



## Enter and View Report – April 2025 Royal Sussex County Hospital

<b>Service name:</b>	<b>The Emergency Department at the Royal Sussex County Hospital</b>
<b>Service Provider:</b>	<b>University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust</b>
<b>Date and Time:</b>	<b>Monday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2025</b>
<b>Representatives:</b>	<b>Mazzie Sharp, Conor Sheehan and Will Anjos</b>
<b>Contact details:</b>	<b>Kate Jones, Project Co-ordinator <a href="mailto:Kate@hwbh.co.uk">Kate@hwbh.co.uk</a> Jo Dorey, Project Support Officer <a href="mailto:Jo@hwbh.co.uk">Jo@hwbh.co.uk</a> Healthwatch Brighton and Hove Community Base, 113 Queens Rd, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 3XG</b>

### Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove would like to thank our volunteers, service providers, service users and staff for contributing to the Enter and View programme.

### Disclaimer

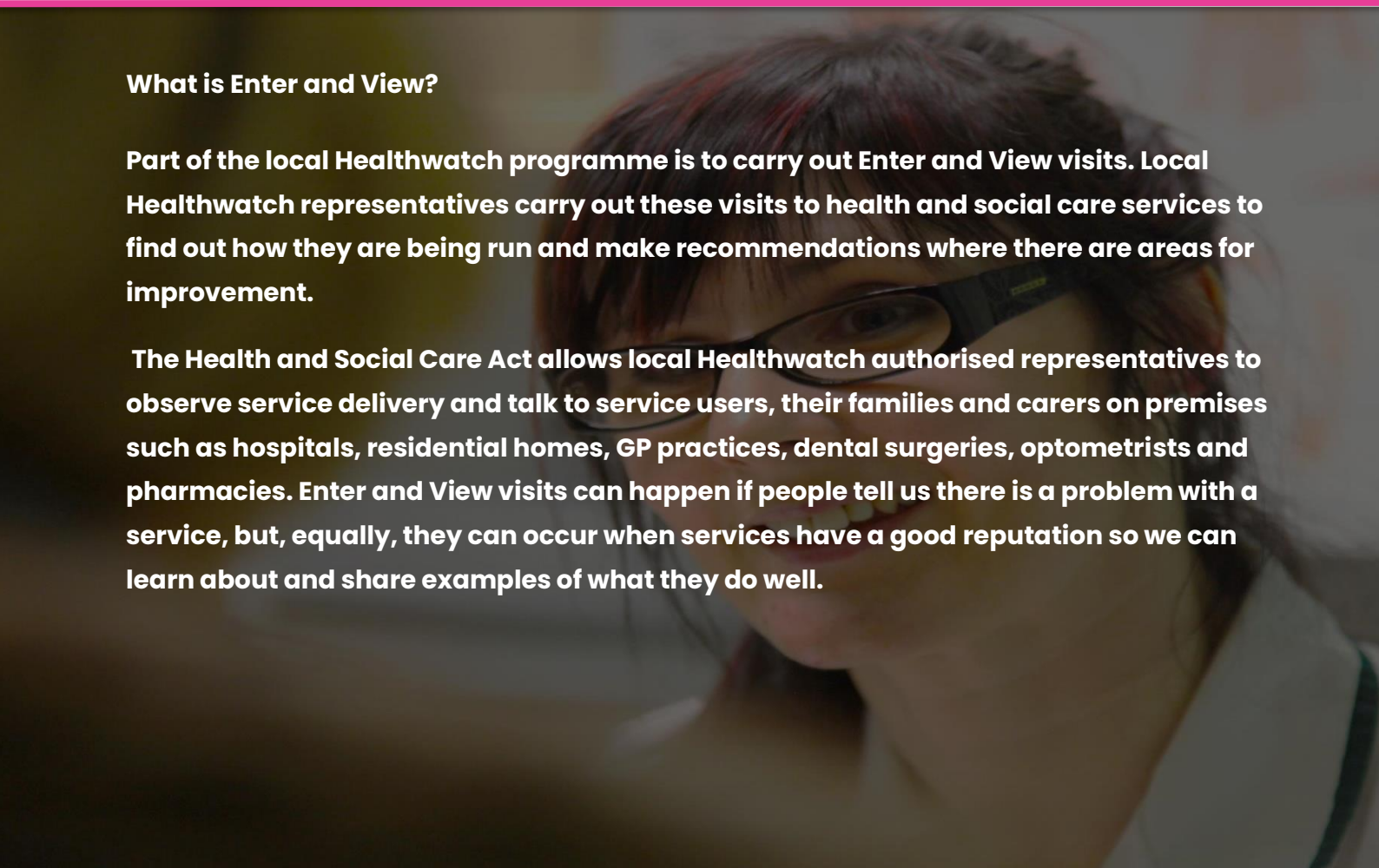
Please note that this report relates to findings observed on the specific date set out above. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all service users and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.



### What is Enter and View?

Part of the local Healthwatch programme is to carry out Enter and View visits. Local Healthwatch representatives carry out these visits to health and social care services to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement.

The Health and Social Care Act allows local Healthwatch authorised representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies. Enter and View visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service, but, equally, they can occur when services have a good reputation so we can learn about and share examples of what they do well.





## Purpose of the visit

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove has worked in partnership with our local hospital trust (University Hospitals Sussex NHS Trust) for several years to conduct regular Enter and View visits. These visits to wards and other units are carried out by trained volunteer lay assessors and staff members and are called Healthwatch Hospital Enter and View visits. The visits are an extension of a national programme of audits called PLACE – Patient Led Assessment of the Care Environment. The trust asked Healthwatch to carry out this environmental audit of the Emergency Department following an unannounced inspection by the Care Quality Commission in March 2025.

These Healthwatch visits:

- Provide valuable insight into the work of our local trust and its hospitals.
- Allow us to see first-hand the many positive aspects of our hospitals.
- Provide an opportunity to raise any concerns directly with senior trust staff.

Healthwatch Hospital, Enter and View visits are intended:

- To provide a regular, independent supply of information about the environment of our hospitals to the trust, which empowers them to act on emerging issues.
- To ensure that patients and staff benefit from an ever-improving hospital environment which in turn supports the delivery of high standards of care, dignity, and safety.
- To provide Healthwatch with an audit trail of intelligence and evidence which it can use to assess how our recommendations are helping to improve hospital environments.
- To enable Healthwatch to share our findings with interested partners such as the Care Quality Commission and the public.

## Methodology

Two trained, DBS-checked Enter and View volunteer lay assessors and a member of staff visited the Emergency Department at the Royal Sussex County Hospital. A member of the nursing team kindly showed our representatives around the department before allowing



them to conduct the visit. Our representatives observed the environment at the Urgent Treatment Centre, the Ambulatory Clinical Decision Unit, the Emergency Department main reception, Majors and Resus and Ward 2C (previously known as the 'Enhanced Observation Unit' for patients with mental health concerns). The representatives recorded their views of the physical environment, and they also completed a checklist to capture positive findings, challenges, and concerns, as well as anything staff told us and our recommendations.

The checklist which Healthwatch uses is based on the NHS publication "[\*The Fifteen Steps Challenge: Quality from a patient's perspective\*](#)", which explores what good care looks like through a patient's eyes. When completing the checklist, volunteers are asked to say whether specific criteria have been met in full, partially or not at all and to award a suitable score out of ten. Volunteers are provided with the opportunity to record any positive findings and make recommendations under four headings:

- (i) Is the environment welcoming?
- (ii) Is the environment safe?
- (iii) Is the environment caring and involving?
- (iv) Is the environment well-organised?

## Results of visit

Healthwatch asks volunteers to give a score out of 10 for each area as a simple way to assess things. The scores represent the subjective views of our trained volunteers and are not part of a national scoring system. Healthwatch considers that:

- 9 or 10 indicates that the ward or unit is performing strongly with little or no room for improvement and areas of excellence have been observed.
- 7 or 8 suggests there are a number of areas which require attention in order to improve the environment, but overall, things are good.
- a score of 6 or less indicates that significant changes may be needed to improve the environment.

## Overall

Healthwatch last visited the Emergency Department at the Royal Sussex County Hospital during the PLACE (Patient-led assessments of the care environment) visits in October and November 2024. We carried out a specific Enter & View of the department in March 2024 and our earlier report can be found [here](#).

Following our latest visit, we scored all areas of the department highly for the environments being welcoming, safe, caring, well-organised and calm, with the scores ranging from between seven, to ten out of ten.

Compared to our last visit in March 2024, the scores awarded to the Emergency Department Reception and Majors and Resus had improved.

Our suggested areas for improvement are:

- improving signage
- installing video displays and positioning information systems to make them more accessible
- improving fire and safety
- providing clearer staff IDs and information about staff uniforms
- improving patient dignity (majors)

## Overall scores comparison 2025 vs 2025

	Urgent Treatment Centre		Ambulatory Clinical Decision Unit	
<b>Checklist area:</b>	Scores March 2024	Scores April 2025	Scores March 2024	Scores April 2025
<i>Welcoming</i>	8	9	9	9
<i>Safe</i>	10	9	9	9
<i>Caring</i>	8	9	8	10
<i>Well-organised</i>	9	10	9	10

	Main ED reception		Majors and resus	
<b>Checklist area:</b>	Scores March 2024	Scores April 2025	Scores March 2024	Scores April 2025
<i>Welcoming</i>	4	7	5	7
<i>Safe</i>	5	8	5	7
<i>Caring</i>	4	8	8	7
<i>Well-organised</i>	5	7	6	7

	Ward 2C (mental health)	
<b>Checklist area:</b>	Scores March 2024	Scores April 2025
<i>Welcoming</i>	9	8
<i>Safe</i>	9	7
<i>Caring</i>	9	8
<i>Well-organised</i>	8	8

The lay assessors reported that the visit felt like hardworking, dedicated staff were working extraordinarily hard to deliver care in a challenging environment.

### UTC – Urgent Treatment Centre

**Overall score: 9/10**

<b>(a) Welcoming environment</b> <b>Score awarded: 9 out of 10</b>	
<b>Positives</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>There was adequate signage on the glass partition in front of the (unmanned) reception desk indicating which patients this unit served.</p> <p>The waiting area had suitable seating for patients.</p>	<p>Signage clearly stated that any patients receiving treatment in this unit should register with the ED reception first even if they had been referred directly to the UTC by NHS 111. Perhaps this UTC needs to clarify/agree with the NHS 111 service about providing instructions to patients to directly report to this unit when this is not the case?</p>

	The presence of a 'reception desk' in this unit may not be appropriate if it remains unmanned. (This was the case today and also on 2 other occasions observed within the past month).
<b>(b) Safe environment</b> <b>Score awarded: 9 out of 10</b>	
<b>Positives</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>The waiting area was clean, uncluttered and tidy.</p> <p>Hand gels were available at the doorway entrance.</p> <p>Attending paramedical and medical staff wore name badges.</p>	There was no record of fire extinguishers or safety instructions observed- this may have been overlooked in this unit by E&V team.
<b>(c) Caring environment</b> <b>Score awarded: 9 out of 10</b>	
<b>Positives</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>Treatment/assessment cubicles were well appointed and equipped, offering complete privacy and dignity to each patient being seen by medical staff.</p> <p>Each cubicle had a solid door, examination couch, patient chair and a PC workstation for the examining clinician.</p>	In the waiting area, consider installing TV monitors with short videos/digital displays indicating likely waiting times for examination and treatment and an outline of 'patient journey' from UTC onwards.
<b>(d) Well organised &amp; calm environment</b> <b>Score awarded: 10 out of 10</b>	
<b>Positives</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
Waiting, examination/treatment areas were uncluttered, supplies in examination cubicles appeared ordered and appropriately colour coded A calm atmosphere prevailed.	None.

## Ambulatory Clinical Decision Unit

**Overall score: 9/10**

<b>(a) Welcoming environment - Score awarded: 9 out of 10</b>	
<b>Positives</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>The Reception desk was manned by Health Care Assistant (HCA) who welcomed patients to the unit.</p> <p>There was some helpful signage on the facilities within the unit near the desk which was ordered and neat.</p> <p>The atmosphere was tranquil and waiting patients appeared to be comfortable.</p>	<p>Some of the signage for patients could have been moved more closely to the various seated waiting areas.</p> <p>The installation of a 'silent' video display on the patient journey and facilities within the section could be considered.</p>
<b>(b) Safe environment - Score awarded: 9 out of 10</b>	
<b>Positives</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>Infection control information was prominently displayed.</p> <p>Hand gels were available and observed to be in use.</p> <p>Patient WCs and shower facilities were available and clean and tidy.</p> <p>Equipment and supplies were stored out of patients' view at the end of the unit (space for this seemed to be a little restricted).</p> <p>Staff roles were identifiable by their uniform type and name badge.</p> <p>Patients were positioned in individual bays/rest areas with access to call bells linked to reception.</p>	<p>Fire and evacuation information could be more clearly displayed.</p> <p>The shower curtain in the shower room appeared to be missing (but perhaps this room was intended to operate as a 'wet' room?)</p>

<b>(c) Caring environment – Score awarded: 10 out of 10</b>	
<b>Positives</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>Patients were positioned in comfortable chairs within semi-private bays (all patients were ambulatory).</p> <p>The atmosphere was calm and peaceful.</p> <p>Patients were observed being offered complimentary food and drink by hospital catering staff. There was also a self-serve hot and cold drinks trolley behind the large seated waiting area.</p>	None.
<b>(d) Well organised &amp; calm environment – Score awarded: 10 out of 10</b>	
<b>Positives</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>The section appeared to be staffed by an attentive caring reception team consisting of nurses and HCAs. During the visit it was observed that they frequently engaging with patients in the waiting areas dealing with any questions they had and reminding them about availability of refreshments.</p> <p>The unit appeared to be generally well maintained and clean.</p>	None



## Emergency Department Reception

Overall score: 8/10

<b>(a) Welcoming environment - Score awarded: 7 out of 10</b>	
<b>Positives</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>Patient information signs were evident but many needed to be more prominently displayed near the reception area (one notice containing triage information was displayed on the left hand wall of the entry corridor to the ED reception area where few arriving patients would be likely to see it.)</p> <p>Some useful video information on the 'patient journey' was playing on a 'loop' within the waiting area. Not all waiting patients would be able to see this from their seats.</p> <p>Approximate waiting time for triage, clinician consultations etc. was digitally displayed. This was very helpful but some anecdotal accounts with waiting patients suggested that this information did not closely reflect reality.</p> <p>Patient WCs in waiting area were clean and well-maintained.</p>	<p>Reposition as many signs as possible so that they are in the eye-line of the maximum number of patients.</p> <p>Signage in this area and in the treatment/consultation area could have offered information in the 4 main spoken languages in the city.</p> <p>Try to ensure video information on the 'patient journey' can be seen by more visitors to the department. (perhaps install another TV monitor?).</p>
<b>(b) Safe environment - Score awarded: 8 out of 10</b>	
<b>Positives</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>Treatment/consultation areas behind the ED waiting area appeared clean and well ordered.</p> <p>Staff wore ID badges and were very helpful to the Healthwatch E&amp;V team.</p>	<p>No fire extinguishers were immediately evident- the policy on their use and location (if appropriate) could have been clearer.</p>

Individual patient treatment areas offered sufficient privacy. Hand gels were available and in use.	One or two of the seat pads in the treatment/consultation areas needed to be replaced.
<b>(c) Caring environment - Score awarded: 8 out of 10</b>	
<b>Positives</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>Patients had sufficient privacy when being treated in the assessment bays (curtains were long enough).</p> <p>Staff appeared to be interacting with patients in a caring and courteous manner.</p>	
<b>(d) Well organised &amp; calm environment - Score awarded: 7 out of 10</b>	
<b>Positives</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
The ED waiting area was very full - some patients and their carers/companions had to stand. The environment was very claustrophobic and stressful.	<p>Fire safety and security information could be more prominently displayed (could be included on the 'video loop' also?).</p> <p>Consider how the waiting area could be redesigned/configured to create a more open and airy feel (perhaps by borrowing some space from other areas within the ED area that are not so heavily congested).</p>

## Majors 2a, 2b and Resus

**Overall score: 7/10**

<b>(a) Welcoming environment - Score awarded: 7 out of 10</b>	
<b>Positives</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>Areas 2a and 2b areas were very congested. There were many patients lying on trolleys both in bays and in corridor areas.</p> <p>The atmosphere was very busy but staff appeared to be working purposefully within a veritable sea of activity. They were calm and helpful to the Healthwatch E&amp;V team and to any patients who were observed to ask direct questions of them.</p>	<p>Because these areas (2a/b and resus) are so busy, the patient information system could possibly be improved so that more patients waiting in the various parts of the unit had access to key information such as the 'typical patient experience' that they could anticipate whilst being treated there.</p> <p>These areas were staffed by many different types of paramedics and clinicians and it would be helpful for patients to be able to identify 'who is doing what' more easily. Some of the nursing and HCA staff uniforms had the role printed in large letters on the back but other medical staff uniforms did not. The use of an illustrative poster displayed prominently explaining what the colours/design of each uniform depicted would be helpful.</p> <p>The installation of TV monitors with a feed offering information on waiting times, patient journey, availability of refreshments, shop location etc. would be advisable. This information was displayed but in an unsuitable location (attached to Perspex screen at nurses station).</p> <p>Signage on doors to side rooms and to entrance of 2A area appeared inconsistent.</p>

<b>(b) Safe environment – Score awarded: 7 out of 10</b>	
<b>Positives</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>Although the environment was congested and stressful, the unit appeared to be kept in a clean and safe condition.</p> <p>All staff wore ID but sometimes difficult to read this because of badge size so please note suggestion on illustrative poster in (a) above.</p> <p>Patients in some bays had access to call bells but patients in corridor waiting areas obviously did not. The noise levels were generally very high which brings into question whether call bells could be heard over this.</p>	<p>We did not observe fire extinguishers positioned in the Majors 2a&amp;b areas – could staff check that appropriate fire safety information is displayed?</p>
<b>(c) Caring environment – Score awarded: 7 out of 10</b>	
<b>Positives</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>The resus area was very well maintained and appeared to be meticulously ordered in terms of supplies and equipment.</p> <p>Patients had access to free hospital Wi-Fi but the information on this was not prominently displayed in enough locations within the 2A area.</p>	<p>Because of pressure on space, many patients were accommodated in an 'ad-hoc' manner, occupying positions in corridors or in 3 deep trolley rows.</p> <p>Patients had very limited privacy or dignity.</p>
<b>(d) Well organised &amp; calm environment – Score awarded: 7 out of 10</b>	
<b>Positives</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>Paramedical and clinician staff appeared to be working calmly to a 'system' but the environment for patients appeared very stressful (a number of whom we spoke to stating they had little idea as to the next stage in their treatment).</p>	

## Ward 2C –Mental Health (used to be Enhanced Observation Unit)

**Overall score: 8/10**

<b>(a) Welcoming environment – Score awarded: 8 out of 10</b>	
<b>Positives</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>The environment appeared very tranquil – there was lower-level lighting which was conducive to relaxation.</p>	<p>Some clear signage welcomed the patient to Ward 2C and provided information about the system of care that will be in place for them whilst they are in the unit (a dedicated MH nurse will be assigned to their individual care).</p> <p>The signage at the entrance to the ward indicates that it is a 'short stay' ward – the accuracy of this description could be improved.</p>
<b>(b) Safe environment – Score awarded: 7 out of 10</b>	
<b>Positives</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>The 2C ward appeared to be clean and relatively comfortable.</p> <p>Each patient was personally cared for by a MH nurse (the Ward Charge nurses are 'general' nurses however but they liaise daily with the Sussex Mental Health Partnership Team on discharge or transfer of patients to specialist MH facilities).</p> <p>Fire extinguishers are located in a locked side room near charge nurse's station because of the danger of potential patient misuse.</p>	<p>None</p>
<b>(c) Caring environment – Score awarded: 8 out of 10</b>	
<b>Positives</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>All patients admitted had their own private bay with trolley bed and chair.</p>	<p>There could be some clearer information displayed on the general ward routine and meal service arrangements. Because the ward has restricted access and egress,</p>



Staff were observed to be interacting with patients in a very caring way and respecting their dignity despite some challenging encounters.	arrangements to accompany patients to visit the shops or have 'cigarette breaks' could be explained.
<b>(d) Well organised &amp; calm environment – Score awarded: 8 out of 10</b>	
<b>Positives</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>The overall environment was calm and uncluttered.</p> <p>Family members and friends of patients were welcomed and encouraged to assist with their support and care.</p>	<p>Given that a patient's stay could be 12 hours or more in this unit (sometimes days or weeks), the TV/DVD area could be made more comfortable (there was only 1 'bean bag' seat evident in this area).</p>

## Next steps

Healthwatch will discuss our visit findings with the trust at their Patient Experience and Engagement Group where we will ask for an action plan to be created to follow up on our findings.



## Healthwatch Brighton and Hove

You can sign up to receive [regular newsletters and information from Healthwatch.](#)

**Share your experiences of health and social care services with us:**

Click here: [Have Your Say](#)

**Email us at:** [info@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk)

**Call us:** 01273 234040

**Follow us!**

**Facebook** [@healthwatchbrightonandhove](#)

**Instagram** healthwatchbh

**Website:** [www.healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk)