



Report of Findings on the University Hospital of North Tees Survey

February 2016

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Introduction

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees



Local Healthwatches have been set up across England to create a strong, independent consumer champion with the aim to:

- Strengthen the collective voice of citizens and communities in influencing local health and social care services to better meet their needs.
- Support people to find the right health and social care services for them by providing appropriate information, advice and signposting.

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees works with local people, patients, service users, carers, community groups, organisations, service providers and commissioners to get the best out of local health and social care services. This doesn't just mean improving services today but influencing and shaping services to meet the needs of the local communities tomorrow.

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees is steered by a Board of volunteers, commissioned by the Local Authority and accountable to the public. Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees are the only non-statutory body whose sole purpose is to understand the needs, experiences and concerns of people who use health and social care services and to speak-out on their behalf.

Healthwatch has:

- The statutory right to be listened to; Providers and commissioners must respond to Healthwatch within 20 days of submission of requests for information or reports.
- The statutory power to Enter & View publicly funded health and social care services.
- A statutory seat on the Health and Wellbeing Board.

University Hospital of North Tees

University Hospital North Tees provides acute care services for North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust. The hospital has 563 beds and provides urgent and emergency care services, critical care services, medical services, surgical services, maternity services, outpatient services and children and young people's services.



The hospital has a workforce of approximately 5500 staff and serves a population of around 400,000 in Hartlepool, Stockton and parts of County Durham. The trust also provides services in a number of community facilities across the areas supported, including Peterlee Community Hospital and the One Life Centre, Hartlepool (North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust, 2016; CQC, 2016).

Rationale

Following recent public engagement, Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees received information regarding service provision at the University Hospital of North Tees. The questionnaire was generated to gather further information about patient's views and experiences of accessing services at the University Hospital of North Tees. Depending on the information gathered, Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees plan to further investigate any issues highlighted.

Aim:

- To gather patients, family member and carers views and experiences of accessing services at the University Hospital of North Tees.

Objectives:

- Design and distribute a questionnaire to patients / relatives / carers etc. via online and postal distribution.
- Analyse questionnaire responses to determine any common themes and if any further work or investigations need to be carried out.

Methodology

The main method of data collection was the use of a questionnaire, designed by Healthwatch staff to gather information from patients, family members and carers regarding their experience of accessing services at the University Hospital of North Tees. The survey was conducted over a six month period from September 2015 to February 2016.

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees created the questionnaire online, the weblink address was publicised on Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees' website, Facebook, Twitter and Streetlife pages to ensure a wide range of data was collected. In addition to this, the online link was posted in a newsletter via email to Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees members. The questionnaire was also posted out, with a stamped addressed envelope, to members of the public who requested a paper copy. (See Appendix 1 for a copy of the online / postal questionnaire)

Results

A total of 206 questionnaires were completed, 138 of which were completed by the patients themselves, 46 completed by family members and 23 were filled out on behalf of both the patients and their family members.

Overall Experience

When patients were asked to rate their overall experience of visiting the University Hospital of North Tees, responses varied from 'Unacceptable' to 'Outstanding', however the majority of patients rated their visit as 'Very Good', 'Excellent' and 'Outstanding'. The results of all the responses are displayed in Table 1 below.

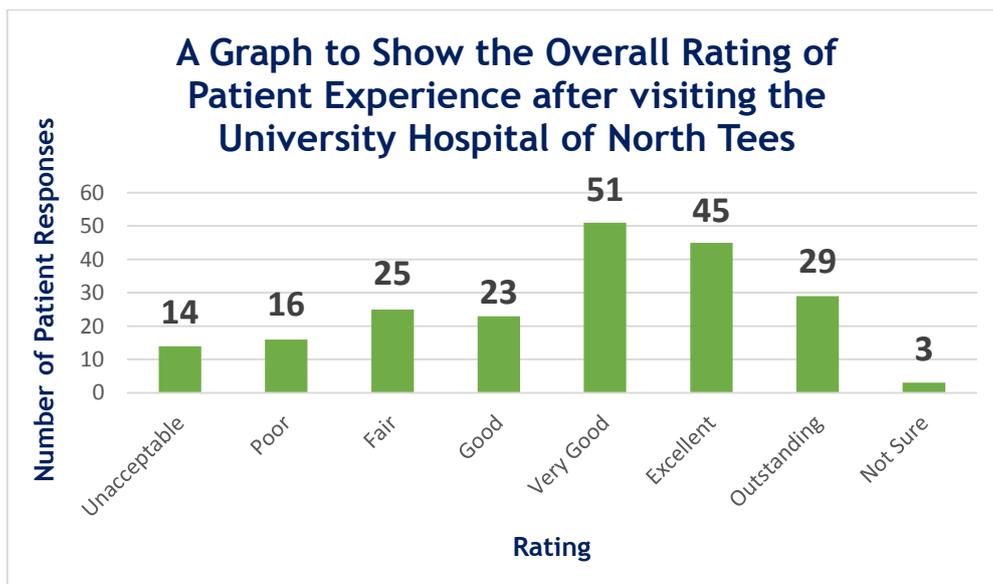
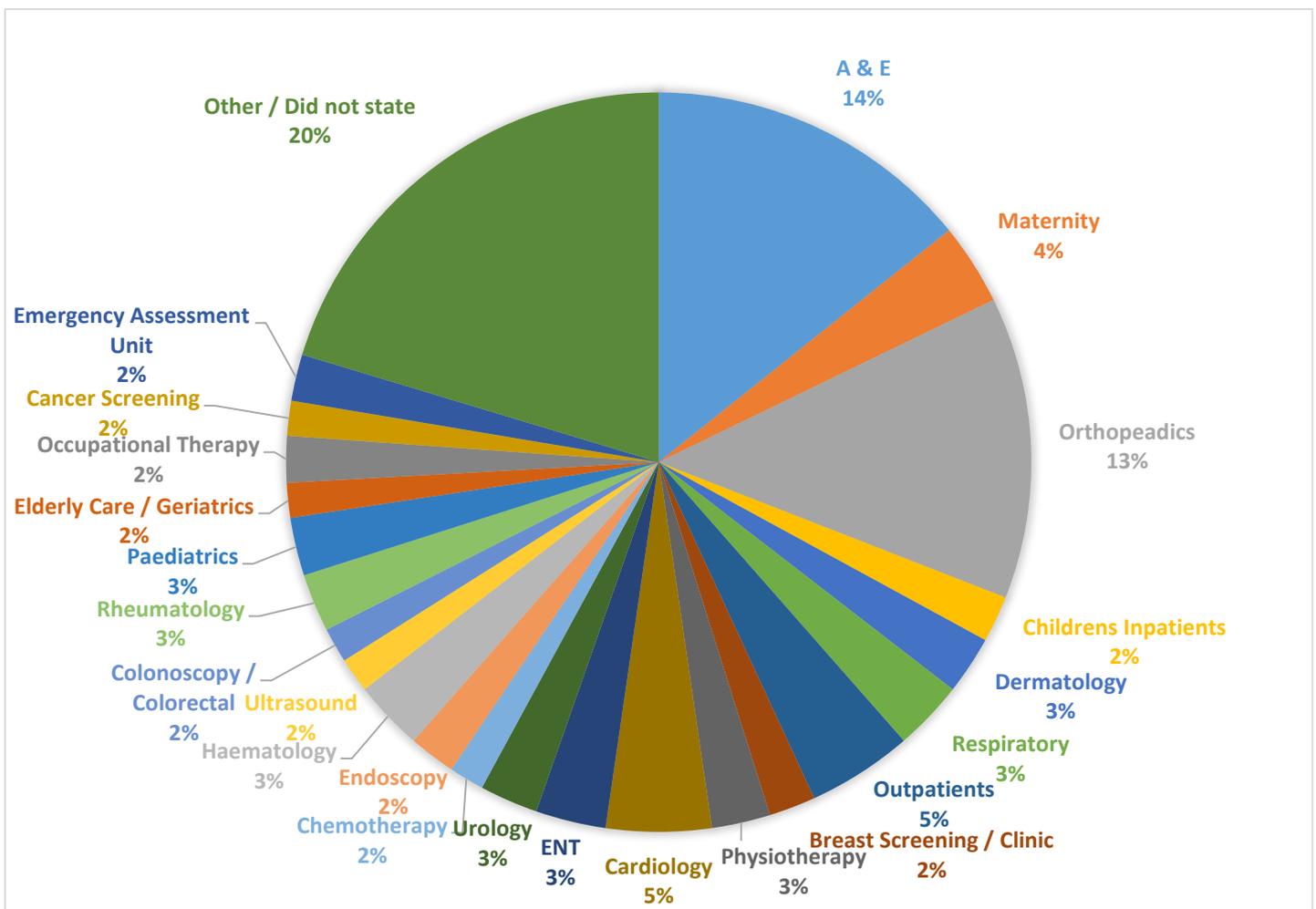


Table 1: Table showing patient responses when asked ‘How would you rate your overall experience of the University Hospital of North Tees during your visit?’

Services Accessed at the University Hospital of North Tees

The pie chart below show the range of services used by the patients who visited the University Hospital of North Tees.

A Chart to Show the services accessed by patients at the University Hospital of North Tees



Patient Views and Experiences

The questionnaire asked if there were any views, concerns, issues or experiences that patients, family members and carers wished to share with Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees. 111 responses were received to this question, with varying degrees of both positive and negative feedback.

With regards to the care provided by the staff, the majority of feedback received was all positive. Patients explained that they felt ‘the service was very professional’ and that the hospital had ‘competent and friendly staff’. Additional comments received included; ‘The staff were amazing and very kind’ and staff [were] very busy but found time to be supportive during a difficult time’ and ‘the level of care she received was outstanding’.

Very positive feedback was received for a number of departments in particular, one being the children’s inpatients where respondents stated that it ‘has a lovely atmosphere, with fantastic staff who made us feel safe’. Further positive feedback was extended to the theatre staff where one respondent stated that they ‘were exceptional’ as well as the IBD (Inflammatory bowel disease) specialist nurse team who had given one particular patient ‘amazing support’ during their visit(s). Accident and Emergency also received lots of praise with feedback given regarding the staff, stating how they were ‘sympathetic, supportive and caring’ and how the staff right through from the paramedics to the nurses and doctors in the department were ‘a credit to the NHS’. The bowel screening service provided by the University Hospital of North Tees also received very positive feedback, with respondents explaining how the staff were very friendly and made patients ‘feel at ease’ during the procedure. One particular response stated that the service was ‘outstanding from start to finish’.

I attended Accident and Emergency and was treated promptly by competent, friendly staff

Those who filled in the questionnaire also gave praise to a number of wards, some of which included ward 18, 19, 22, 24, 27, 28, 31, 33 and 40. Staff on these wards were described as ‘excellent’ and ‘fantastic’ and found to be very ‘caring and attentive’ where ‘nothing is too much trouble’. Further praise was received for the orthopaedics, cardiology, physiotherapy, maternity and chemotherapy departments.

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees also received some negative feedback regarding patient experience following a visit to the University Hospital of North Tees with particular reference to the lack of and poor communication. One particular patient had visited Accident and Emergency with her child who was ‘screaming in pain’. The receptionist spent ‘what felt like forever’ confirming the patients details while another receptionist staff was ‘standing around talking’ Another respondent explained how they went to A&E as she was ‘very ill’ however it appeared that the receptionist ‘could not have cared less’, it was only when a nurse noticed the patient that ‘then things improved’. Other

respondents to the questionnaire informed Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees that they heard ‘members of staff arguing’ and that some staff were ‘seeming to spend more time talking about their social lives’. This concern was also expressed by a parent who had spent a number of weeks in the hospital with her child who explained that the nurses and doctors on the ward were ‘unnecessarily noisy, chatting about their social lives in loud voices’ while the children were trying to sleep.

Further information gathered from the questionnaire discovered that there were some issues raised regarding communication between the staff and patients. Some respondents felt that their appointments had been rushed due to them running late and there was ‘no time for a proper discussion’ and another respondent stated that they ‘didn’t feel as though I was listened to’. One patient also stated that they felt there was a lack of communication explaining ‘I wasn’t informed on what was happening to me’. Observations made by another patient explained how ‘an old man’s calls for a nurse were being ignored by nurses on the ward walking past the room’ ‘the man started shouting for a nurse’ and ‘the nurse outside the room ignored the three calls’ until eventually someone attended to them. In addition to this, another patient explained that when they received their food, they did not get what they had ordered and the ordering and delivery system appeared ‘very mixed up’. The member of staff giving out the food was also found to be ‘rude to patients’. When patients tried to locate the staff, ‘the named ward nurses could not be found’ and there also appeared to be some language barriers as feedback received stated that ‘older patients, some with dementia could not understand [the] nursing staff’.

The discharge process was also raised with Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees to have problems. One particular patient felt that they experienced a ‘disappointing rushed discharge’ as the bed was needed for a new patient but they then had to endure a ‘lengthy wait in the discharge lounge’ before going home. Another respondent stated that they felt their experience of the University Hospital of North Tees was ‘all very good apart from [the] discharge process’ as they had an ‘extra nights stay’ ‘due to waiting for meds’. Another patient gave similar feedback stating that the length of wait was ‘too long’ to be discharged from the lounge. Frustration was also expressed by one family member who had gone to pick up a relative who stated ‘after waiting 2 hours for medication, we waited another hour and a half for a wheelchair’.

Communication between staff members and me being the biggest problem

Further issues raised by respondents of this questionnaire was with regards to notes being ‘lost’ and incorrect information on letters. One particular patient had received an appointment letter stating to attend the hospital at 1:00pm. However, they were told on arrival that they ‘should have been there at 7:00am’. In addition to

this, further feedback received explained that one patient had ‘received a letter for an appointment [and] he was not aware what it was about’. When the patient phoned to enquire about the appointment, the hospital explained that ‘his appointment had been moved to the following week, which he hadn’t been informed about’. One disappointed patient also explained how they had received ‘a letter with [her] details incorrect’. Additional feedback explained that ‘the department issuing appointment letters do not seem to be aware of the surgical diary’.

Another respondent explained that a ‘lot of time [was] spent looking for items / records’. Further concerns were expressed by another patient who explained that ‘every visit I had to tell the doctor my history as my notes were lost after the first visit’. Furthermore, one patient explained that they turned up at North Tees when actually they should have been at Hartlepool and stated there were ‘communication problems here’.

Rating of Services at the University Hospital of North Tees

Table 2 below shows how the patients rated the service they accessed at the University Hospital of North Tees. The majority of patients rated the hospital as excellent, however 25 patients who completed the questionnaire found it to be unacceptable or poor.

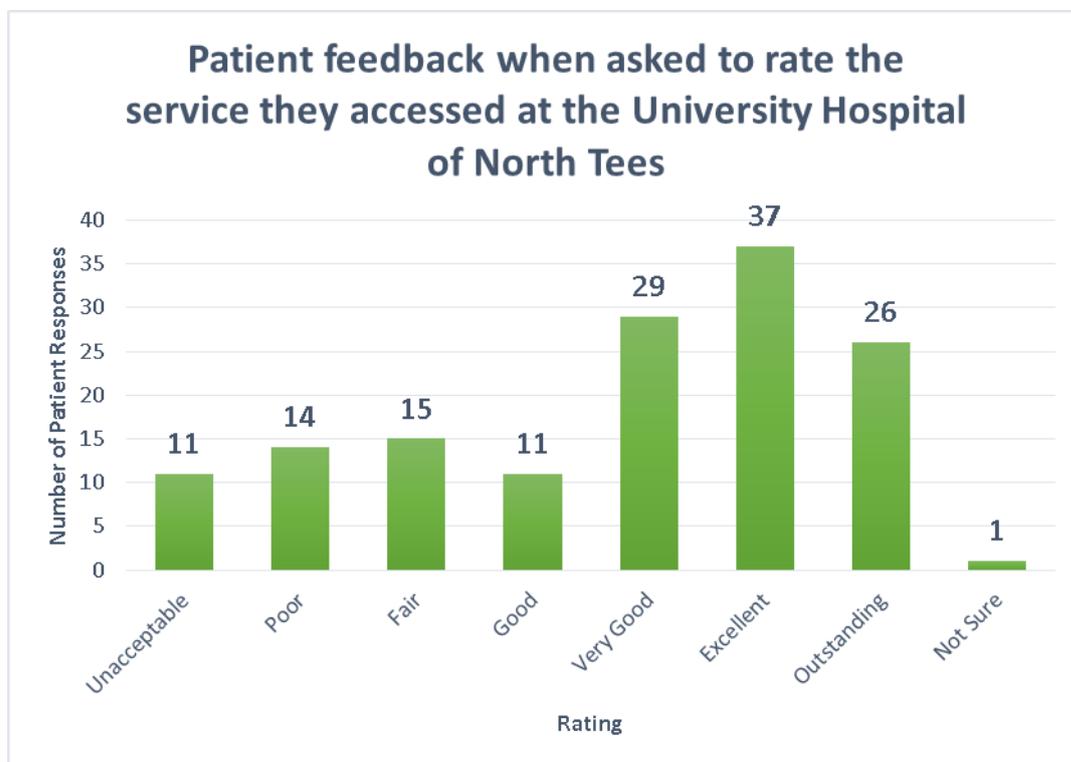


Table 2: Patient feedback to the question: ‘How would you rate this service?’

Improvement Suggestions

The questionnaire asked patients if there was anything which they felt could be improved with regards to their experience of accessing services and receiving treatment at the University Hospital of North Tees.

Patients felt that the receptionists (particularly those at the front of A&E) should take more time and have more sympathy for the patients who were in hospital. When asked for improvement suggestions, one particular patient responded with 'Have more sympathetic receptionists and not someone who was more interested in their social life'. In addition to this, the 'staff should be encouraged to use quieter voices when children on the ward are trying to sleep'. Language barriers were also highlighted to be an issue which needs addressing, particularly for elderly patients.

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees also received feedback about improvements required when patients are first diagnosed with an illness/disease. Patients felt that they needed a 'better explanation' when they are initially diagnosed. In addition to this, another patient made a suggestion to be given a leaflet on the condition whilst in the consulting room as many patients will have some questions to ask after reading this. Another patient felt that the staff should 'take more time to listen' to the patients point of view.

The need for improvements in communication between the staff themselves and the patient was highlighted to be one of the 'biggest problems' faced by patients accessing services at the University Hospital of North Tees. There appeared to be several issues with regards to notes being 'lost', poor admin processes and disjointed pathways between the hospital and other healthcare providers e.g. GPs. Patients also felt that the hospital needs to enforce 'better communication with patients regarding their diagnosis' and their appointments. Several suggestions for improvements were with regards to the admin process as some patients had received letters with the wrong information on e.g. incorrect times and dates. Some patients also experienced difficulty contacting the hospital, one patient stated 'it is not easy to get through on the phone'.

Some patients also felt that some improvements required were for the staff to 'listen and not talk over you', 'staff in the waiting areas to be more aware' and for nurses to be 'more approachable'.

Although the questionnaire did receive some negative feedback, there were also a number of patients who wanted to further praise the service and care they had received at the University Hospital of North Tees. Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees received numerous positive comments from patients who,

when asked if they could think of any improvement suggestions replied with; 'I could not ask for a better service', 'the nursing staff on the ward could not be faulted' and 'it's the best service I have ever experienced'.

Conclusion

Following the analysis of the results of this survey, Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees have highlighted some main issues which have been raised regarding access and provision of services and the University Hospital of North Tees, in particular with regards to communication problems. This report will be fed back to the Board and discussed in detail to decide any future work plans.

References

North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust. (2016). *University Hospital of North Tees*. Available: <http://www.nth.nhs.uk/hospitals/north-tees/>.

Care Quality Commission. (2016). *University Hospital of North Tees*. Available: <http://www.cqc.org.uk/location/RVWAE/inspection-summary#overall>.

Appendix 1

University Hospital of North Tees Questionnaire

University Hospital of North Tees

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees are currently seeking feedback on the public's views and experiences of the University Hospital of North Tees.

The findings of this questionnaire will help the team identify where further investigation is needed. We want to ensure that services provided by the hospital meet the needs of the people who use them.

1. Have you or a family member accessed services or received treatment at the University Hospital of North Tees in the last six months?

- Yes
- No

2. Are you completing this questionnaire on behalf of yourself or a family member?

- Myself
- A family member
- Both

3. How would you rate your overall experience of University Hospital of North Tees during your visit?

- Unacceptable
- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Very Good
- Excellent
- Outstanding
- Not Sure

4. Which services did you use? (Please comment in the box below)

(E.g. Paediatrics, Occupational Therapy, Dietetics, Speech and Language Therapy)

5. Are there any views, concerns, issues or experiences you would like to tell us about your visit?

Please comment in the box below.

(Please provide as much detail as possible including dates, ward numbers, treatment received etc.)

6. How would you rate this service?

- Unacceptable
- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Very Good
- Excellent
- Outstanding
- Not Sure

7. Is there anything which could be improved about your experience?

(Please comment in the box below)

If you need any support, help or information regarding the information disclosed in this questionnaire, you can contact a member of the team at 01642 688312 or at healthwatchstockton@pcp.uk.net.

Under the Data Protection Act 1998, Healthwatch Stockton-On-Tees will ensure all information provided in this questionnaire will be anonymised. All personal information disclosed will be kept confidential and stored securely.