

**Environmental audits of the Brighton
and Sussex University Hospitals Trust
(April 2018- March 2019)**

An annual Healthwatch report

Published: August 2019

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About us

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove is the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Brighton and Hove.

Our job is to make sure that those who run local health and care services understand and act on what really matters to people. We listen to what people like about services and what could be improved. We share what people tell us with those with the power to make change happen. We encourage services to involve people in decisions that affect them. We also help people find the information they need about services in their area.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove would like to thank the following volunteers who have supported this project:

Mike Doodson
Nick Gorvett
Sylvia New
Dave Romaine
Sue Seymour
Lynne Shields
Maureen Smalldridge
Louise Spry
Roger Squier

We would also like to thank Terece Walters, Karon Goodman, Emil Pacan, Caroline Davies, Clare Williams, Jane Carmody, Philip Holmes and all the staff of the Brighton and Sussex University Hospital Trust who facilitated our visits.

Report author: Alan Boyd

Executive summary

Background

Since December 2016, Healthwatch Brighton and Hove (Healthwatch) has worked in partnership with our local Trust to conduct monthly visits to the Brighton and Sussex University Hospital Trust (BSUH) estate which includes the Royal Sussex County Hospital (RSCH) and Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital (RACH). These monthly visits are called Environmental Care Audits ("audits"). This is the second Healthwatch annual report which summarises the key findings from these audits, and specifically those undertaken from April 2018 to March 2019. Our first annual report is available on the Healthwatch [website](#).

Purpose of visits

Supported by our local Trust, Environmental Care Audits undertaken by Healthwatch:

- provide us with an invaluable insight into the environment of the hospitals and wards within the Brighton and Sussex University Hospital Trust (BSUH) estate
- allow Healthwatch to see first-hand the many positive aspects of our local hospitals
- provide Healthwatch with an opportunity to raise any issues or concerns that we identify directly with senior figures at the BSUH Trust
- build on the 'Patient Led Assessment of the Care Environment' or PLACE, which provides a framework for assessing what good quality hospital environments look like against common guidelines and standards.

Objectives

The Environmental Care Audits are intended:

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

Summary of findings

Between April 2018 to March 2018:

- Healthwatch volunteers undertook 10 separate monthly audits across the BSUH estate (Annex A provides more detail)
- Healthwatch provided BSUH with 220 recommendations for how the environments of our hospitals might be improved, and attributed scores based on the NHS 15-Step challenge. The Trust was able to implement 160 or 74% of our recommendations (others were not practicable or possible for various reasons. Annexes B and C provide more detail)
- Three of the 10 audits we conducted were to areas of the Trust that Healthwatch had not visited before. The remaining seven audits were revisits which involved our volunteers comparing current ward environments against historical data. During these audits Healthwatch observed tangible improvements across many wards (see Annex C).

In addition to our environmental audits, during May 2018 Healthwatch volunteers took part in the annual Patient Led Assessment of the Care Environment or [PLACE](#) (see Annex D). The findings from these visits are available in a separate Healthwatch report entitled "*Patient Led Audits of the Care Environment: A Healthwatch report of the scores achieved by local Trusts between 2013 - 2018*"

Key findings and recommendations

The following wards, clinics or departments were audited by Healthwatch in 2018-19, and a summary of our positive findings from each visit are shown (further detail is given in Annex C).

Table A: Dates & locations of audits undertaken by Healthwatch and our summary findings

Location	Positive observations
June 2018 Respiratory wards: Catherine James, Egremont and Overton.	A clean, caring, ward which supported the needs of dementia patients with excellent targeted information. Equipment, including wheelchairs and furniture had recently been replaced. Good signage, security and fire procedures were all in place.
July 2018 Elderly medicine wards: Jowers, Vallance, Chichester, Bristol	Excellent standards of dementia care with 'Forget-Me-Knot' and 'Sunflower' schemes clearly displayed. Excellent patient information displayed. The whole environment in Jowers ward was particularly good.
August 2018 Sussex Cancer unit	Clean, well-lit and attractive with a calm and friendly environment. Furniture was in excellent condition and informative notice boards were in use.
September 2018 Haematology Ward, including renal wards	Calm and friendly environments with generally good décor and informative patient information made available. Renal was particularly well-organised.
October 2018 Maternity and gynaecological services	Light, airy and well maintained. Generally clean and orderly with informative notice boards. Evidence of recent renovation and improved equipment.
November 2018 Sussex Cardiac Centre (Lewes and Albion Wards) & Vascular Assessment Unit	Calm and well organised with good signage and clear information about the staff team and infection control. Good observed hand gel usage.
December 2018 Main Outpatients, Gynaecology Outpatient and Diabetic Outpatients	Signage was generally good and the environments were welcoming and well-run. Security and patient privacy were respected. Results of FFT were shown on notice boards. A wide range of literature was available. Cleaning standards were good
January 2019 Claude Nicol and Lawson Unit (Sexual Health and Contraception)	The Lawson Clinic looked modern and well cared for. Privacy and dignity were clearly respected. Cleaning standards were generally good. Furniture was new. Lots of patient information was available and signage was good and clear.
February 2019 Elderly medicine wards: Jowers, Vallance, Chichester, Bristol	Significant improvements were observed in all wards following our audit in July 2018. Cleaning standards were much improved and the wards were more welcoming. Good patient literature was available and the wards were dementia friendly.
March 2019 Stroke wards: Donald Hall and Solomon	Wards were largely clean and tidy and there was good signage. Showers and other areas had been recently renovated. Information leaflets were plentiful and clearly displayed. Equipment was clean.

The Healthwatch audits we conducted throughout 2018/19 revealed the considerable amount of work being undertaken by the Trust to maintain and improve the environments of its wards and clinics across the BSUH estate. As might be expected of any large, busy hospital we sometimes observed some areas which we felt could be improved and in Table B we have looked at the issues that were raised more frequently by our volunteers and grouped these together under seven themed headings. We have included a summary of our recommendations made to the Trust to improve the environments of the wards that we visited, and highlighted the actions already taken by the Trust to improve things (Annex C provides more detail).

Healthwatch has been impressed by how quickly the Trust acted on many of our recommendations and suggestions, and in a number of cases we were able to witness first-hand the tangible improvements that were made. Examples of this are the notable improvements made to the Elderly People’s wards (Chichester, Bristol, Jowers and Valance) over just a 7-month period. We have provided this as a case-study on page 14 as it demonstrates the benefits that our Healthwatch audits can bring; and it also demonstrates the excellent working relationship between our two organisations. Healthwatch applauds the Trust and staff for responding so positively to the feedback from Healthwatch and for taking such speedy action.

In addition, we have also taken a historic look back at the findings from our audits undertaken in 2017-18 and identified that five themes we identified in that year were either not observed in 2018-19 or only observed in a smaller number of instances. This information shows how much work the Trust has undertaken to improve ward environments over the last year (see Table C for further detail).

Table B: Themes identified in 2018/19, Healthwatch recommendations and Trust actions

	Theme identified	Observations and recommended improvements / changes	Actions taken by the Trust
1	Improve/identify better storage facilities	Some wards had excellent facilities. Others had limited storage which occasionally resulted in blocked or cluttered corridors and rooms. Storage will improve once the 3Ts development is complete. Where possible we recommended that dedicated storage facilities were identified.	During several re-visits we observed improved storage facilities which were often tidy, clean and well-organised. Less equipment was seen blocking corridors.
2	Improve ventilation, heating, lighting	Poor ventilation issues affected the Maternity wards, Cardiac and Gynaecological services. We recommended that steps were taken to improve ventilation & air conditioning.	Wards in the old Barry building will be relocated to new facilities in 2021. In the interim the Trust has installed temporary solutions to improve ventilation.
3	Ensure high cleaning standards	Cleaning standards varied across some wards, particularly affecting lift lobby areas, edges and corners. We support the Trust’s deep clean roll-out which is helping to ensure that a consistently high standard of cleaning is maintained at all times across the whole estate.	The Trust has already rolled out a programme of deep cleans it was noticeable to our volunteers where this had already taken place.

4	Improve security /safety	<p>During some audits we observed that sluice and IV rooms, staff toilets and linen cupboards had been left accidentally open.</p> <p>In addition, fire doors were sometimes propped open.</p> <p>We recommended that action was taken to stop this from happening.</p>	<p>The Trust has already acted on these findings and reminded all staff of the importance of ensuring that rooms and fire doors are kept closed at all times. Daily staff huddles are used to remind staff.</p>
5	Improve bathrooms, particularly in the Barry building	<p>We observed that patient bathrooms were sometimes in a poor condition.</p> <p>We recommended that the Trust undertake improvements works of all bathrooms</p>	<p>During several revisits we observed improved bathroom facilities, and in some cases bathrooms had been completely re-fitted.</p>
6	Ensure patient privacy and dignity is maintained	<p>We observed that patient notes were sometimes temporarily left unattended.</p> <p>The design and layout of some areas affected patients' privacy.</p> <p>We recommended that the Trust improve privacy particularly at reception areas so that private conversations cannot be overheard.</p>	<p>The Trust has already taken action to remind staff not to leave patient notes unattended.</p> <p>There was evidence that the Trust were making improvements to public areas to improve patient privacy.</p>
7	Ensure the needs of dementia patients are being met	<p>We observed that patient bathrooms were not always dementia-friendly i.e. with contrasting colours.</p> <p>We recommended that the Trust improve bathrooms across the estate.</p>	<p>During several revisits we observed improved bathroom facilities, including changes to make these dementia-friendly</p>

Table C. The following themes were recorded by Healthwatch in 2017-18, and were either not observed in 2018-19, or only seen in a smaller number of instances

	Theme in 2017/18	Healthwatch observations
1	Improve the quality of patient information	The Trust has taken steps to improve notice boards and is delivering a programme to standardise the information that is displayed. In general, information is now clearer and more helpful but we recommend that the Trust conducts regular checks to ensure that information is regularly updated and maintained.
2	Improve signage	The Trust is rolling out improved signage across the estate. The Trust is already developing plans for a consistent style and format to be used in the new hospital site that will open in 2021.
3	Promote the consistent use of hand gels	More prominent notices have been installed to encourage staff and public to use hand gels. This message should continue to be reinforced as much as possible to help combat infections.
4	Replace equipment or furniture	Worn chairs, desks and flooring are routinely being replaced or repaired and this work is ongoing.
5	Undertake general maintenance sooner	We received fewer concerns from staff regarding the timeliness with which smaller maintenance issues were being actioned.

Partner comments

Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust

We would like to thank Healthwatch for the ongoing work undertaken by a dedicated team of Healthwatch volunteers who, on a monthly basis, conduct environmental audits in various areas of the Trust. These audits lead to recommendations and an action plan, which is re-audited at a later date. This work has been the catalyst for positive change.

The findings of the Annual Environmental audit provided positive observations; it demonstrates the restrictions with the Barry Building which will be rectified when the building is relocated in 2021. The trust prides itself with responding to the monthly feedback and making timely positive change.

The Trust ensures that these issues are reported at the Patient Experience Panel, which is co-chaired by the Chief Officer of Healthwatch Brighton and Hove and the Nurse Director of BSUH. Healthwatch also sit on our Patient Experience and Engagement Quality Governance Group.

We look forward to working with Healthwatch and its dedicated volunteers during 2019, continuing our excellent working relationship which is fundamental to the successful implementation of patient centred improvements.

Clare Williams, Interim Chief Nurse

Methodology

Part of the local Healthwatch programme is to carry out ‘Enter and View’ visits. Our volunteers are all trained Authorised Representatives and the Health and Social Care Act 2012 permits them to carry out visits to local health and social care services on behalf of Healthwatch. Their role is to find out how these services are being delivered, to promote positive experiences, and make recommendations for improvement. They can do this by talking to patients and their relatives or carers, and by recording their observations.

Healthwatch use these powers to conduct our Environmental Care Audits of the BSUH estate. Each month, Healthwatch determines a site (ward, department or clinic) to visit, and sends two volunteers to tour the designated area accompanied by one or two members of BSUH staff. The focus of our audits is always the patient experience and how this might be improved through better environments.

Environmental Care Audits build on the annual Patient Led Assessment of the Care Environment, or PLACE (see Annex D for more detail). PLACE audits are carried out once a year with results published annually. PLACE shows how hospitals are performing both nationally and in relation to other hospitals providing similar services. They provide motivation for improvement by offering a clear message, directly from patients, about how the environment or services might be enhanced. The monthly Healthwatch audits allow Healthwatch to undertake a more regular review of the areas covered by PLACE namely:

- cleanliness
- privacy, dignity and wellbeing;
- condition, appearance and maintenance;
- suitability of the environment for those with a disability and/or dementia.

We do not however assess the fifth PLACE criteria of food and nutrition during our visits.

When carrying out audits, Healthwatch volunteers record their observations of the physical environment by completing a narrative feedback form and a checklist. The feedback form captures information under the following headings:

- positive findings/observations
- challenges and concerns noted
- what staff told us
- recommendations to the Trust.

The checklist Healthwatch uses is based on the NHS publication “[The Fifteen Steps Challenge: Quality from a patient’s perspective](#)” (updated in 2017) which uses a qualitative observation approach “to explore what good care looks like from a patient/carer perspective”. The toolkit is designed to look into “clinical areas and explore them through a patient’s eyes”. The toolkit aligns with the Care Quality Commission, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence and the Picker International Institute standards. When completing the checklist volunteers are asked to say whether certain 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:

- is the environment welcoming** e.g. is relevant, up-to-date information available; is helpful signage in place; and overall does the ward instil confidence and trust?
- is the environment safe** e.g. are high cleaning standards being maintained; are hand gels in use; are medicines and dangerous substances stored safely; are fire exits and equipment in place?
- is the environment caring and involving** e.g. how well does the environment protect individual privacy, dignity and wellbeing?
- is the environment well-organised** e.g. is equipment being stored safely?

In awarding scores Healthwatch volunteers are asked to consider the following question “As a patient what score would I give this ward under each heading?” Indicatively, Healthwatch considers that a score of 9 or 10 shows that the ward in question is performing strongly with little or no room for improvement; a score of 7 or 8 suggests there are a number of areas which require attention in order to improve the physical environment, and a score of 6 or less indicates there are significant changes required to the physical environment to bring it up to the standard which patients and staff are entitled to expect.

After they have completed an audit, Healthwatch volunteers finalise their feedback sheet and checklist and submit these to Healthwatch who then reviews and shares these with BSUH staff who are in charge of facilities and estates; but also with senior management. In turn, Healthwatch attends the Trust’s monthly Patient Engagement and Experience Panels (PEEGs) where we present our findings and seek their feedback. This process is now well established and Healthwatch receives regular feedback and action plans following each of our visits which detail what the Trust proposes to do about the issues and concerns raised.

Findings

Observations and findings from Healthwatch audits

We have used the checklist described above to calculate average scores across the 10 audits completed in 2018-19 under the four assessment headings (see Table D below). This has also allowed us to compare these scores with the averages seen in 2017/18. The average scores for ‘welcoming’ and ‘safe’ environments increased in 2018/19, whilst the score for ‘caring environments’ is about the same as last year; and only the score for ‘organised environments’ has seen a slight fall (which might relate to the issue with storage facilities that we have identified over the last year).

Table D: Average scores by assessment heading

Assessment heading	2018/19	2017/18
The environment was welcoming	7.6 ↑	7
The environment was safe	8 ↑	7.8
The environment was caring	7.9 ←	8
The environment was organised	7.8 ↓	8.3

Following six audits Healthwatch volunteers completed more than one checklist. This occurred when they visited two or more wards as part of the same visit and where the environments showed marked differences. For example four checklists were completed during the visits to the Elderly Peoples’ wards in July 2018 and February 2019. Overall, 20 checklists were completed for the 10 audits conducted throughout 2018-19. A full breakdown of all the scores awarded following each audit is given at Annex B.

Individually, the highest audit scores were awarded to Jowers ward (elderly medicine), the Sussex Cancer Centre, the Maternity wards and the Lawson Unit (sexual health). Lower scores were awarded to Chichester ward (elderly medicine), the Diabetes and Gynaecology Outpatients and Donald and Solomon wards (stroke). However it should also be noted that the scores for some of these wards significantly improved following a second follow-up visit made by Healthwatch.

Are environments welcoming

Under the *'Is the environment welcoming?'* heading, volunteers were asked to observe whether the ward made them feel welcomed by looking out for clear ward information, useful and accurate notice boards and information about staff on duty. Between 2017/18 to 2018/19 we observed improvements in the welcoming nature of the wards that we visited.

Our [2017/18 report](#) showed that this heading received the lowest score out of the four headings, with only two sites being given a score of 9 out of 10 (the Eye Hospital and Children's A&E); whilst three sites scored only 5 or 6 (Claude Nicol, Digestive Diseases and Stroke wards). Where low scores were given some of the main reasons included poor signage and a lack of, or poor quality, patient-targeted information which was also sometimes out of date. Some sites had poor ventilation and air-conditioning (Maternity and Respiratory wards); whilst it was felt that the decor of some wards could be improved.

In 2018/19 the average scores for 'welcoming environments' increased with four wards or sites receiving 9 out of 10 (Maternity, Sussex Cancer Centre, Jowers ward and Lawson Unit) and only two wards receiving 6 or less (Donald & Solomon wards and Claude Nicol). On average most wards scored 7 or 8 out of 10. Our findings show that over the course of a year the Trust has taken action to improve the welcoming nature of many of its wards. A number of wards we visited had benefited from renovations and new furniture, and patient information and signage had also improved. We consider that more can still be done to ensure that information boards are well-maintained, kept up-to-date and are clearly visible. In addition, we consider that overall cleanliness and tidiness is important if wards are to feel welcoming and we sometimes observed inconsistent cleaning standards during a number of audits. We also observed inconsistent and sometimes poor storage facilities (see 'safe environments' below) during five audits with some corridors being blocked by equipment, linen being poorly stored and/or there being a lack of space to properly store items.

An unresolved issue remains ventilation and air conditioning which continues to affect the Maternity wards, whilst also impacting on the environments of Gynaecology Outpatients and Cardiac wards. Healthwatch acknowledges that the physical limitations of the Barry and Outpatient buildings are the principal causes of these issues, and that these will be resolved once Stage 1 of the [3Ts development](#) is complete. We are also aware that the Trust is actively looking into temporary solutions but would encourage the Trust to find and implement permanent solutions where possible.

Are environments safe?

Under the *'Is the environment safe?'* heading, volunteers were asked to observe the overall cleanliness of the environment; the use and availability of hand gels; whether medical items were safely stored/disposed of and if safety information was clearly displayed. Between 2017/18 and 2018/19 the average score for 'welcoming environments' increased.

In 2017/18, the majority of the sites audited scored a 7 or 8 under this heading. The exceptions were the Eye Hospital and Children's A&E which both received a 9, and the 6 which was awarded to the Respiratory wards. Sites which scored well had common features such as clear fire exit signage; good lighting; plenty of hand gels and notices encouraging their use, and dedicated rooms containing medical or cleaning items that were locked. Where sites scored less well some of the main observations were that hand gel usage by the public was poor and/or notices did not encourage their usage; and most sites had a number of maintenance issues, some of which were long-standing.

In 2018/19 the average scores for ‘welcoming environments’ increased with the majority of wards receiving a score of 8 out of 10. Four of our audits saw wards receive a 9 (Jowers ward [twice], Chichester and the Respiratory wards) and one ward a 10 (the Sussex Cancer Centre). Only one ward received less than 7 (Vallance ward which scored a 6). The Respiratory wards in particular are to be congratulated for improving their score from a 6 in 2017/18 to a 9 in 2018/19. And special recognition is given to Chichester ward which received a 7 following our first visit to them in July 2018 but who increased their score to a 9 by February 2019.

Some of the issues identified by Healthwatch in 2017/18 had been addressed in 2018/19 and this included the improved observed usage of handgels and better information about infection control. However, some earlier issues did not appear to have been addressed in full although we are aware that the Trust is actively taking steps to improve things. For example, we continued to observe inconsistent cleaning standards during six audits which particularly affected lift lobby areas and edges and corners. The Trust is rolling out a programme of deep cleans and it was noticeable where this had already taken place.

Healthwatch were concerned to observe several instances where specialist or hazardous items were not securely locked away. During several audits we observed that a number of secure rooms had been left open or unlocked including sluice and IV rooms, staff toilets and linen cupboards. In addition, we observed fire doors being left/propped open in an attempt to improve ventilation. On each occasion Healthwatch advised the Trust to take action to ensure that rooms containing medicines, cleaning products, linen etc are kept locked at all times and that potentially hazardous fluids are tidied away. The Trust actively listened to our concerns and advised that staff have been reminded of the importance of complying with health and safety standards at daily huddles. During several return visits we noticed improvements in this area.

Are environments caring (respecting privacy and dignity)?

This assessment does not relate to the standard of nursing or doctor care, rather it considers whether the environment recognises the privacy and dignity of patients e.g. issues such as whether patients are dressed to protect their dignity, and whether cubicle curtains are long enough to provide privacy and do they fully close, etc? It also looks at whether wards were equipped to meet the needs of people living with dementia or with a disability. Between 2017/18 and 2018/19 the average score for ‘caring environments’ was maintained.

During 2017/18, only four sites were assessed under this heading, but all audits saw wards score between 7-9 points (out of 10). Where concerns were identified these related to whether more could be done to ensure patient privacy was protected e.g. the walls of some consulting cubicles did not always extend all the way to the ceiling which potentially allowed for private conversations to be overheard.

In 2018/19, all 10 audits were assessed under this heading and the scores were mixed ranging from 4 to 10. We did however observe some sizeable improvements in the scores for wards that we re-audited during the year, for example Chichester ward received a 4 in July 2018 but increased their score to an 8 by February 2019.

Examples of excellent practices under this heading included patients being observed wearing their own clothes (Vascular unit) and patient’s medical notes being correctly and safely stored (General Outpatients and Lawson unit). Where poor practice was observed this related to patient notes being left unattended and potentially accessible to members of the public (three audits). During five audits we saw examples of patients’ privacy not being fully respected and this was often due to poorly designed reception areas most notably in the Gynaecology unit whose reception area meant that private conversations could be overheard and where patients were observed being weighed in public corridors. Healthwatch

recommended to the Trust that all staff should be reminded not to leave patient notes unattended. We also recommended that the Trust look into ways to improve reception areas to ensure that private conversations cannot be overheard.

During four audits we observed patient bathrooms that were not completely dementia-friendly i.e. with contrasting colours. Healthwatch recommended that the Trust should seek a firm policy on colours for equipment / bathrooms to fully support dementia patients, and implement this across the estate which they have started to do.

Are environments well-organised?

Under the ‘*Is the environment well-organised?*’ heading, volunteers were asked to observe the overall organisation of the ward and look out for things such as whether equipment was being stored safely and if environments were uncluttered. Between 2017/18 and 2018/19 the average score for ‘well-organised environments’ saw a slight decrease.

In 2017/18, this heading received the highest score out of the four standards. A number of high-performing wards were reported to be calm, organised and generally uncluttered. However, in 2017/18 we also observed that equipment could sometimes be stored better.

In 2018/19, four separate audits saw wards achieve 10 out of 10 (Sussex Cancer Centre, Maternity wards, Main Outpatients and Jowers wards). A further five audits saw wards receive 9 out of 10 (Haematology, Claude Nicol, Jowers ward [first visit], Lawson unit, Bristol ward [second visit]). However, we also saw three wards receive a score of 6, and a further three wards score just 5 (Chichester and Bristol wards [first visits], and Gynaecology Outpatients). This shows the wide variation in how well wards are organised across the BSUH site.

A number of the wards with poorer organisation scores were located in the Barry Building which will be replaced as part of the ‘3T’s redevelopment’ of the RSCH site. We observed inconsistent storage facilities and during five audits observed some corridors being blocked by equipment or linen that was being poorly stored, as well as a general lack of space to properly store items. We saw that other wards had excellent storage facilities however i.e. Jowers and Vallance wards. It is widely accepted that the Barry building is old, and the environment is often poorer than other areas of the BSUH estate and that this sometimes creates poorer environments when compared to other areas of the BSUH estate.

In 2018/19, we saw two wards significantly improve their scores when re-visits were made. In July 2018 Chichester and Bristol wards both scored 5 out of 10, but following our re-visit in February 2019 the scores increased to 8 and 9 respectively. Our earlier Healthwatch visits were the catalyst for these improvements.

Case study

A case study of positive change delivered through Healthwatch environmental visits

Elderly people's wards: Chichester, Bristol, Jowers and Vallance.

These four wards provide care for elderly patients, some of whom suffer with dementia. The wards themselves are located in the Barry Building which is the oldest part of the hospital, and the wards will be relocated when the new hospital is completed by 2021.

Healthwatch has audited these wards on four separate occasions:

- January 2017 - Chichester and Bristol wards only
- March 2017 - Jowers and Vallance only
- July 2018 - all four wards
- February 2019 - all four wards

In 2017, Healthwatch made 26 individual recommendations to the Trust. On our return in July 2018 a number of areas had been actioned by the Trust, whilst some remained outstanding or had only partially been resolved.

During our July 2018 visit Healthwatch observed a variation in standards across the four wards. In particular we identified a number of ways to improve Chichester Ward. We also noted that Jowers ward was an excellent environment and that there were many measures in place there which could be easily adopted by the three remaining wards. Our key observations were:

- Showers and bathrooms required the Trust's attention
- General maintenance issues were affecting Bristol, Chichester and Vallance wards
- Cleaning standards were poorer on Chichester ward
- Patient privacy and dignity could be improved
- Sluice rooms and fire doors were not always being kept closed.

Healthwatch made a number of recommendations and after raising these with senior managers, the Trust shared with us their action plan to address these. The action plan was later discussed at the Patient Experience and Engagement Panel in August 2018. A further update was provided to Healthwatch by the Trust in April 2019.

“Significant change”

In February 2019, Healthwatch returned to review these four wards and it was apparent that a lot of work had been undertaken by the Trust to improve standards:

- Three quarters of our recommendations made in July 2018 had been completed by the estates team, and a further 8 had been partly actioned
- Information leaflets had been printed and were clearly displayed
- New daily “Huddle boards” showed that staff were routinely involvement in identifying issues and finding “quick wins” where possible

Healthwatch uses the NHS 15-step challenge to assess the wards it audits and allocates scores out of 10 accordingly. The scores across the four wards in July 2018 and February 2019 are shown in Table E below and as can be seen there were improvements in the scores across all four wards, with most scoring ‘8’ or above in most areas, and Jowers scoring 10 in two areas. The most significant improvement had occurred in Chichester ward.

The Care Quality Commission visited the wards in January 2019. The visit made by Healthwatch in February confirmed the findings of the CQC “improvements chart” displayed on the information boards of all four wards.

This was a perfect example of Healthwatch supporting the Trust to improve the hospital environment and demonstrates the excellent working relationship between the two organisations. Healthwatch applauds the Trust and staff for responding so positively to the feedback from Healthwatch and the CQC, and for taking such speedy action to improve the environments on these wards.

Table E: NHS 15-step challenge scores awarded to elderly people’s wards

Ward names	‘welcoming’		‘caring’		‘safe environment’		‘well organised environment’	
	July 2018	Feb 2019	July 2018	Feb 2019	July 2018	Feb 2019	July 2018	Feb 2019
Chichester	7	8 ↑	7	9 ↑	4	8 ↑	5	8 ↑
Bristol	7	8 ↑	8	8	7	9 ↑	5	9 ↑
Jowers	9	8	9	9	9	10 ↑	9	10 ↑
Vallance	7	8 ↑	6	7 ↑	8	8	6	8 ↑

Annex A: Dates and locations of visits

Date of 2018/19 visit	Location	Previous Healthwatch visits (if applicable)
April 2018	No visits were undertaken	N/A
May 2018	Volunteers supported annual PLACE visits	PLACE 2017
13 June 2018	<p>Respiratory wards 2nd floor, Barry Building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catherine James ward • Egremont ward • Overton ward <p>These three wards all deal with respiratory conditions, and whilst the majority of in-patients tend to be elderly, these are not dedicated elderly people's wards.</p>	January 2018
13 July 2018	<p>Elderly medicine wards 1st - 3rd floors, Barry Building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chichester • Bristol • Jowers • Vallance <p>These four wards all provide care for elderly patients, some of whom are dementia sufferers.</p>	January 2017
9 August 2018	<p>Sussex Cancer unit</p> <p>Located on Bristol Gate, below Accident and Emergency. Patients attend for initial post-diagnosis consultation sessions, and for chemotherapy and radiotherapy treatment, on an out-patient basis. Patients do not stay overnight.</p>	None
6 September 2018	<p>Renal Unit</p> <p>Forms part of the Sussex Kidney Unit providing treatment and support for patients with kidney disease across East and West Sussex. The unit provides clinics in general nephrology, low clearance and renal vasculitis, as well as transplant and dialysis clinics. A secondary care hypertension clinic is also provided.</p> <p>Haematology Ward</p> <p>Located on level 9 of the Sussex kidney unit. The ward provides care for patients with blood disorders. They also run outpatient clinics and the haematology day clinic.</p>	None

4 October 2018	Maternity and gynaecological services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level 11 Thomas Kemp Tower: services included ante-natal clinic, day assessment unit and a gynaecological ward Level 12 Thomas Kemp Tower: services include post-natal and ante-natal inpatient wards 	July 2017
8 November 2018	Sussex Cardiac Centre (Lewes and Albion Wards) Cardiology services are based on Level 10 Thomas Kemp Tower and provide care for patients with heart conditions and for those who require heart surgery. They treat and diagnose heart disease, perform heart surgery and provide rehabilitation. Vascular Assessment Unit Located on Level 8, Thomas Kemp Tower providing diagnostics and treatment for vascular diseases that affect the arteries, veins and lymphatics. They provide examinations ranging from simple pressure measurements to complex imaging.	None
7 December 2018	Main Outpatients Gynaecology Outpatient and Diabetic Outpatients Located in the General Outpatients' Building, Eastern Road	January 2016
10 January 2019	Claude Nicol and Lawson Unit Located in the General Outpatients' Building, Eastern Road, the units provide sexual health and contraception services. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lawson Unit: a specialist centre offering treatment, support and ongoing care for men and women living with HIV/AIDS; and Claude Nicol unit: the Claude Nicol Centre and Morley Street Clinic are now an integrated Sexual Health & Contraception (SHAC) service offering a range of booked and 'walk-in and wait' appointments. 	March 2017 and September 2017
7 February 2019	Elderly medicine wards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chichester Bristol Jowers Vallance 	July 2018 and January 2017
7 March 2019	Stroke wards 3rd floor of the Barry Building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Donald Hall Solomon These wards provide support to patients who have had a stroke or 'mini stroke' (transient ischaemic attack).	August 2017

Annex B: NHS 15-step scores

Date of visit	Ward or department		Scores awarded using the NHS 15 step challenge principles (any previous scores are shown in brackets)			
			Welcoming	Safe	Caring	Organised
13 June 2018	Respiratory wards Revisit	Catherine James, Egremont, Overton	7 (7)	9 (6)	8 (8)	7 (7)
13 July 2018	Elderly medicine wards Revisit	Chichester (re-visit)	7	7	4	5
		Bristol (re-visit)	7	8	7	5
		Jowers (re-visit)	9	9	9	9
		Vallance (re-visit)	7	6	8	6
9 August 2018	Sussex Cancer Centre First visit		9	10	10	10
6 September 2018	Sussex Kidney Unit First visit	Renal	7	8	8	8
		Haematology	7	8	8	9
4 October 2018	Maternity - Revisit		9	8	9	10
8 November 2018	Cardiology First visit	Cardiac	7	8	7	7
		Vascular	8	7	7	6
		Diabetes and Gynaecology	8	8	5	5

Date of visit	Ward or department		Scores awarded using the NHS 15 step challenge principles (any previous scores are shown in brackets)			
			Welcoming	Safe	Caring	Organised
7 December 2018	Outpatients Partial revisit	Main Outpatients	8	8	8	10
10 January 2019	Sexual health clinics Revisit	Claude Nicol	6 (5)	8 (8)	8 (N/A)	9 (9)
		Lawson Unit	9 (8)	8 (8)	9 (N/A)	9 (9)
7 February 2019	Elderly medicine wards Revisit	Chichester	8 (7)	9 (7)	8 (4)	8 (5)
		Bristol	8 (7)	8 (8)	9 (7)	9 (5)
		Jowers	8 (9)	9 (9)	10 (9)	10 (9)
		Vallance	8 (7)	7 (6)	8 (8)	8 (8)
7 March 2019	Stroke wards Revisit	Solomon and Donald Hall	5 (5)	7 (8)	8 (7)	6 (N/A)

Annex C: summary of audit findings

The following table provides a detailed summary of the outcomes of each audit including our positive findings and observations, main recommendations and how the Trust responded. We have also indicated where we have revisited a particular ward or wards.

Location	Positive observations	Recommended actions
<p>Respiratory wards</p> <p>Healthwatch audited these three wards in January 2018 identifying 43 recommendations. In June 2018 we returned for a revisit and observed that a number of improvements had been made to the wards.</p>	<p>By June 2018, scores for ‘welcoming’ and ‘caring’ environments were unchanged (7 & 8 out of 10) whilst the score for ‘safe environment’ increased from 6 to 9, and the score for ‘well organised’ went up from 6 to 7.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Swipe access installation had removed some earlier issues with secure rooms being left open. - Better fire exit and procedure signage existed. - There was better observed usage of hand gels. - Cleaning standards had improved - Worn wheelchairs and furniture had been replaced. - The quality of patient info had improved. - Some minor repairs had been carried out. 	<p>By June 2018, recommendations included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improving the ability to control ward temperatures adequately. - Improving storage facilities. - Improving the standard of information on notice boards. - Ensuring doors marked ‘keep closed’ were not being left open. - Repairing showers. - Sorting out the patient TV system, either by fixing it, or not offering the service.
<p>Elderly medicine wards</p> <p>Healthwatch audited Chichester and Bristol wards in January 2017 and Jowers and Vallance wards in March 2017, and made a total of 26 recommendations to the Trust. In July 2018, we returned for a revisit and observed that a number of issues had been rectified whilst some had not, and new concerns were identified.</p>	<p>In July 2018, we observed a number of improvements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Better notice boards in Bristol, Jowers & Vallance wards. - A well organised ward (Jowers) - Fans being used to help control the temperature on Bristol ward. - Excellent standards of cleaning on Jowers ward. - Use of the ‘Forget-me-not’ scheme’ on Chichester and Jowers wards. <p>In addition:</p> <p>Bristol Ward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A wide range of relevant information and good notice boards were observed. <p>Jowers Ward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The whole ward had been upgraded since March 2017. - Patients’ dignity was being maintained on the ward. - Information on Staff uniforms 	<p>By July 2018, recommendations included:</p> <p>Bristol Ward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improving all toilets and showers. - Improving cleaning standards. - Ensuring doors to secure rooms were not being left open. - Ensuring medical swabs were appropriately stored. <p>Jowers Ward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improving the location of the reception desk. - Ensuring toilets are in dementia-friendly colours. - Checking hot water temperatures and ensuring these are safe. - Ensuring doors to secure rooms were not being left open. <p>Vallance ward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Removing unwanted waste from public areas. - Improving bathrooms and

	<p>and their roles were displayed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The sluice room was clean and tidy. <p>Vallance Ward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The sluice room was tidy and fans were being used to control temperatures. 	<p>toilets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring doors to secure rooms were not being left open. - Ensuring the use of the 'Forget-me-Not' scheme. - Improving cleaning standards. - Ensuring patients' confidential files were not left unattended. - Ensuring the Fire Exit was not blocked. <p>Chichester ward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improving patient privacy and dignity. - Improving storage facilities. - Improving all toilets and showers. - Ensuring doors to secure rooms were not being left open. - Improving cleaning standards.
<p>Sussex Cancer unit</p> <p>This was our first visit to this centre and we observed only minor concerns.</p>	<p>In August 2018 we observed:</p> <p>The building is relatively new and the unit was clean, bright, well-maintained, calm and friendly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There were excellent "meet your team" photo boards. - There were three quiet rooms, which were comfortable and nicely furnished. - All the furniture was relatively new and comfortable and in very good condition. 	<p>In August 2018 we made the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The lift should be put back into action as soon as possible. - One large sign should be installed at the main entrance. - Fire Doors should have locks and be kept locked except when access is required. - Consider introducing a 'wear-and-tear' log to record, report and monitor issues. - Ensure toilets are in dementia-friendly colours and signs to toilets are added.
<p>Renal Unit</p> <p>Haematology Ward</p> <p>This was our first visit to these wards / unit.</p>	<p>In September 2018 we observed:</p> <p>Renal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The ward had won the 'Team of Year' award in 2018. - There was a good selection of leaflets in the Day Room. - Medication was stored securely. - The environment was clean and tidy. - There was consistent signage. - Storage was generally well organised and reasonably tidy. <p>Haematology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Centre was clean, tidy and provided a welcoming, calm environment. - Drug/medication and sluice 	<p>In September 2018 we made the following recommendations:</p> <p>Renal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve the ability to control ward temperatures adequately - Improve notice boards. - Remind staff to check that clinical rooms are locked when unattended. - Reorganise the Day Room and remove the wheelchairs that are stored there. - Repair the disabled handrail in one of the bathrooms and lengthen the emergency pull. <p>Haematology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve notice boards. - Remind staff to clear away any rubbish left on the ward floor.

	rooms were clean and well organised.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve storage facilities. - Carry out minor repairs. - Remind staff to correctly store patient files in lockable cupboards. - Ensure medicines are always securely locked up. - Replace worn furniture.
<p>Maternity and gynaecological services</p> <p>Healthwatch audited these wards in July 2017, following which the Trust provided us with an action plan. In October 2018 we returned for a revisit and observed a number of improvements.</p>	<p>In October 2018 we observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The approach to Thomas Kemp was light, airy and well maintained. - The units were clean and orderly and the information boards informative and easy to read. - There was evidence of recent renovation and improved equipment (such as new cots). - There was evidence that walls had been repapered (with what looked to be a hard wearing paper) and painted white. They looked fresh and attractive. 	<p>In October 2018 we made the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve the ability to control ward temperatures adequately (this is an ongoing concern and we urge the Trust to identify a permanent solution). - Improve cleaning standards across the wards. - Repair bathroom extractor fans. - Carry out general maintenance works.
<p>Sussex Cardiac Centre</p> <p>Vascular Assessment Unit</p> <p>This was our first visit to these wards / unit.</p>	<p>In November 2018 we observed:</p> <p>Cardiology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good observed usage of hand gels. - There was clear information about infection control. - Security and fire procedures were clearly displayed. - The different bays were well organised. <p>Vascular</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Signage was good. - There was clear information about the staff team. - Hand gel was available and staff were observed using them. - There were protected areas for staff to manage drugs. - Patients' privacy and dignity was well-respected. - Wards were calm and well organised. 	<p>In November 2018 we made the following recommendations across both areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve the ability to control ward temperatures adequately. - Improve storage facilities. - Carry out minor repairs. - Ensure showers are working. - Ensure all check lists such as cleaning checks and audits are up to date. - Ensure that housekeeping staff are trained and monitored so that they are following the correct procedures.
<p>Main Outpatients Gynaecology Outpatient and Diabetic</p>	<p>In December 2018 we observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cleaning standards were good. - Signage had been improved. - There was better storage of 	<p>In December 2018 we made the following recommendations:</p>

<p>Outpatients</p> <p>Healthwatch last visited Outpatients in July 2016 but did not conduct a full environmental audit at that time. In December 2018 we returned for a full audit and nevertheless observed that significant improvements had been made to the Outpatient Clinics.</p>	<p>medical records, drugs and hazardous equipment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disabled toilets were available. <p>Other positive findings were:</p> <p>Main Outpatient Clinic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A welcoming waiting room. - Friends and Family Test information was available. - Good quality chairs. - Good cleaning standards. - An electronic number system was in use for Phlebotomy. - All curtains in the examination clinic rooms were in good order. - Staff on duty were listed on notice boards. <p>Diabetic Clinic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A good range of information was available. - There was good ventilation in the main waiting area. - There was pleasant artwork on the walls. <p>Gynaecology Clinic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A clean and tidy waiting room. - A wide range of leaflets and information was available. 	<p>Main Outpatient Clinic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve signage, and notice board content. - Provide information about delays to clinics. - Improve reception to make this accessible for the disabled. - Carry out minor repairs. - Repair air-conditioning units. <p>Diabetic Clinic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carry out repairs to the toilet and move the emergency cord to make this accessible. - Improve storage facilities. - Improve ventilation. - Provide better access for wheelchair users. <p>Gynaecology Clinic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve patient privacy throughout. - Improve storage facilities. - Increase the number of examination rooms or ideally relocate the clinic. - Ensure fire doors are kept closed. - Carry out minor repairs. - Improve reception.
<p>Claude Nicol and Lawson Unit</p> <p>Healthwatch visited in March 2017 and raised serious concerns. By September 2017 significant improvements had been made. We returned in January 2019 to observe how these improvements had been maintained.</p>	<p>In January 2019 we observed:</p> <p>Claude Nicol</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desks had been replaced. - Chairs were clean and wipeable. - Many rooms had been repainted. - The unit was well sign-posted. - There was attractive artwork. - Radio/TVs helped to protect patient confidentiality. - A recently refurbished unisex/accessible toilet existed. - Storage had improved. <p>Lawson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desks were suitable and clean. - Reception looked newly renovated, fresh and clean. - Rooms had been redecorated. - Minor maintenance issues had been fixed. - There was a good selection of leaflets - Signage was good and clear. 	<p>In January 2019 we made the following recommendations:</p> <p>Claude Nicol</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further action is needed to protect patient privacy at reception. - Improve the visibility of opening times. - Better utilise the notice board. - Provide feedback forms for patients. - A deep clean of the reception area is recommended. - The flat roof needs a complete overhaul. <p>Lawson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A deep clean is recommended. - We continue to recommend that the main door is power assisted from both sides.

<p>Elderly medicine wards</p> <p>This was the third visit made by Healthwatch to these wards since January 2017. This visit followed on from one made in July 2018 where we observed a wide variation in standards across the four wards; with notable concerns regarding Chichester Ward.</p>	<p>By February 2019, many of the recommendations made by Healthwatch in July 2018 had been completed, and scores across the four standards had improved, notably on Chichester ward (please refer to the ‘Case Study’ on page 14 for more information).</p> <p>In addition:</p> <p>Bristol Ward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Décor had been improved and the ward looked clean and welcoming. - Doors to secure rooms were now kept closed. - Steps had been taken to improve bathrooms and toilets. <p>Jowers Ward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There were new showers, and bathrooms had dementia friendly colours. <p>Vallance Ward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some floors have been replaced. - Showers had been replaced. <p>Chichester Ward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some of the floors had been replaced and deep cleaned. - Equipment had been cleaned. - There was a large range of information leaflets available and the notice board was well utilised. 	<p>In February 2019 we made the following recommendations:</p> <p>Bristol Ward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secure doors still need to be kept closed when not in use. - The floor needs a deep clean. - Some further improvements to bathrooms are still needed. - Patient notes should never be left unattended. <p>Jowers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The location of reception still needs improving. - Some further improvements to bathrooms are still required. - Internal windows need cleaning. <p>Vallance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some further improvements to bathrooms are still required. - Some minor repairs are needed - Secure doors still need to be kept closed when not in use. <p>Chichester</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve linen storage facilities. - Some further improvements to bathrooms are still required. - Train all staff in the ‘Forget Me Not’ and ‘Sunflower’ schemes.
<p>Stroke wards</p> <p>This was the second visit made by Healthwatch. Our first was in August 2017 at which time we highlighted a number of concerns. By March 2019 some of our earlier concerns had been addressed whilst others had not.</p>	<p>In March 2019 we observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The wards were largely clean. - Shower rooms looked as though they had been recently renovated. - Staff “Huddle” boards were clearly visible and up-to-date. - Information leaflets were plentiful and clearly on display. - Some renovations had taken place and equipment was clean. - Cupboards and rooms were named and labelled, and wards themselves were tidy and uncluttered. 	<p>In March 2019 we made the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review the visitor entrance procedure. - Reposition and improve the information board. - Ensure bathrooms colours are dementia friendly - Seek a firm policy on patient TV/radio facilities and ensure all staff can access these and that systems fully work. - Remind staff to close and lock secure rooms. - Improve storage of equipment. - Carry out minor repairs.

Annex D: Patient-led Assessments of the Care Environment (PLACE)

Environmental Care Audits are monthly audits which were established in conjunction with BSUH Trust and designed to replicate aspects of the Patient Led Assessment of the Care Environment, or [PLACE](#). PLACE is delivered by NHS Digital (previously NHS Improvement, or NHSi) which is an NHS organisation responsible for overseeing foundation trusts and NHS trusts, as well as independent providers that provide NHS-funded care. It supports providers to give patients consistently safe, high quality, compassionate care within local health systems that are financially sustainable.

The PLACE programme is a voluntary scheme that was introduced in April 2013. It provides an annual appraisal of the non-clinical aspects of NHS and independent or private healthcare settings. PLACE aims to promote the principles established by the [NHS Constitution](#) that focus on areas that matter to patients, families and carers:

- Putting patients first;
- Capturing active feedback from the public, patients and staff;
- Adhering to basics of quality care;
- Ensuring services are provided in environments that are fit for purpose.

The PLACE assessment tool provides a framework for assessing quality against common guidelines and standards. The environment is assessed using a number of question forms depending on the services provided by the facility. These can be viewed [here](#).

The six standards that are used to quantify how good the environment is are as follows:

1. cleanliness;
2. food and hydration provision;
3. the extent to which the provision of care with privacy and dignity is supported;
4. overall condition, appearance and maintenance;
5. whether the premises are equipped to meet the needs of people living with dementia and,
6. whether the premises are equipped to meet the needs of people living with a disability.

PLACE encourages the involvement of patients, the public, and both national and local organisations that have an interest in healthcare in assessing providers. Assessments are therefore undertaken by teams made up of hospital staff and members of the public (or patient assessors). All assessment teams must include a minimum of two patient assessors, making up at least 50% of the team. As in previous years, Healthwatch volunteers provided invaluable support in undertaking a number of PLACE visits at the Brighton Sussex Universities Hospital Trust (BSUH) in 2018.

Results from the 2018 PLACE visit are available in our report entitled “*Patient Led Audits of the Care Environment: A Healthwatch report of the scores achieved by local Trusts between 2013 - 2018*”.

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