

# Developing Our Estates Strategy

## Patient Questionnaire

### October 2021

## **Contents**

Introduction	p3
Aims and Objectives	p3
Sample	p3
Methodology	p3
Results	p4
Discussion	p8
Conclusion	p10
Recommendations	p11

## **Introduction**

We are currently developing our Estates Strategy which will outline our priorities and intentions to best use our hospital buildings over the next five years, to support the delivery of healthcare services. Without our patients, service users, relatives, carers and clinical services, we would not require our hospital buildings; therefore, people are at the heart of our estates strategy. To best serve our people, we asked patients to complete a questionnaire to understand how we can enhance the environment and facilities to improve the patient experience.

Please see “Developing our Estates Strategy Patient Questionnaire” (Appendix 1).

## **Aims and Objectives**

A patient questionnaire was developed to enable patients to provide feedback in regards to their experiences both before arrival at our hospital sites, and during time spent at our hospital sites. Patients were asked to consider their experiences of transport to the hospital sites, the localities of services, navigation around the hospital sites, food and drink, and the hospital environments.

The aim of the questionnaire was to gain a patient perspective in identifying ways in which we can enhance our environment and facilities to improve the patient experience.

## **Sample**

There were a total of 50 respondents and the results were anonymous. The questionnaire was not limited to a particular sample group, and was aimed at the wider patient audience to gain as many responses as possible.

## **Methodology**

Below are the steps taken to gain patient feedback:

1. A patient questionnaire was developed by our Strategy and Business Planning Manager
2. The patient questionnaire was approved by the Estates, Facilities and Capital Governance Structure
3. The Patient Experience Team then developed an electronic questionnaire using a system called Envoy
4. The link to the electronic questionnaire was then shared and made available for patients to access via social media, and was shared on the Healthwatch Wirral website
5. The questionnaire remained live for two weeks before closing

6. Once the questionnaire closed the data was collected and collated using Microsoft Excel. Please see “Data Analysis – Patient Questionnaire” (Appendix 2)
7. Patient feedback was used to inform our Estates Strategy

## **Results**

A total of 50 patients responded to the questionnaire. Some questions received more than 50 responses, as patients were able to select multiple responses. Patients were also able to skip questions, and other questions were follow-up questions for certain responses given, so received less responses. Details of the numbers of responses to each question can be seen in the raw data in Appendix 2. Some free text comments received were the same as others, so these have been collated and summarised.

### **Part 1 – Before you arrive**

#### **Transport**

The most common reported method of transport to travel to our hospital sites was by car, with 42% of patients driving and using hospital car parking, and a further 20% being dropped off by a friend or relative, in addition to 4% of patients using a taxi. 6% of respondents reported that they used public transport, whilst only 2% reported that they walked. No patients in the sample group reported that they cycled. 26% of patients selected “other” as their method of transport, however only one patient provided details for other methods of transport, and this was by ambulance.

When asked why they chose their method of transport, 53% of patients reported that their choice was due to convenience, and 21% reported that their mobility affected their choice of transport. 4% of patients reported that the hospital was near them, and 4% reported that they had a travel pass. 18% of patients reported other reasons for choosing their method of transport, as summarised:

- Limited bus services
- Clinical/disability reasons
- Can't drive because have eye drops in
- Don't live on a bus route
- Don't have a car

When asked how the trust could support patients to use more eco-friendly transport options, 50% of responses demonstrated that patients would still choose to travel by car. 31% voted for improving bus routes. 2% of votes supported improving patient bike stores, however no patients voted for improving cycle routes. 17% of votes were for “other” transport methods, with 7 patients providing answers summarised below:

- Not sure/ don't know
- Own car
- Free Shuttle Bus

- Mobility issues

From the 31% of patients who voted for improving bus routes, 4 patients voted for improving the frequency of buses, 3 felt that the areas covered by the bus routes should be improved, and 10 patients selected both frequency and areas covered. Patients were then asked which site they were referring to when considering bus routes, 4 of the patients selected Arrowse Park, 1 selected Clatterbridge, and 9 patients selected both sites.

Of the 50% of responses demonstrating that patients would still choose to travel by car, 16 patients provided reasons for still choosing to travel by car, these reasons are summarised:

- Clinical reasons eg. Disability or using oxygen
- Public transport is difficult for me
- Convenience
- Safety
- Buses don't have direct route
- Not enough buses
- Bus takes too long
- Preference

Out of the sample, patients reported that they travelled from the following areas to reach our hospital sites:

- Arrowse Park
- Greasby
- Birkenhead
- Prenton
- Wallasey
- Claughton
- West Kirby
- New Brighton
- Pensby

## **Localities**

62% of respondents were happy to travel to one of our hospital sites, whilst 38% would rather receive healthcare closer to home. 14 patients provided suggestions of services to be moved closer to home, and/or where these services could be moved to:

Suggestions for services to be moved were:

- X-ray
- DVT Clinic
- Ophthalmology
- Warfarin tests
- Dermatology
- Dialysis

- Physiotherapy
- Pre-operative assessments
- Minor surgery
- Consultations with no medical intervention

Patients suggested moving services to:

- Birkenhead
- Claughton Village
- Bromborough
- St Catherine's Hospital
- Pensby
- West Kirby

## Part 2 – Your time spent at our hospital sites

### On-site Navigation

When asked how easy it was to find where they were going once on our hospital sites, 53% of respondents found it “very easy”, 14% found it easy, 17% found it average to find where they are going, and only 12% found it difficult, and 2% very difficult. 2% of these respondents selected unknown for this question.

34 responses were given to clarify what helped patients to find where they were going, answers given are summarised:

- **Reception/meet and greet staff**
- **Asking staff/being signposted (most common responses)**
- Instructions/map in appointment letter
- Knowledge from previous visits
- Signs
- Site maps

When asked how we could help patients find where they were going, 4 patients from the sample group reported that increased signage would support them. 3 patients reported that it would help to make the signage more accessible, for example, using colours or symbols. No patients from the sample group reported that accessibility aids such as assisted voice command would support navigation around the sites, but 4 of the patients reported that having a map available upon arrival would help. When asked which locations the patients were thinking of in relation to navigation around our sites, 39 patients responded, and the following areas were suggested:

- All areas
- Arrowe Park Hospital
- Clatterbridge Hospital
- Main Entrance (site not specified)
- X-ray
- Cardiology
- Physiotherapy
- Outpatients (site not specified)
- Urology
- Ultrasounds

- Orthopaedics
- Leverhulme day care centre – Clatterbridge Hospital
- St Catherines Hospital

Patients also reported that information could be improved online, in appointment letters and through an appointment department.

48 patients voted about how clearly visible the reception areas are. 92% of respondents reported that our main reception areas were clearly visible, 6% voted that they were not clearly visible, and 2% voted “other”.

When asked if the information given by our reception staff was helpful, 57% of patients voted yes, 4% of patients voted no, 33% felt it was not applicable to them, and 6% voted “other”. Of the 6% of patients who voted no, 3 additional comments were left in relation to this:

- Only if you are not hard of hearing
- Volunteers know me now and always say hello
- Helpful if they have access to accurate information eg the whereabouts of a patient who has arrived at A&E

## **Food and Drink**

25% of respondents reported that they purchase food and drink from our shops, cafeterias and vending machines while at our hospital sites, and 75% voted that they don't. 12 patients went on to rate the selection of food and drink from our shops, cafeterias and vending machines. 3 rated the selection of food and drink as very good, 1 as good, 3 as average, and 5 as less than average.

67 responses were received about suggestions on how food and drink offers could be improved, of those responses, there were 8 votes for healthier choices, 8 votes for more variety, 7 votes for better quality and 7 patients voted for food and drink to be made available closer to clinical areas. A further 14 patients selected “Don't know” as a response, and 23 selected “other”. 21 comments were left about how we could improve, as summarised:

- Food is too expensive
- Don't buy food because didn't want or need any
- Food is poor quality

## **Environment**

42 patients voted on whether or not we provide a calming experience, of these, 64% voted that we do, whilst 19% reported that we don't, and 17% were unsure. The most common suggestion for how we can provide a more calming experience was to provide more people around to help patients find their way, as staff always appear to be busy. 8 patients left comments about this, other suggestions raised were:

- Improve comfort
- Use more calming colours
- Consider the positioning of chairs in the waiting areas
- Notice board with more information on wait times
- Promotion of self-help and public health initiatives

- Split A&E up and provide a place for vulnerable patients away from louder patients

When asked about the cleanliness of the hospitals, 42 patients responded. 45% of those reported that it was very good, 29% rated it as good, 21% reported the cleanliness was average, and only 5% reported it was poor. 1 patient left a comment, reporting “always litter on the floor and floor looks dirty”.

Patients were asked how we can improve our environment and facilities to improve your patient experience, 29 comments were provided by the sample group, summarised below:

- Introduce equipment suitable for frailty - eg consider the height of chairs and toilets
- Locate relevant services close to each other
- Introduce free parking
- Provide clearer information on cost of parking
- Improve wheelchair access/ corridor space
- Replace carpet
- Provide background music in waiting areas
- Reduce cost of drinks
- Increase presence of meet and greet staff/volunteers
- Improve air conditioning
- Ensure windows open
- Make the environment look less clinical
- Increase number of vending machines and move them closer to clinical areas
- Provide more facilities during evenings and weekends
- Provide chairs to sit and rest to break up long walk between different areas
- Modernise and improve the cleanliness of the lifts
- Provide hand gel and tissue boxes at wheelchair height
- Provide mobility support from the bus stop
- Improve Cleanliness
- Front of house hand sanitizer

There were a small number of comments made by patients in the free text responses that were not related to estates or facilities, and were instead related to allowing visitors, staff candour, and staff communication. These comments are captured in the raw data (Please see Appendix 2) but have not been considered as part of the results for the Estates Strategy.

## **Limitations**

A limitation acknowledged is that due to a small sample size, the results may not be widely generalisable, or representative of the wider population. Therefore, continued patient engagement is recommended.

## **Discussion**

The results are split into two parts: Before you arrive, and Your time spent at our hospital sites. There were 5 key areas of discussion:

- Transport

- Localities
- On-site navigation
- Food and drink
- Environment

## **Transport**

The majority of patients reported that they arrive to hospital by car, whether they drive themselves, are dropped off, or by taxi. Convenience, personal preference, and mobility issues were the main reasons for choosing to travel by car, whereas distance and the availability of public transport were not reported as significant barriers to this sample group. In fact, 50% of respondents reported that they would still choose to travel by car when given the option of support to use an eco-friendly method of transport. This would suggest that even if efforts were made to improve public transport or cycle access to our hospital sites, the most common form of transport may still be by car due to patients continuing to require mobility and medical equipment. With the growing population in Wirral, and issues raised around car parking access, this is an issue to explore further.

However, when asked how we could help patients get to our hospital sites using eco-friendly transport options, 31% of patients reported that we could improve bus routes. In particular, patients described the issues with the bus routes as buses not being regular, direct, or the route not being close to where the patient lived, and the journey taking too long. The majority of patients in the sample group who reported these challenges were travelling to both hospital sites and informed us that they had travelled from North East Wirral. Interestingly, this information shows that residential areas in relative close proximity to our hospital sites still experience difficulties with public transport options.

## **Localities**

62% of patients reported they were happy to travel to the hospital sites to receive care. Among those who reported they would rather receive healthcare closer to their home, a common suggestion was moving services into community health buildings, such as St Catherine's hospital, or GP Surgeries in North East Wirral. This correlates with the patient feedback regarding public transport difficulties when travelling to our hospital sites.

Physiotherapy, dialysis, X-rays, warfarin tests, ophthalmology and dermatology were some of the suggestions for services to be made available to patients closer to home. Some of these services are already provided in the community, therefore this suggests that there is this an opportunity for Wirral Place system working to establish understanding of the services available to the Wirral population and to promote and develop or expand existing services.

## **Navigation**

Only 14% of patients reported that they found it difficult or very difficult to find where they were going whilst at our hospital sites, and the majority of patients found it very easy. The two most common reasons patients reported that they found it easy to navigate around our sites were the use of signage, and help from staff, in particular reception staff. The most common requested idea for improvement was increasing staff/volunteer presence to escort and sign-post patients when navigating on site, as it was reported that staff appeared to be busy.

92% of patients reported that they found the main reception areas clearly visible. An assumption is being made that this positive feedback relates to Arrowe Park Hospital main reception area as anecdotal evidence received through additional engagement with staff during development of the Estates Strategy People campaign, has suggested that patients often report the lack of a defined main reception area at Clatterbridge to be problematic.

## **Food and Drink**

Only 25% of patient reported that they purchase food and drink from our shops cafeterias and vending machines whilst at our hospital sites. The majority of patients reported that they don't buy food or drink because they don't want or need any. Of the patients who do purchase food and drink, 58% of patients reported that the selection was very good or good or average. It will be interesting to compare these results with the results of the staff questionnaire.

## **Environment**

When considering the hospital environments, 64% of patients reported that we provide a calming experience. In fact, the majority of free text responses about improving the patient experience were not related to estates or facilities, but were in relation to having more staff/volunteers present, and information regarding waiting times. Suggestions to improve the environment included playing music in waiting areas, considering the comfort of equipment, replacing carpet and improving ventilation. Only 5% of patients reported that the cleanliness of our hospital sites was less than average.

## **Conclusion**

The patient questionnaire results suggest that there may not be a change in the methods of transport that patients use to travel to our sites, but more consideration could be given to understand how we could improve bus routes and parking facilities. The majority of patients are happy to travel to our hospital sites to access services, but there is opportunity to explore the provision of services across the Wirral footprint from a system delivery level. Patients generally gave positive feedback about the site estates and facilities, and most recommendations for improving were around developing the staff/volunteer presence, as this is more effective than other methods of supporting navigation such as signage or maps. Food and drink does not appear to be a priority for patients when visiting our hospital sites, however patients do note

their experience of the environment during their visit, and there is room for improvement when considering equipment, and the physical appearance of our estates.

## Recommendations

- Given that travelling by car was the most common form of transport, more engagement would be recommended to look at issues raised around car parking.
- Explore patient experience of public transport with patients arriving from other areas of Wirral.
- Work in collaboration with our Integrated Care System partners to optimise the provision of services across Wirral place.
- Assess the opportunities to develop staff/volunteer presence around the hospital sites, and develop further understanding around patient experience of accessing Clatterbridge Hospital in the absence of a main reception area.
- Develop a backlog maintenance programme to address any concerns or suggestions raised by patients regarding the general condition of our estate.

## Appendix 1

Developing our Estates Strategy Patient Questionnaire



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## Appendix 2

Data Analysis – Patient Questionnaire



Data Analysis -  
Patient Questionnaire