

Healthwatch visits Mill View Hospital as part of the PLACE programme

March 2025

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

Our visit to Mill View Hospital was 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.

Our observations

Mill View Hospital, 7th November – our observations

Four Healthwatch volunteers undertook this visit: **thank you to Neil, Paul, Leah, and Vanessa 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:

www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/location-mill-view-hospital.

Healthwatch volunteers visited the following wards, Pavilion (Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit), Caburn (Acute Psychiatric), and the Meridian (Acute Psychiatric). They also completed a review of the exterior and conducted food tasting.

Our observations

- Representatives felt pretty confident that the services provided are working within a clean and looked after environment where patient wellbeing is taken seriously.
- Overall, the building's fabric, furniture, and fixtures are clean but tired in places. An example of this is the design of some of the toilets, which are made with safety first in mind, but as a result, they are quite difficult to clean properly despite the best efforts of the staff.
- It was fairly visible that some areas were suffering from lack of maintenance i.e. skirting boards wearing off, walls looking tired, ceiling needed painting works, etc.
- We saw clear evidence of leisure activities taking place in several wards this year. This was positive to see after learning in 2023's visit that there was only a very small budget for this.

- The problem with smoking just outside the front door has largely been addressed.

Food

- Most of the dishes on the lunch menu were good (vegan spicy bean sausage; sweet and sour chicken; meatballs in tomato sauce). However, the quiche had to be returned to the kitchen as it was not cooked.
- The quality of the vegetables (prepared in-house) was good, not mushy – cooked to the bite and did not lose any colour.
- This was a positive change from our observations last year where there was an overemphasis on deep-fried or ‘oven-coated’ food and the vegetables that were cooked from frozen.



The pace throughout was brisk but never rushed – at no time did we feel we were steered towards a particular grading, or made to rush or skimp in our inspection. –



Healthwatch volunteer

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