



**Enter and View Report – April 2026**  
**Royal Sussex County Hospital**

<b>Service name:</b>	<b>The Sussex Eye Hospital 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>Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April at 10am</b>
<b>Representatives:</b>	<b>Jo Dorey and Kate Jones</b>
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### **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**

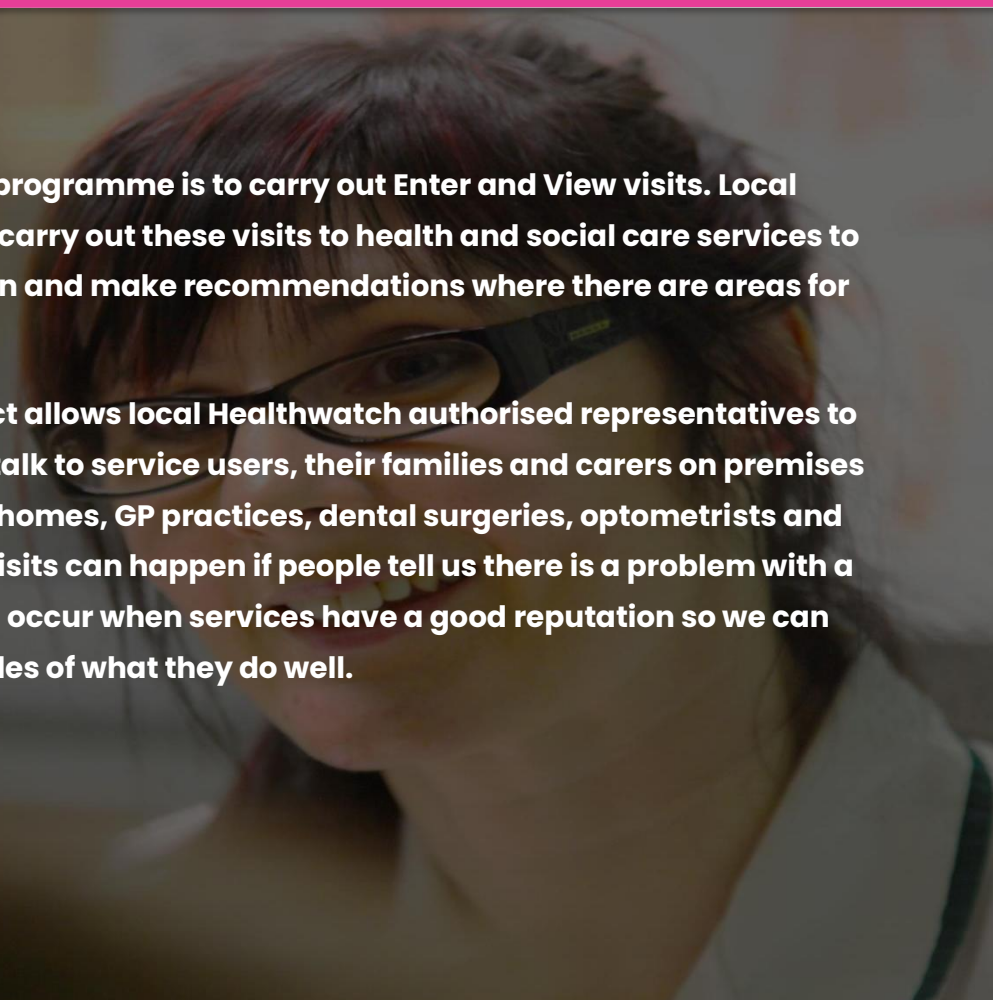
Please note that this report relates to findings observed on the specific date set out above. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all service users and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.



### **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. University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust asked Healthwatch to carry out this environmental audit of the Sussex Eye Hospital.

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.

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## Methodology

Two volunteers and one member of staff from Healthwatch West Sussex visited the Sussex Eye Hospital at the Royal Sussex County Hospital in April. The Lead Nurse kindly showed our representatives around the department before allowing them to conduct the visit. Our representatives observed the environment in the outpatients' waiting room, the Accident



and Emergency waiting room and the Pickford Ward. 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 our visit

Healthwatch asks representatives 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 representatives 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

We scored all areas highly for the environments being welcoming, safe, caring, well-organised and calm. Scores ranged between eight and ten for all the areas we visited. The Pickford Ward achieved the highest scores with no lower score than a 9. Positives included plentiful and welcoming signage, staff being extremely courteous and friendly, and the whole department appearing extremely clean and tidy which was commendable given the challenges associated with the older building.

The Outpatients Department also achieved high scores. Positives included seating in the waiting area being plentiful and there appeared to be no capacity issues on the day we attended, the waiting area was also tidy and uncluttered and a 'positivity corner' notice board provided uplifting messages for patients and staff regarding the quality of treatment and care.

The A&E department scored the lowest but still achieved a good overall score. Positives included a clean and well organised waiting area, attractive wall mosaics most likely contributing to patients' sense of wellbeing, and very responsive and friendly reception, nursing and medical staff (noted from direct observation and informal patient feedback).

Our key suggested areas for improvements are:

- **Improving communication about waiting times**, including clearer information at reception and in waiting areas (e.g., regular verbal updates and visible boards/screens where feasible).
- **Increasing privacy at reception**, exploring options such as a private check-in booth/space for sensitive conversations.
- **Improving seating options across waiting areas**, including the provision of bariatric chairs alongside standard seating and ensuring accessible spaces for wheelchair users.

- **Further supporting patient comfort during waits** by providing complimentary USB charging points/ports in waiting areas where possible.
- **Strengthening dementia-friendly environments** by installing dementia-friendly clocks and ensuring consistent dementia-friendly signage across all areas (not only in bathrooms).
- **Maintaining clear, current information displays** by replacing out-of-date posters and positioning notices in a consistent, framed area.
- **Ensuring infection prevention facilities are reliable** by keeping hand gel dispensers topped up and easy to access.
- **Addressing basic environmental issues promptly** (e.g., fix non-functioning TVs in waiting/day rooms; replace missing/stolen remote controls; replace worn shower curtains).
- **Keeping accessible toilets available for patients** by avoiding storage of wheelchairs/walking frames and other ambulatory equipment in accessible toilet spaces.

## Outpatients Waiting Area

(a) Welcoming environment Score awarded: 9 out of 10	
Positives	Recommendations
<p>The seating in the patient waiting area was plentiful and there appeared to be no capacity issues.</p> <p>The TV in the seating area was working and provided relevant clinical</p>	<p>Provide some bariatric chairs in the waiting area in addition to standard seating.</p> <p>Post all notices within a framed area and ensure these are appropriately positioned.</p>

<p>information for patients on the consultation and treatment protocols.</p> <p>Other signage was quite good although certain posters were displayed outside the notice board frames, and some had 'curly corners'</p> <p>There was plenty of natural light and the area had an open and airy feel to it.</p> <p>There was a (pay for) mobile phone charging facility.</p>	<p>Provide some complimentary USB charging ports.</p>
<p><b>(b) Safe environment</b>  <b>Score awarded: 10 out of 10</b></p>	
<p><b>Positives</b></p>	<p><b>Recommendations</b></p>
<p>Tidy and uncluttered waiting area.</p> <p>Dementia friendly signage in evidence on washroom doors.</p> <p>'Positivity corner' notice board provided uplifting messages for patients and staff on the high scores for quality of treatment and care.</p>	<p>None</p>
<p><b>(c) Caring environment</b>  <b>Score awarded: 10 out of 10</b></p>	
<p><b>Positives</b></p>	<p><b>Recommendations</b></p>
<p>Attentive, courteous and sensitive staff apparent at all levels (from direct observation and casual anecdotal accounts from patients spoken with).</p>	<p>None</p>

<p>'Thank-you' card cabinet displaying patients' messages of appreciation supports this.</p>	
<p><b>(d) Well organised &amp; calm environment</b> <b>Score awarded: 9 out of 10</b></p>	
<p><b>Positives</b></p>	<p><b>Recommendations</b></p>
<p>Generally, very clean and tidy waiting and treatment area environments.</p> <p>Café available in the adjacent area (A&amp;E department).</p>	<p>Need to avoid storage of ambulatory equipment (wheelchairs and walking frames) in accessible toilets.</p>
<p><b>Accident and Emergency Waiting Area</b></p>	

<p><b>(a) Welcoming environment - Score awarded: 8 out of 10</b></p>	
<p><b>Positives</b></p>	<p><b>Recommendations</b></p>
<p>A clear and open reception area was appropriately positioned at the main entrance to the building.</p> <p>The 'welcome' signage' was informative but a little too cluttered with detail.</p> <p>Positive feedback from patients was displayed next to the reception area and this provided reassuring messages for new patients in the Sussex Eye Hospital (SEH).</p>	<p>It is possible that the 'open' nature of the reception desk where patients first present themselves might compromise privacy and dignity in the view of some patients. Perhaps the provision of one 'private' check-in booth might be appropriate for patients who would prefer this.</p> <p>Replace the very outdated poster in the ED reception area (displaying old Trust ID and mentions a charity that no longer exists).</p> <p>Install dementia friendly clocks.</p>

	Provide framed noticeboards so all smaller posters and fliers can be contained within these.
<b>(b) Safe environment - Score awarded: 8 out of 10</b>	
<b>Positives</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>ED waiting area was very clean and well organised.</p> <p>Surfaces were clean and well maintained.</p> <p>Hand gels were available (although some dispensers were empty at the main SEH entrance).</p>	<p>Ensure all hand gel dispensers are kept topped up.</p> <p>Check the radiators are only turned on where necessary and that all linoleum wall/floor borders are in good order (radiator was on unnecessarily by the doorway between 'blue' and 'red' areas in ED making this area uncomfortable for any patients waiting there. There was some loose linoleum on the floor under the radiator)</p>
<b>(c) Caring environment - Score awarded: 8 out of 10</b>	
<b>Positives</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>Attractive wall mosaics displayed are likely to contribute to patients' sense of well-being.</p> <p>Very responsive and friendly reception/nursing/medical staff (from direct observation and anecdotal evidence from informal patient feedback)</p>	<p>Just one clinical treatment room (W5) had a white wipe board next to the door with words: 'Approximate waiting time' but there was no indication of what this time would be. (This consultation room did not appear to be in use however).</p> <p>The TV screen in ED was not working. This needs to be remedied.</p>

	<p>The seating area was a little crowded and patients with additional needs require appropriate chairs (e.g. bariatric patients).</p> <p>Dementia friendly signage and indicators need to be improved (e.g. these were provided on washroom doors, but the purpose of other rooms also need to be clear with appropriate colour contrasts between walls and doors).</p>
<b>(d) Well organised &amp; calm environment – Score awarded: 9 out of 10</b>	
<b>Positives</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>Many patients waiting for consultation confirmed that they had not been waiting too long and that they had been dealt with courteously and efficiently so far.</p> <p>Refreshments were available to all at a reasonable price.</p>	<p>Consultation stations within some ophthalmic imaging treatment areas appeared a little crowded and could compromise patient privacy if all stations were in use simultaneously.</p>

## Pickford Ward

<b>(a) Welcoming environment – Score awarded: 9 out of 10</b>	
<b>Positives</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>The welcome signage was plentiful and included a number of specific information and 'audit' boards with positive news on previous patients' satisfaction.</p> <p>All staff encountered in the course of this 'enter and view' in the Pickford</p>	<p>The reception desk does not directly face the entrance to the ward, but this is because of the physical restrictions in this part of the SEH.</p> <p>Perhaps consider reducing the level of detail on the welcome noticeboard and confine this to the essential elements of what a new patient needs to understand about their</p>

Ward were extremely courteous and friendly.	journey (as the overall effect was rather cluttered).
<b>(b) Safe environment - Score awarded: 9 out of 10</b>	
<b>Positives</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>The lighting levels were generally appropriate although the reception area was dimly lit (this was because the receptionist needed it to be so as she suffered from migraines and low-level lighting alleviated these).</p> <p>The whole department appeared extremely clean and tidy which was commendable given the challenges associated with operating in an older building.</p>	<p>The curtains around the ward beds were 'within date' although the shower curtain in the shower room needed replacing.</p>
<b>(c) Caring environment - Score awarded: 9 out of 10</b>	
<b>Positives</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>Speaking to patients' relatives in the dayroom confirmed that the healthcare assistants, nursing and medical staff were all very attentive and considerate.</p> <p>There were plentiful supplies of water, tea coffee and biscuits for patients waiting for consultation or treatment (and their carers).</p>	<p>The TV in dayroom needs to be checked as it was not operating. Apparently, the remote control had been stolen some time ago and had not been replaced.</p> <p>Dementia friendly clocks could be installed throughout the ward.</p> <p>Other dementia friendly signage was in evidence, but this needed to be consistent on washroom and treatment room doors throughout the ward.</p>
<b>(d) Well organised &amp; calm environment - Score awarded: 10 out of 10</b>	



<b>Positives</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<p>Corridors were tidy with the minimum of clutter which was challenging in the narrow corridors of this older building.</p> <p>Environment was clean and bright.</p> <p>Examination rooms were neat, tidy and well-stocked.</p> <p>Signage was generally very clear (ref. note above in one dementia friendly information display).</p>	None

## Next steps

Healthwatch will discuss our visit findings with the Trust, and we will ask for an action plan to be created to follow up on our findings.



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