

Experiences of a patient over 100 days

John Radcliffe Hospital West Wing, beginning of October 2016

The plus points: Excellent diagnosis, spine operation and nursing.

The minus points: The food. The daily menu choices at the JR seemed very enticing but in reality, although nutritious, the meals were never very appealing. Food plays a large part in the psychology of recovery.

It was planned to move me to the Oxford Community Hospital, but this was changed to Bicester Community Hospital at short notice. There was a long delay on the day of the move and I arrived at my new location late in the evening, having waited all day for transport.

Bicester Community Hospital

I had a good, comfortable en-suite room, but after two days the floor beneath the shower needed mending, which was not done while I was there.

I got little physiotherapy. I had two sessions in the gym to work out where I would need a grab rail and at what height I would need a bed at home so that I could get off it. Over 21 days, I got no more than 4 hours of supervised physiotherapy. To me, this seems like having the cost of keeping me but not having the opportunity to make me more independent. I could walk a short way with my walker. But I could not rise from the bed or wheelchair onto my walker.

The Occupational Therapist was extremely helpful in seeing what I needed in order to cope at home. She accompanied me to my home one day. As a result, she arranged for me to have a hospital bed which would enable me to get my boots on and stand onto my walker.

But after 21 days, I was moved at very short notice - I was told the ambulance was waiting - to take me to the nursing home.

Nursing Home, Banbury

The plus points: A safe location for a period.

The minus points: Unsuitable accommodation and poor communication.

I arrived late morning, not met by anyone, and was left in their lounge. Later in the day, two carers came and took me to a small room on the first floor which had no toilet or shower, just a hand basin. The only accessible toilet for me was on the floor below. I asked to speak to someone about moving to another room. I was told they would look for one. This didn't happen. A commode was placed in the room.

It seemed to be a home for people with dementia, rather than a stepping stone for patients recovering following an operation.

I saw the physiotherapist for about five minutes a day, four days a week, when I had one little walk. I believe she was in contact with the OT (*Occupational Therapist*) in Bicester. But I needed more practice to enable me to (a) get my boots on and strapped so that I could stand to get out of bed, (b) stand from a chair and wheelchair, and (c) transfer into a bathroom. The staff did not seem to have the time to allow me to do this myself. Their ability to communicate clearly in English to someone hard of hearing did not help.

Near the end of my stay at Banbury, I saw someone (who turned out to be the ?manager) welcome a new patient. I asked her why she had not spoken to me when I first arrived, and why I had been put in a room with an accessible toilet. Her reply was that I should have complained earlier.

I tried to find out who was planning for my discharge home. I couldn't, so I asked a friend to find carers for me. She phoned the Home to find out if it would be safe for me to go home with carers. They told her I would need 2 carers four times a day. But nobody told me this. In fact, I left with 1 carer, twice a day which was adequate.

Over all

The plus points: I was very grateful to the NHS for helping me in my hour of need. The excellent emergency care and treatment.

The minus points: There was not enough physiotherapy given in either Bicester or Banbury.

Note from author: I am not complaining, a friend of mine said I should write to Healthwatch to hear my experience.

1 In their own words

A snap shot of patient experiences gleaned so far from our Witney project

JR - Trauma Department

All staff I met were helpful. Any requests I made were dealt with in timely fashion, and I felt respected. All staff were focussed on their jobs and made the experience as good as possible for me. (improvement) Shorter waiting times for follow up appointments - if possible.

JR Hospital

On one occasion my son's appointment was changed but I did not receive the information notifying me of the change and due to the consequently missed the appointment I then had to seek to get him re-referred.

Another incident is to do with my son's referral to community paediatrics for autism assessment which took a long time due to a lost referral form.

The people / professionals I have dealt with are amazing and a real credit to the service.

The individuals who are amazing need much more recognition.

Systems need to be rethought to be more effective.

Witney Hospital

The service was very good and the lady was very professional though I did feel very isolated as the physio would come for around 30 mins then go leaving me with instructions of how to get my son walking. I then wouldn't see her for another 2-3 weeks being left on my own to do the physio was very overwhelming and scary experience feeling it was all down to me physically to get him walking or that's how it felt.

The advice although not rocket science was worth its weight in gold.

More regular visits with physio to help the carer feel more supported.

Churchill

Once you're in the system - care is excellent in all parts of it, staff...but to get into system 1st!!!

Churchill Outpatients

Dreadful - nightmare to park, long waits. Didn't feel I was given the time - not treated holistically - (they) saw the diagnosis other than the person.

(need) better organisation of outpatient system, communication - re appointment received letter inviting me to appointment after I'd already seen the consultant and had my appointment.

Car parking makes you feel v stressed before you get to appointment

Staff looked exhausted so are doing the best they can.

Warneford Hospital

Sister has mental health - took overdose made a patient at the Warneford for 4 weeks. Excellent staff. (improvement) - More beds available - she could have done with more time but they needed the beds.

John Radcliffe Eye Hospital

Laser treatment - prompt and caring. Thorough examination and helpful information about condition.

Witney Community Hospital

Visited Dr ... seen straight away, blood test and ECG done. Now 3hrs later x-ray complete. Excellent service. Efficient and quick. Everybody very helpful and polite.

MIU

Wanted to know if broken toe. Was worried about waiting. Seen in 10mins - got x-ray in another 10mins, saw doc straight after that. Strapped broken toe....nurses are brilliant

111

Amazing - although once called an ambulance when they didn't need to - turned up at A&E & they said ...111 had been too cautious.

They saved my mum's life - she felt ill & she thought it was heartburn & they told her it was a heart attack & called the ambulance.

Cardiac Unit at JR

Can't fault them, got me back on my feet and their ongoing support has kept me mobile. I could hardly walk before I went into hospital - now I go to the gym!

(good) The ongoing rehab & support via the gym at Windrush. Cardiac nurse who I can call at any time if I am worried about my heart.

Paramedics & A&E @ J Radcliffe

My 94-year-old mother had a fall at her care home...Paramedics were called - a quick response lady came, then she called an ambulance as she felt mum needed her neck/back checking out...The paramedics took both mum and myself up to the JR. Here she was assessed promptly, painkillers given and a complete body scan. Thankfully the only real damage was a bad cut to her head which needed stitches.

Excellent caring from both paramedics and hospital staff. Mum dealt with very thoroughly & competently. Also assessed next day to ensure she was well enough & had good mobility to be returned to her care home.

(improvements) - more information given to waiting relatives? I only found things out by going to find staff and question them. Without me doing that I'd have had a 5 hour wait not knowing anything until the doctor actually called me through.

2 Healthwatch Oxfordshire Update

2.1 Witney project update

Our month focusing on Witney is under way and we will report in June on what we have heard.

2.2 Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire & Berkshire West (BOB) Sustainable Transformation Plan (STP) Freedom of information request (FOI)

We are waiting a response from the Commissioner.

Healthwatch attends the BOB STP Communications and Engagement Group and is contributing to the development of a dedicated website.

2.3 Oxfordshire Health Transformation

The Big Consultation Phase 1 consultations began on January 17 and we have attended every meeting bar one. Our report to HOSC meeting of March 7 summarised the key issues we have heard from the meetings and from individual contacts including:

What is the 'real' future of Horton General Hospital?

How can we properly comment on the closure of hospital beds when we are not told how the 'closer to home' care will be delivered and how this might impact on Phase 2 of the 'Big Consultation'?

What is going to happen in the second phase to community hospitals?

People are asking questions that are not addressed in the current consultation documents including about the impact on parking if the more outpatient appointments are delivered from the Horton; and the capacity in community hospitals and the care sector to support the 'closer to home' health care strategy.

An obvious gap in the information supplied in the Big Consultation documents has been any reference to the impact on social care, third sector partners and carers by the drive to 'closer to home' delivery of care. The decision by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) Cabinet on February 21 'not to support the proposals based

Healthwatch is concerned that were the second phase of consultation will be developed without active input by Oxfordshire County Council and third sector partners that a similar response will be forthcoming from OCC.

2.3.1 Summary

Healthwatch Oxfordshire would have preferred a single health and social care transformation consultation.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire wants to see a Phase 2 consultation that is presented as a joint health and social care transformation document. The current draft OCCG timetable for the launch of Phase 2 of the transformation consultations is due to begin in November 2017. Surely this is sufficient time for the commissioners and providers to work together to achieve a health and social care transformation plan that will present the people of Oxfordshire with a system wide vision for the future on which to be consulted?

2.4 Deer Park Surgery

Healthwatch Oxfordshire has been very concerned that as of writing (23/3/2017) more than 2,000 patients have yet to register with a new surgery. We have taken a pro-active role in encouraging patients to register at another surgery - by the time you read this Deer Park will be closed. This has resulted in news-paper headlines including:

‘Final warning to patients: find yourself a new doctor’ (Oxfordshire Guardian 23/3/17),

‘Deer Park patients are urged to move ‘before it’s too late’ (Oxford Mail 16/3/17) and

Deer Park is set to close..(Witney Gazette 22/3/17)

We have regular contact with the Deer Park Patient Participation Group and Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group and are feeding back to the OCCG issues that are being heard in the community regarding challenges facing patients looking to register at new surgery, concerns over appointment waiting times.

In April, Healthwatch will pull together the key stakeholders in order to learn from this experience of a surgery closing in Witney.