by improving information about waiting times, and using notice boards to display information about staff.
2	Improve signage	A consistent style and format should be adopted across the whole estate to assist the public in finding their way around.
3	Promote the consistent use of hand gels	More prominent notices should be installed to encourage the public to use hand gels thus helping to combat infections.
4	Replace/update equipment or furniture	Worn chairs, desks and flooring should be replaced or repaired to improve the aesthetics, and help combat infections.
5	Undertake general maintenance sooner	Improving the timeliness with which smaller maintenance issues are actioned needs to be addressed by the Trust.
6	Improve/identify better storage facilities	Time should be taken to identify dedicated storage facilities across the estate (and improve their design and layout).
7	Improve ventilation, heating, lighting	For example, some further improvements to the lighting in the Eye Hospital would be beneficial to patients with poor sight, and improved ventilation is needed on maternity wards.

8	Review cleaning standards	Consistently high standards of cleaning must be maintained at all times across the whole estate.
9	Improve security/safety	Action is needed to ensure that rooms containing medicines, cleaning products etc are kept locked at all times

Healthwatch identified a large number of positive findings during each audit which are summarised in Table C (with more detail provided in Table F). In all instances the staff on duty were welcoming and attentive to patients and/or their relatives and carers.

Table C: A summary of positive findings or observations from the 10 audits

Location	Positive observations
Newhaven Day Hospital	A clean, tidy and well-organised ward. Patients have pleasant external views. There is a dedicated patient dining area.
Paediatrics, Main X-Ray, MRI and CT scanning units	Excellent natural and artificial lighting and ventilation. Attractive décor.
Early Pregnancy Unit and Day Assessment Unit	Welcome signs in place and informative notice boards in use. Water dispensers in place. Comfortable seating available.
Stroke wards (Donald Hall and Solomon wards)	A flexible system of visiting times is operated. Staff wear colour coded uniforms to identify role and seniority.
Claude Nicol and Lawson Unit (Sexual Health and Contraception)	Clean, light and welcoming. A TV screen provides patient info. An induction loop and access ramp is in place. Both units were recently decorated. Modern UPVC windows are installed.
Digestive Diseases Centre and Endoscopy Unit	User-friendly signage has been adopted. Disability access exists. The units are light, airy, clean and tidy. Staff roles are displayed.
Eye Hospital	A low-level reception desk is in place for wheelchair users. Feedback boxes are clearly displayed. Consistent signage is in use throughout.
Respiratory (Catherine James, Overton and Egremont wards)	A calm, quiet and relaxed environment for patients is provided.
Main Accident and & Emergency department	A wide range of patient info is available. New style signage has been adopted. There is an excellent variety of quality seating in the Ambulatory Care Unit.
Royal Alexandra Children's Accident and & Emergency department	Ample toys are available. A TV screen shows child-friendly programmes. Privacy screens are in use. There is an informative notice board and a wide range of patient info is available. Good signage exists throughout.

The environmental audits organised by Healthwatch, and the findings and recommendations made by our volunteers, have led to demonstrable improvements across the BSUH estate.

Eye Hospital, 2014 and 2017

In 2014, Healthwatch volunteers participated in Patient-Led Assessments of the Care Environment (PLACE). They found that the Sussex Eye Hospital had serious problems ranging from faulty windows which let in cold air and created dampness such that rooms could not be used; to uncomfortable chairs, poor flooring and shabby décor. The visit resulted in a number of recommendations from Healthwatch to the BSUH Trust Chief Executive, which in turn led to a £3 million investment programme in 2015 which has remedied most of these issues and improved the facilities for patients and staff with new treatment rooms, as well as a separate waiting area for young patients. The 2014 Healthwatch audit played a valuable role in helping to deliver these improvements. In 2017, Healthwatch volunteers again visited the Sussex Eye Hospital and observed significant improvements in the overall environment, awarding it near perfect scores in three of the four categories that were used to assess the quality of the environment.

In 2018/19, Healthwatch will continue its monthly audit of the BSUH estate, as well as be involved in the more formal Patient-Led Audit of the Care Environment (more information on this 'PLACE' audit is given in the 'Observations and findings' section of this report below). We are also contemplating how we might extend these audits to include the Mill View hospital which is part of the Sussex Community Foundation Trust, and which provides invaluable care to individuals living with mental health conditions.

5. Introduction and methodology

Aims

The monthly audits undertaken by Healthwatch volunteers provide an invaluable insight into the environment of the hospitals and wards within the BSUH estate. The audits allow them to see first-hand the many positive aspects of our local hospitals; as well as providing an opportunity to raise any issues or concerns they identify directly with Healthwatch, who in turn bring these to the attention of senior figures at the Trust. This regular, independent, supply of information empowers the Trust to act on emerging issues much sooner. In turn, patients should benefit from higher standards of care, dignity and safety being maintained across the BSUH estate and staff should witness requested improvements being made. The information we gather also provides Healthwatch with an audit trail which it uses to assess whether our concerns have been acted on.

These monthly audits build on an annual assessment of the BSUH estate called the 'Patient Led Assessment of the Care Environment' or PLACE (see Annex B). Results from PLACE are published each year and show how hospitals are performing both nationally and in relation to other hospitals providing similar services. They provide motivation for improvement by offering a clear message, directly from patients, about how the environment or services might be enhanced. In summary, PLACE provides a framework for assessing what good quality environments look like against common guidelines and standards.

The monthly Healthwatch audits allow Healthwatch to undertake a more regular review on the areas covered by PLACE namely:

- cleanliness;
- food;
- privacy, dignity and wellbeing;
- condition, appearance and maintenance;
- suitability of the environment for those with a disability and/or dementia.

Methodology

Part of the local Healthwatch programme is to carry out 'enter and view visits'. Our volunteers are all trained 'Authorised Representatives' and the Health and Social Care Act 2012 permits them to carry out visits to local health and social care services on behalf of Healthwatch. Their role is to find out how these services are being delivered, to promote positive experiences, and make recommendations for improvement. They can do this by talking to patients and their relatives or carers, and by recording their observations.

Healthwatch use these powers to conduct our environmental audits of the BSUH estate. Each month, Healthwatch determines which site to visit, and sends two volunteers to tour the designated area accompanied by two members of BSUH staff. The focus of our audits is always the patient experience and how this might be improved.

When carrying out audits, Healthwatch volunteers record their observations of the physical environment recording notes under the following heading:

- Positive findings/observations
- Challenges and concerns noted
- What staff told us
- Recommendations to the Trust

From August 2017, Healthwatch introduced a new checklist for volunteers to complete. This is largely a 'yes/no' exercise, with opportunity for volunteers to record any positive findings and make recommendations under three headings:

- welcoming environment** e.g. is relevant and up-to-date information available; is signage in place, and is it helpful; and overall, does the ward instil confidence and trust?
- safe environment** e.g. are high cleaning standards being maintained; are hand gels in use; are medicines and dangerous substances stored safely; are fire exits and equipment in place?
- well-organised environment** e.g. is equipment being stored safely?

A fourth heading was added in November 2017 to record observations under the heading "(iv) **caring and involving**" which is used to assess how well the environment protects individual privacy, dignity and wellbeing e.g. are patients dressed to protect their dignity.

The checklist we use is based on the NHS publication "*The Fifteen Steps Challenge: Quality from a patient's perspective (2012)*"² which is concerned with what "good quality care looks and feels like from a patient's perspective". The toolkit is designed to help "look at hospital care through the eyes of patients and relatives, helping to hear what good looks like". The toolkit aligns with the Care Quality Commission core quality standards, and matches many of the quality standards developed by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE).³

After they have completed an audit, Healthwatch volunteers finalise their feedback sheet and checklist and submit these to Healthwatch who then shares these with BSUH staff. In turn, Healthwatch should be provided with an action plan that specifies the issues identified by Healthwatch and what the Trust proposes to do about them.

² <https://www.england.nhs.uk/improvement-hub/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2017/11/15-Steps-Challenge-toolkit.pdf>

³ Our work aligns with wider NHS guidance and standards produced by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). This approach ensures that any observations and recommendations made by Healthwatch are meaningful and, if adopted, can lead to changes that will ultimately benefit patients.

6. Observations and findings from Healthwatch audits

Healthwatch introduced a checklist for volunteers to complete in August 2017, meaning that a checklist was completed for only seven of the ten audits undertaken from April 2017 to March 2018. The checklist recorded the scores given by our volunteers for each audit under four separate headings. The average scores awarded across the seven audits were as follows:

Table D: Average scores by assessment heading

Assessment heading	Score out of 10
The environment was welcoming	7
The environment was safe	7.8
The environment was caring	8
The environment was organised	8.3

The scores awarded during each audit represent the views of the Healthwatch volunteers in their role as ‘patient’ e.g. “As a patient what score would I give this ward under each heading?” A series of statements taken from the NHS 15-step challenge were used to help guide their thinking. As can be seen, the average scores were all good or very good. Healthwatch considers that a score of 9 or 10 indicates that the ward in question is performing strongly with little or no room for improvement; a score of 7 or 8 suggests there are a number of areas which require attention in order to improve the physical environment, and a score of 6 or less indicates there are significant changes required to the physical environment to bring it up to the standard which patients are entitled to demand. A full breakdown of the scores awarded for each audit is given at Annex C. During some audits more than one checklist was completed i.e. this occurred when two or more wards were visited as part of the same visit and where the environments showed marked differences.

Individually, the highest audit scores were awarded to the Eye Hospital and Royal Alexandra Children’s Accident and Emergency department. In both cases, the sites scored 9 out of 10 in three of the four categories used to assess quality. The Eye Hospital underwent a £3 million renovation in 2015 partly following earlier concerns reported by Healthwatch following a PLACE visit in 2014⁴. The Children’s Hospital is currently the newest part of the RSCH estate, having opened in 2007, and was designed to meet modern healthcare specifications. It is perhaps not surprising therefore that both sites scored well overall given the large financial investments that have made in improving their infrastructures. Nevertheless, during the 2017 audits Healthwatch noted a number of concerns and made several recommendations to further improve both sites, some of which are shown in Table E below.

⁴ <https://www.healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk/news/press-releasehealthwatch-actions-kick-start-the-sussex-eye-hospital-redevelopment/>

Are environments welcoming?

The heading which consistently received the lowest scores across the seven audits was *'Is the environment welcoming?'*. Only two sites were given a score of 9 out of 10 (the Eye Hospital and Children's A&E), whilst three sites scored only 5 or 6 (Claude Nicol, Digestive Diseases and Stroke wards). Where low scores were given some of the main reasons included poor signage and a lack of or poor quality patient-targeted information which was also sometimes out of date. Some sites had poor ventilation and air-conditioning (Maternity and Respiratory wards); whilst it was felt that some of the decor in the Respiratory wards could be improved.

Those sites which scored highly included features such as attractive décor and art work, a wide range of informative patient information, clear welcome signs, information about staff, and items which were designed for the patient demographic e.g. toys were provided in the Children's A&E department.

In all cases, the staff that were on duty were observed to be welcoming.

Are environments safe?

Under the *'Is the environment safe?'* heading, volunteers were asked to observe the overall cleanliness of the environment; the use and availability of hand gels; whether medical items were safely stored and if the environment was uncluttered.

The majority of the sites audited scored a 7 or 8 under this heading. The exceptions were the Eye Hospital and Children's A&E which both received a 9, and the 6 given to the Respiratory wards. Sites which scored well had common features such as clear fire exit signage; good lighting; plenty of hand gels and notices encouraging their use; good hygienic storage, and dedicated rooms containing medical or cleaning items that were locked. Where sites scored less well, some of the main observations were that hand gel usage by the public was poor and/or notices did not encourage their usage; and most sites had a number of maintenance issues, some of which were long-standing. In some instances repairs were needed to maintain hygiene, for example on a number of occasions flooring and chairs were observed which had been repaired with hazard tape. In addition, during our audit of the Maternity units (based in Thomas Kemp Tower) staff told Healthwatch that they felt a number of their environmental concerns were regarded as being low priority and that repeated requests to improve ventilation were routinely ignored.

Are environments well organised?

The heading which consistently received the highest scores was *'Is the environment organised?'* with four separate audits being given 9 out of 10. Such sites were routinely reported to be calm, organised and generally uncluttered.

In several audits, volunteers recommended that equipment could be stored better. On several occasions the doors to linen, sluice, staff rooms and other rooms were reported to have been left open and accessible to patients and relatives when they should not have been.

Some of the lowest scores given under this heading were recorded for the Respiratory wards (Catherine James ward, Overton ward and Egremont wards) and Stroke wards (Solomon ward and Donald Hall ward). Healthwatch noted that all of these wards are located in the Barry building which will be replaced as part of the '3T's redevelopment' of the RSCH site. It is widely accepted that the Barry building is old, and the environment is often poorer than other areas of the BSUH estate. However, Healthwatch does not accept the argument that the site will be replaced as part of the 3Ts's development as justification for failing to implement improvements now; especially as the first stage of the new development will not open until winter 2020/2021. Between now and then patients are entitled to expect higher standards from the physical environment than they are currently receiving.

Are environments caring (respecting privacy and dignity)?

As indicated, Healthwatch only began to record observations under the '*Is the environment caring?*' heading in November 2017. This assessment does not relate to the standard of nursing or doctor care, rather it considers whether the environment recognises the privacy and dignity of patients e.g. issues such as whether patients are dressed to protect their dignity, and whether cubicle curtains are long enough to provide privacy and do they fully close?

The four sites visited since November 2017 were all allocated between 7-9 points (out of 10). Where concerns were identified these related to whether more could be done to ensure patient privacy is protected e.g. the walls of some consulting cubicles did not always extend all the way to the ceiling potentially allowing for conversations to be overheard.

7. Healthwatch recommendations

Overall, Healthwatch identified nine key areas which it considers would help to improve the environment of the various wards, clinics and departments within the BSUH estate.

Table E: Areas where there is scope for improvement and recommended actions

Area for improvement	Recommended actions
Improve the quality of available information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the quality of information on noticeboards by ensuring all information is relevant and up-to-date. • Provide clearer information about staff on duty and their job roles (including clearer job titles on staff uniforms). • Ensure 'Friends and Family' test boxes are provided and prominently displayed to enable patients and relatives to provide feedback and make suggestions for change. • Improve information on wait times. In many cases none was available and/or TV monitors designed to provide this information were not working.
Improve signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Across the BSUH estate different styles of signage are in use and adopting a uniform approach would help people find their way about. In a number of instances signage was missing, hard to find, hidden or unclear.
Promote the consistent use of hand gels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst hand gels were often in place during audits, their observed usage by members of the public was poor. Prominent signage is needed to encourage the use of hand gels.
Replace/update equipment or furniture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In several sites, some of the furniture and fixtures were worn and in poor condition, and looked unhygienic. Items should be replaced, and items which are no longer in use should be removed to declutter the environment.
Undertake general maintenance sooner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerous smaller maintenance issues were observed, which in a number of cases had been awaiting action for several months. The Trust should improve the timeliness re: maintenance issues.
Improve/identify better storage facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of storage facilities should be undertaken. In some cases, Healthwatch observed patient toilets being used to store items and/or items being poorly stored or left in inappropriate locations.
Improve ventilation, heating, lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements in this area are recommended for the Eye Hospital, Respiratory wards and Maternity units, and the Stroke wards.
Review cleaning standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In late 2017/early 2018 our audits began noticing a deterioration in cleaning standards, which should be reviewed and rectified immediately.
Improve security/safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthwatch noted with concern evidence of sluice, medicine and storage rooms being left opened and accessible to the public. Immediate action is required to ensure that such rooms remain inaccessible.

A summary of Healthwatch findings following each separate audit

Table F: A summary of positive findings or observations from each individual audits

Location	Positive observations	Recommended actions
Newhaven Day Hospital	A clean, tidy and well-organised ward. Patients have pleasant external views from wards which are full of natural light. There is a dedicated patient dining area where patients are encouraged to eat together.	A few minor maintenance issues need attention e.g. loose handrails; some lights not working. Staff told us that getting woodwork repairs done is problematic.
Paediatrics, Main X-Ray, MRI and CT scanning units	There is excellent natural and artificial lighting and ventilation, and attractive décor. Overall facilities in the Education department are impressive. Several patients provided unsolicited positive comments.	General maintenance issues were noted e.g. stained ceiling tiles and some chairs need replacing. Some poor cleaning standards were noted. A TV monitor is not working. The shower room is used to store toys and clothes.
Early Pregnancy Unit and Day Assessment Unit	Welcome signs are in place and informative notice boards are in use. Water dispensers are in place and comfortable seating is available. Available data showed excellent infection control on the wards.	Signage to the units is poor. Some flooring needs replacing. Poor ventilation was noted. Patient privacy must be improved. Fire doors must always be kept shut. General maintenance issues were noted.
Stroke wards (Donald Hall and Solomon wards)	A flexible system of visiting times is operated which is beneficial to patients. Staff wear colour coded uniforms to identify their role and seniority.	The wards could be made more welcoming with better patient info. More storage is needed to declutter the environment. Ventilation is poor. Overall, the décor needs urgent attention. A number of general maintenance issues were noted.
Claude Nicol and Lawson Unit (Sexual Health and Contraception) <i>This was a follow-up audit after an earlier audit in March 2017</i>	Both units are clean, light and welcoming. A TV screen provides useful patient info in Lawson. An induction loop and access ramps are both in place in Claude Nicol. Both units were recently decorated and modern UPVC windows and LED lighting have been installed. Patient info is good. A disabled toilet now exists in Claude Nicol.	Clinic rooms are used as storage which is poor practice. Further improvements to Claude Nicol reception are needed to improve privacy. An automatic door should be installed in Lawson. Claude Nicol noticeboard needs better patient info. Some worn furniture needs replacing and minor maintenance issues were noted across both units.

<p>Digestive Diseases Centre and Endoscopy Unit</p>	<p>User-friendly signage within these units has been adopted. Disability access exists. The units are light, airy, clean and tidy. Staff roles are displayed. Patient info is good and there are clear notices encouraging the use of hand gels.</p>	<p>Signage to the units is poor. The units also lack welcome signs. An unused treatment room containing medical supplies was left open. Toilets need to be made dementia friendly. A number of general maintenance issues were noted.</p>
<p>Eye Hospital</p> <p><i>This was a follow-up audit after an earlier audit in 2014</i></p>	<p>A low-level reception desk is in place for wheelchair users and disabled access is good overall. Feedback boxes are clearly displayed. Consistent signage is in use throughout. A café is in situ. The hospital is very welcoming, and chairs/seating are varied and in good repair. Good patient info.</p>	<p>External signs to the Eye hospital need to be improved. A toilet is doubling up as a storage area. Some aspects of privacy could be improved. Ventilation/air-con is not ideal. Some corridors are cluttered. Some areas were poorly lit and minor maintenance issues were noted.</p>
<p>Respiratory (Catherine James, Overton and Egremont wards)</p>	<p>A calm, quiet and relaxed environment for patients is provided.</p>	<p>Poor signage to fire exits/routes. Rooms containing medical supplies were unlocked. Storage facilities need improving. Urgent maintenance and some cleaning issues were noted.</p>
<p>Main Accident and & Emergency department</p> <p><i>This was a follow-up audit after an earlier audit in 2016</i></p>	<p>A wide range of patient info is available on well designed notice boards. New style signage has recently been adopted which is clear and informative. There is an excellent variety of quality seating in the Ambulatory Care Unit. The overall environment is good.</p>	<p>Flooring needs to be replaced. A TV providing info on wait times needs fixing. Better info on staff roles would be useful for patients. Feedback boxes need to be more prominently displayed. Better signage at the entrance and reception is needed.</p>
<p>Royal Alexandra Children's Accident and & Emergency department</p>	<p>Ample toys are available. A TV screen shows child-friendly programmes. Privacy screens are in use. There is an informative notice board, and a wide range of patient info is available. Good signage exists throughout. A patient feedback box was clearly available.</p>	<p>Some patient info was out of date. Flooring in reception needs replacing. The linen storage room needs improving to make this more hygienic. Some maintenance and cleaning issues were noted.</p>

8. Case study: positive change at the Claude Nicol and Lawson Units delivered through Healthwatch environmental visits

On the 29 March 2017, our volunteers visited the two sexual health clinics based in the General Outpatients’ building of the RSCH and were extremely concerned by the state of the building, its fabric and the potential impact on privacy and dignity for patients and staff. The issues identified by Healthwatch were considered to be serious, and these were subsequently reported to the Managing Director of the Trust.

In September 2017, Healthwatch returned to re-audit both clinics and assess what actions the Trust had taken to rectify the earlier issues. Healthwatch was pleased to see the large number of improvements that the Trust had made to both clinics in the five months since its last visit in March. Healthwatch applauds the Trust for taking such rapid action to improve these clinical environments; which are now judged to be safer, cleaner, and which also provide more professional and welcoming spaces for patients. A summary of how some of the main concerns identified by Healthwatch have been addressed by the Trust are given in Table G below.

Table G: How the Trust responded to issues raised by Healthwatch

March 2017 audit – issues identified by Healthwatch	September 2017 audit – improvements noted since the March audit
In the Claud Nicole Unit, patients had to sit in open cubicles in reception making it difficult or impossible for confidentiality to be maintained.	The reception layout has been improved but more could be done to guarantee privacy, especially at busy times.
Healthwatch volunteers were told that in a row of examining rooms, conversations could be heard through the prefabricated walls.	Staff advised that low radio noise now cancels this out to some extent.
In the summer when windows need to be opened, conversations could be overheard.	Air con has now been installed and windows are only opened in order to air rooms, and never whilst consultations are taking place.
Examination rooms were cluttered, in need of decoration and furniture needed replacing.	Rooms have all been redecorated and feel cleaner, airier and less stuffy.
The room containing medications was not locked because it doubled up as an examination room.	The room still doubles as a clinic and storage room. The clinic continues to lack dedicated storage space due to the overall design however it is not clear whether anything can be done to rectify this.
Throughout both buildings, water had penetrated from the roof staining the ceilings, and some ceiling tiles had come loose.	Volunteers were advised that parts of the roof had been fixed and staff indicated that water leakage had stopped.
The flooring and skirting boards were described as being stained and worn in places.	White block has been installed into a linking corridor, replacing dirty and worn ceramic tiles.

Some of the original windows were old, rotten and leaked.	All windows have been replaced with new UPVC.
The walls and woodwork in many areas were chipped, with holes in some walls from where old sanitisers had been removed.	Holes have been filled, and redecorated.
Furniture was in poor condition.	Reception held a large number of chairs all with wipeable covers and these were in good condition. A larger, specialised chair for those with a disability was also provided.
There is no accessible toilet for bariatric patients in wheelchairs or access to treatment rooms.	A new disabled toilet now exists.
The outside of the building was in poor repair and the parking bays were too small, making it difficult for a disabled person to get out of their vehicle.	The parking bays have been improved. Whilst the number of spaces has been reduced from 3 to 2, those now in use were much larger meaning that disabled patients would be able to manoeuvre in and out of them with greater ease.

Annex A – Dates and locations of Healthwatch visits

Date	Location
April 2017	A visit was not undertaken this month. Healthwatch volunteers assisted with a mock CQC inspection at the RSCH.
Thursday 4 May 2017	<p>Newhaven Day Hospital</p> <p>The Newhaven ward is a "step-down" ward of BSUH, which only takes patients from the Royal Sussex (mostly Bailey ward) or Princess Royal Haywards Heath (e.g. Twineham and Newick wards) who have a Discharge Plan, and who are not generally expected to need significant additional care following time in the main hospital. It is not a rehabilitation ward, and patients only stay in the ward for an average of 6 days. The ward opened in January 2016 in premises previously occupied by the Newhaven Community ward.</p>
Tuesday 6 June 2017	<p>Paediatrics, Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orthodontics and Dentistry, Surgical ward, Paediatric Intensive Care, Respiratory Clinic, Education Department <p>Main X-Ray, MRI and CT. Level 5 Main hospital block</p>
Wednesday 5 July 2017	<p>Early Pregnancy Unit and Day Assessment Unit (maternity)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 11 Thomas Kemp Tower: services included ante-natal clinic, day assessment unit and a gynaecological ward • Level 12 Thomas Kemp Tower: services post-natal and ante-natal inpatient wards
Thursday 3 August 2017	<p>Stroke wards</p> <p>3rd floor of the Barry Building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solomon ward • Donald Hall ward
Tuesday 4 September 2017	<p>Claude Nicol and Lawson Unit (Sexual Health and Contraception services)</p> <p>Located in the General Outpatients' Building, Eastern Road</p>
Wednesday 4 October 2017	<p>Digestive Diseases Centre and Endoscopy Unit</p> <p>Millennium Wing and Thomas Kemp Tower</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digestive Diseases Centre, Millennium Wing Level 9. A combined Medical and Surgical ward for patients with gastrointestinal conditions. • The Endoscopy Unit and the Digestive Diseases Outpatient Clinic in the Thomas Kemp Tower Level 9

Thursday 2 November 2017	<p>Eye Hospital Accessed via Eastern Road and Sudeley Terrace</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orthoptics department, Eye Hospital Outpatients and Accident and Emergency Departments.
Tuesday 5 December 2017	A visit was not undertaken this month
Wednesday 10 January 2018	<p>Respiratory wards 2nd floor, Barry Building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catherine James ward • Egremont ward • Overton ward
Thursday 8 February 2018	<p>Main Accident and & Emergency department Level 5, Thomas Kemp Tower</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urgent Care Unit, Majors Unit, and Ambulatory Care Unit
Thursday 8 March 2018	<p>Royal Alexandra Children's Accident and & Emergency department Level 6, Thomas Kemp Tower</p>
April 2018	No visit undertaken

Annex B – Patient-Led Assessment of the Care Environment (PLACE)

Healthwatch monthly audits are an extension of the ‘Patient Led Assessment of the Care Environment’ or PLACE. PLACE is delivered by NHS Improvement (NHSI) which is an NHS organisation responsible for overseeing foundation trusts and NHS trusts, as well as independent providers that provide NHS-funded care. It supports providers to give patients consistently safe, high quality, compassionate care within local health systems that are financially sustainable.

PLACE provides a framework for assessing what good quality environments look like. To do this common guidelines and standards have been created in order to assess an environment's:

- cleanliness
- food and hydration provision
- the extent to which the provision of care with privacy and dignity is supported
- whether the premises are equipped to meet the needs of people with dementia or with a disability.

PLACE assessments involve local people (known as Patient Assessors) going into hospitals as part of a team, alongside staff. Patient assessors make up at least 50 per cent of the team. Each year, Healthwatch volunteers make up an invaluable part of this team.⁵

PLACE assessments appraise the non-clinical aspects of NHS healthcare setting i.e. they do not include audits of operating theatres or any other space where medical procedures are carried out.

Results from the 2017 PLACE visit

The results from the 2017 Patient-Led Assessments of the Care Environment (PLACE) Programme were published on 15 August last year⁶. Hospitals within the Brighton Sussex University Hospitals Trust (BSUH), which includes the Royal Sussex County, were compared against nine other Trusts in the south and against national averages. In summary, the 2017 scores were generally good news. There were sizeable improvements in the scores for ‘Dementia’, ‘Disability’ and ‘Food and Hydration’ compared to 2016, and BSUH scored higher than the national average in ‘Cleanliness’ and ‘Food and Hydration’. However, the score for ‘Privacy, Dignity and Wellbeing’ continued to worsen and has been declining since 2013 (see Annex B for the data).

⁵ In 2018, Healthwatch will be supporting PLACE visits to the RSCH and also Mill View hospital, part of the Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust. The Mill View hospital provides care for people with mental health problems and learning disabilities

⁶ <http://digital.nhs.uk/catalogue/PUB30055>

Despite some good scores, BSUH is still behind other Trusts in the South in some areas, and also below national averages in four areas. But it is also important to acknowledge the improvements in many areas and the overall upward trend in scores since 2013, which is testimony to the hard work and effort of staff at our local hospitals.

BSUH compared to 9 other Trusts in the South (2017):

- BSUH scored 2nd (out of 9) in four of the eight areas assessed under PLACE ('cleanliness', 'food & hydration', 'organic food?' and 'ward')
- BSUH scored 5th (out of 9) in two of the eight areas assessed ('dementia' and 'disability')
- BSUH scored 8th (out of 9) in both 'Privacy, Dignity and Wellbeing' and 'Condition, Appearance and Maintenance' (The Royal Sussex County Hospital 3 Ts redevelopment will help to improve this score in the future).

BSUH compared to National averages (2017)

- BSUH was lower than the national average in four areas: 'Privacy, Dignity and Wellbeing', 'Condition, Appearance and Maintenance', 'Dementia' and 'Disability'. However, the scores for these latter two areas improved by 17.5% and 14% respectively on 2016.
- BSUH scored higher than the national average in 'Cleanliness' and 'Food and Hydration'.

BSUH PLACE scores since 2013

- The score for 'Privacy, Dignity and Wellbeing' dropped slightly on 2016 and has dropped every year since 2013 which is of concern.
- The scores for all the remaining areas increased from 2016 and have also been showing an upwards trend overall, indicating improvement year-on-year.

	Cleanliness %	Food and hydration %	Privacy, Dignity and Wellbeing %	Condition, Appearance and Maintenance %	Dementia %	Disability %
2013	97	84	87	81	Not measured	
2014	98	96	84	87	Not measured	
2015	99	96	80	77	58	-
2016	99	86	76	84	55	67
2017	99	95	73	91	73	81

* All numbers have been rounded up to the nearest whole number

Annex C – NHS 15-step challenge scores per ward/department: summary

Date of visit	Ward or department	NHS 15 step challenge scores			
		Welcoming	Safe	Caring	Organised
5.4.17	No visit				
4.5.17	Newhaven ward	Healthwatch did not use the 15-step challenge at this time so scores are not available			
6.6.17	Level 5 (x-ray, MRI, CT Scan)				
6.6.17	Royal Alex Children's Hospital				
7.7.17	Maternity and Gynaecology				
3.8.17	Stroke Donald Hall & Solomon	5	8	Healthwatch did not use the 15-step challenge to record scores under 'Caring' at this time	7
4.9.17	Lawson Unit	8	8		9
4.9.17	Claude Nicol	5	8		9
4.10.17	Digestive diseases Centre ward	6	9		9
4.10.17	Digestive Diseases Outpatients	6	7		9
2.11.17	Eye hospital	9	9	7	9
5.12.17	No visit				
10.1.18	Respiratory	7	6	8	6
8.2.18	A&E (Acute and Majors)	8	7	8	8
8.3.18	A&E Royal Alexandra	9	8	9	9

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove Address:

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove
Community Base
113 Queens Road,
Brighton
BN1 3XG

Phone: 01273 234040

Email: office@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk

Website: www.healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk

Share your experiences with health and social care services via our online feedback centre on www.healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk

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