

Healthwatch visits Mill View Hospital and Rutland Gardens as part of the PLACE programme

March 2024

In November, Healthwatch Brighton and Hove conducted visits to two sites run by the Sussex Partnership Foundation NHS Trust (SPFT). Six of our trained volunteers conducted these visits.

Our visits to Mill View Hospital and Rutland Gardens were part of PLACE or 'Patient-Led Assessments of the Care Environment'. This report provides the volunteer's observations from their visits. PLACE is delivered as a national programme, and all data is collected and formally analysed by NHS Digital. They will publish detailed reports after the programme has ended.

What is PLACE?

PLACE assessments focus on the environment in which care is delivered to people, such as hospital wards. It does not look at clinical care or how well staff are doing their job.

Good environments matter. Every NHS patient should be cared for with compassion and dignity in a clean, safe environment. Where standards fall short, this should be drawn to the attention of managers so that improvements can be made.

Assessments involve local people (known as patient assessors) going into local hospitals to assess how good the environment is.

What's it like to be a patient assessor?

PLACE gives patients and the public a voice to have more influence over the way their local health and care services are run.

Our volunteers who are acting as patient assessors are given basic training and support by Healthwatch, using materials produced by the NHS. They visit different wards, clinics and communal areas and assess how well patients' privacy and dignity are respected, overall cleanliness and general building maintenance. They also look at the extent to which the environment can support the care of those with dementia or with a disability. Lastly, they undertake food tastings and, where possible, observe how meals are served to patients. You can read more about the PLACE programme by clicking [here](#)

Thank you

Healthwatch would like to express its thanks to the Trust for inviting us to participate in PLACE. This allows us to assess the patient environment first-hand and share our observations.



"I am again very grateful to Healthwatch, for their ongoing support with the PLACE assessment process. The input and feedback from volunteers is extremely valuable and is used to aid improvement. I look forward to working with Healthwatch again this year."

- Gavin Ford

Head of Facilities at the Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust



Our observations

Mill View Hospital, 10th November – our observations

Four Healthwatch volunteers undertook this visit: **thank you to Paul, Vanessa, Conor and Leah for their time and contributions.**

Mill View is located at Nevill Avenue, Hove, BN3 7HY. It is a hospital for adults with mental health needs. It has four inpatient wards that treat general mental health conditions. Their website is:

<http://www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/location-mill-view-hospital>.

Healthwatch volunteers visited the following wards, Pavilion, Regency, Caburn (including the Haven), Brunswick (Dementia Care), the Meridian (Acute Psychiatric), completed a review of the exterior and conducted food tasting.

Our observations

- The wards at Mill View Hospital were clean, tidy and generally well-presented.
- The male wards have common showers and baths, which appeared clean and tidy.

- The food was good, and there was a reasonable range of options. However, there appeared to be an overemphasis on deep-fried or 'oven-coated' food, and the vegetables that were frozen had a lower nutritional value than fresh food.
- The Brunswick ward uses good use of colour and design to ensure that it is dementia friendly.
- Healthwatch volunteers learnt that there is hardly any budget to spend on creating activities for the patients to do. Additionally, there is a very small budget per patient for purchasing occupational therapy-related resources.

Areas that we flagged as requiring attention:

- There was a shortage of 'visual stimuli' (such as pictures and posters etc....) that would help with creating a more homely environment.



- *It was a bit of a whistlestop tour, but we were always given the chance to ask questions and explore as much as we wanted, so we never felt under pressure.*

- **Healthwatch volunteer**



Rutland Gardens, 26th October - our observations

Two Healthwatch volunteers undertook this visit: **thank you to Fran and Vanessa for their time and contributions.**

Rutland Gardens is located at 5 - 7 Rutland Gardens, Hove, BN3 5PA. It provides tailored support packages for people with a learning disability or autistic spectrum disorder. This service provides care and support to people living in a 'supported living' setting so that they can live in their own home, as independently as possible.

Rutland Garden residents prepare their own food, so no food tasting was conducted at this site.

Our observations

- The gardens were well-kept, and the social and communal spaces were warm and welcoming.
- The kitchen was well equipped, and residents were cooking their breakfast whilst we were there.
- The bedrooms share a bathroom and toilet, which are clean and bright on both floors.
- We had the opportunity to visit a resident in his room (which was similar to the other residents) it was nice, bright and homely.
- Rutland Gardens genuinely felt like a home, albeit with specific areas that were for clinical or therapeutic use.

Areas that we flagged as requiring attention:

- There were a few minor decorative issues that had already been reported to the relevant departments to address, but apart from that, no other issues were identified.
- Sussex Partnership is a smoke-free organisation, so even though Rutland Gardens is their home, the residents are seen smoking in the street rather than having a smoking area in the garden.



“On arrival at Rutland Gardens, we were warmly greeted by a member of staff closely followed by the most mouthwatering smell of cheese on toast wafting from what was later to be discovered as one of the residents cooking his breakfast in the kitchen.”

- **Healthwatch volunteer**



Contact us



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