

Enter and View report

Cirencester Minor Injury and Illness Unit

13 December 2023



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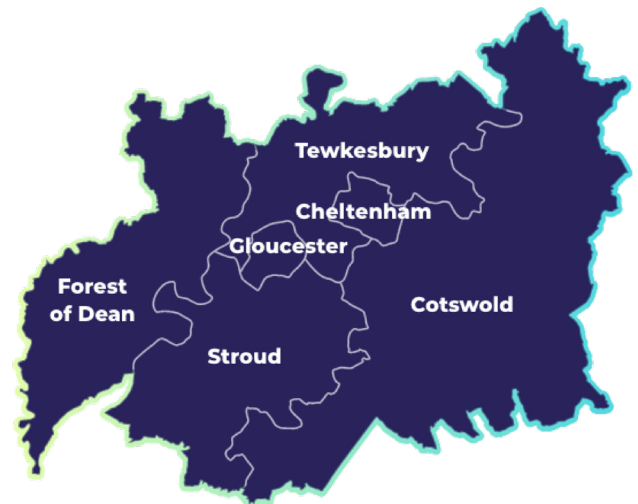
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About Healthwatch Gloucestershire

Healthwatch Gloucestershire is the county's health and social care champion. As an independent statutory body, we have the power to make sure that NHS leaders and other decision makers listen to your feedback and use it to improve standards of care.

We're here to listen to your experiences of using local health and care services and to hear about the issues that really matter to you. We are entirely independent and impartial, and anything you share with us is confidential. We can also help you find reliable and trustworthy information and advice to help you to get the care and support you need.

Healthwatch Gloucestershire is part of a network of over 150 local Healthwatch across the country. We cover the geographical area of Gloucestershire County Council, which includes the districts and boroughs of Cheltenham, Cotswold, Forest of Dean, Gloucester, Stroud, and Tewkesbury.



What is Enter and View?

One of the ways we can meet our statutory responsibilities is by using our legal powers to Enter and View health and social care services to see them in action.

During these visits we collect evidence of what works well and what could be improved to make people's experiences better. We do this by observing the quality of service, and by talking to people using the service, including patients, residents, carers and relatives.

Enter and View visits are carried out by our authorised representatives who have received training and been DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checked. These visits are not part of a formal inspection process or audit.

This report is an example of how we share people's views, and how we evaluate the evidence we gather and make recommendations to inform positive change, for individual services as well as across the health and care system. We share our reports with those providing the service, regulators, the local authority, NHS commissioners, the public, Healthwatch England and any other relevant partners based on what we find during the visit.

Details of the visit

Service visited: Cirencester Minor Injury and Illness Unit (MIIU)

Visit date: 13 December 2023

About the service

This MIIU is located in Cirencester and is a department within the Cirencester Hospital. The unit is based on the ground floor. There is a car park available for patients to access. There are six community based MIIUs across Gloucestershire.

MIIUs in Gloucestershire provide support for patients with a variety of new or recent minor illnesses or injuries. If there are ongoing issues, or long term conditions, patients are expected to contact their GP.

The unit is open from 8.00am until 8.00pm, seven days a week. Patients can access the service by walking in, an appointment as a result of using the MIIU telephone triage option, an appointment for a return visit (for example, for an X-ray or dressing/wound management).

This MIIU also offers an Emergency Same Day Minor Injury (ESDMI) clinic. This clinic is funded by a group of local GP practices and offers appointments with a senior practitioner. There is an agreed referral criteria encompassing patients that call with an acute minor illness therefore allowing GPs to manage more complex/chronic patients. This service is only available for patients who are registered with the GP practices who fund this and the appointments are managed by these GP practices. There is a clinic room and waiting room allocated for patients accessing this service.

Purpose of the visit

This visit was part of our ongoing partnership working to support improving the patient experiences across the county. It is also supporting a wider project being undertaken by Healthwatch Gloucestershire in relation to Urgent and Emergency Care Services.

How the visit was conducted

The MIIU was told about the visit in advance. During the visit information was collected from observations of the communal areas used by patients, including the accessibility of the premises and by talking to patients and staff. Ahead of the visit there was also a conversation with the Clinical Team Lead of the unit to help inform the visit.

Authorised Representatives

- Helen Esfandiarinia (Staff member and Lead Authorised Representative)
- Fred Ward (Volunteer)
- Amanda Naylor (Volunteer)

Disclaimer

This report relates to this specific visit to the unit, at a particular point in time. It is not representative of all patients who access the services provided by the unit. We recognise the following limitations of our visit:

- We only spoke to patients who attended the unit during our visit.
- Observations are based only on those parts of the unit that are communal, for example, reception, waiting area, patient toilets, car park etc.
- We did not ask patients to share any information about the medical/health reason for their visit.

This report is written by the Lead Enter and View Authorised Representative who carried out the visit on behalf of Healthwatch Gloucestershire.

Visit overview

The MIU was advised that the visit would take place and the date for this. They were therefore expecting us.

Ahead of the visit the Lead Authorised Representative spoke and met with the Clinical Team Lead for the unit. The information gained from this discussion helped to inform the visit.

The visit was carried out over two sessions on the same day; one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Three Authorised Representatives were involved. There were nine staff, including the Clinical Team Lead, on duty for the duration of the visit. Across the two sessions we spoke to 29 patients. We also managed to have a couple of conversations with staff as they were working.

Ahead of the visit the unit had shared details of our visit by putting up Healthwatch Gloucestershire posters across the unit and making leaflets available in the waiting room.

During the visit information was collected from observations of the communal areas of the unit, including the reception area and via conversations with patients and staff.

At the end of each session there was a team discussion to review and collate findings and recommendations. Initial feedback was provided verbally to the Clinical Team Lead towards the end of the visit.

Key findings

The following are the key findings from the visit and should be considered alongside the further information provided later in the report:

- The visiting team were warmly welcomed onto the unit by staff and patients alike.
- There was a calm and relaxed atmosphere on the unit across the visit. This was also the case during the slightly busier times.
- The feedback received from patients was, without exception, positive; they felt listened to, understood possible next steps and were complimentary of all staff.
- Staff were observed to be working as a team to ensure that patients were seen in a timely manner. This included using the space flexibly.
- Patients were observed to be seen quickly with only short periods being spent in the waiting room.
- The majority of patients spoken to on the day of the visit were walk-ins.
- Physical Environment:
 - The unit is spacious and offers a number of different options in terms of clinical spaces to meet different patient needs.
 - There is a separate waiting room for children.
 - All communal spaces were clean and well maintained. There was information available for patients in relation to the MIU process and other NHS services. Information appeared to be up-to-date and relevant.
 - There was a list of staff on duty on the day of the visit and this included their role.
 - No concerns were raised by the patients spoken to during the visit in relation to accessibility issues. It was noted that there is no choice of different seating available to patients in the main waiting room.
- A significant number of patients spoken to expressed their appreciation of having access to the unit within their local area and were concerned that future decisions may result in the unit being closed.

Recommendations

Due to the overwhelmingly positive feedback received during the visit the recommendations are based on the physical environment only:

1. Consider if different types of seating could be introduced into the main waiting room to ensure that all patients are able to sit comfortably. In recommending this we do acknowledge that this was not raised as an issue by the patients we spoke to, however, we did not speak to any patients with mobility issues.
2. Consider replacing the clock in the main waiting room as the current one may be difficult to read for some patients.
3. Stick to the plan to leave space when the vending machine is removed from the main waiting room for wheelchair/mobility aid user access.

Observations and findings

These are based on what was observed on the day of the visit, the conversations that took place with the unit ahead of the visit and conversations with patients and staff during the visit.

Patients

Accessing services provided by the unit

There are a number of ways that patients can access the services provided by the unit; as a walk-in during opening hours, as a result of calling the countywide telephone triage service and being allocated an appointment at the unit or as part of a planned return. Additionally the unit has the ESDMI service; access to this is via an appointment made by a GP practice.

During the visit most of the patients attended as a result of walk-ins; some patients had an appointment as a result of the telephone triage service or returning for an X-ray or wound management and some were attending appointments in the ESDMI service.

We did ask patients why they had opted to access this service rather than another service, such as a GP. There was a mix of responses to this:

- Been advised to attend the unit by their GP practice if their need could be met by the unit.
- Attended unit after a visit to Accident and Emergency (A&E) when the wait was very long and their observations indicated that it was appropriate for them to access the unit the following day.
- Some patients had used the service before and felt comfortable to return.
- Some patients had tried to get an appointment with their GP and been referred to the ESDMI service.
- Some patients had not tried calling their GP as they felt that they would have a long wait for an appointment.

Feedback about experience in unit

The feedback from patients was, without exception, positive. Some of the themes of this were:

- A significant number of patients told us how much they appreciate having the services offered by the unit available locally. They also told us that they are worried that future changes and decisions may result in the unit being closed.
- Patients accessing the ESDMI service were complimentary of the service provided and acknowledged that this had enabled them to be seen quickly. While patients found this service more accessible than their GP practice, they did express disappointment that they had not been able to get an appointment with their GP within their GP practice.

General observations

- All of the waiting rooms were used by patients during the visit.
- Patients were responded to quickly, both at the reception desk and then being called in for triage and follow up treatment.
- We observed a patient come into the unit to give the staff some biscuits. We heard that they have been doing this for a number of years following the support that was given to them in relation to a specific issue.

Staff

All interactions observed between patients and staff were professional and patients were communicated with in a calm manner.

From observations and conversations during the visit, staff appear to enjoy working in the unit with good team working evident. A friendly and positive atmosphere was observed throughout the visit with gentle humour being used. We observed the team supporting each other by covering various roles as needed, for example, the reception desk, triage duties etc.

Feedback from patients

Without exception all patients were complimentary about the staff. The themes of the feedback were:

- Staff were thorough, friendly and supportive.
- Patients felt listened to and understood possible next steps.
- Some patients said that they would like the unit to have longer opening hours.

Physical Environment

The unit is well signposted from the point that you enter the grounds of the hospital and within the hospital. The unit is based on the ground floor. There is plenty of space for patients to manoeuvre safely.

Waiting rooms

There are three waiting rooms available:

- Main waiting room
- Children's waiting room – parents told us that they particularly appreciate having this space available.
- ESDMI waiting room.

Within the waiting rooms the following was observed:

- Water dispenser and vending machine available in the main waiting room. We heard that the vending machine is being removed and that the space left will provide additional room for wheelchair users.
- TV screens in the main and children's waiting rooms. These were set to appropriate channels with the volume set to low.
- There is a 'living' screen in the ESDMI waiting room and patients can choose which screen to set this to.
- Plenty of seating however there is no choice in relation to the type of seating in the main waiting room. This did not present an issue for the patients seen on the day of the visit, but this did not include any patients with mobility/physical issues.
- There are games and books available in the children's waiting room.
- There is a clock in the main waiting room. However this could be hard to read for some patients due to all numbers not being present (only the 3, 6, 9 and 12) and shown as Roman numerals.

General observations across the unit

- There were some key elements of information available to patients, for example, the names and roles of staff on duty, the process of accessing services at the unit (in the form of a map), signposting to other services etc.
- There were toilets available for patients to use. These are both designated disabled toilets.

What people told us

Below are some of the quotes from patients from conversations that took place during the visit.

Positive feedback included:

- "Knew I would be seen quickly and confident the treatment would be good."
- "Receptionist was very welcoming and easy to talk to."
- "Found medical advice clear and helpful."
- "The nurses were very friendly and supportive."
- "Been here before and know the staff are brilliant."
- "I much prefer to come here as little waiting and you get very good treatment."
- "Fantastic facility. Very lucky to have the resource."
- "Wonderful."
- "Absolutely brilliant, love having it as a resource."
- "Amazing facility."
- "I love Ciren Hospital, just hope it stays open, amazing resource."
- "They're amazing, please keep it open at all costs."
- "Very reassuring, didn't leave anything to chance."
- "It's how nurses should be; looked after me extremely well."
- "It's a proper little hospital where you get treated like an individual."

In relation to accessing other services:

- "Couldn't get an appointment with the GP but referred to this unit. I've come back today to leave a box of chocolates for the staff to say thank you."
- "Went to A&E last night but eight hour wait, observations were done and advised to attend the MIU today."
- "Quicker than A&E."

Acknowledgements

The Healthwatch Gloucestershire Enter and View team would like to thank Cirencester MIU for working with us and enabling us to be able to speak to patients and staff to seek their feedback.

Provider response

We were pleased to host the Healthwatch Gloucestershire visit and appreciated the opportunity to conduct a thorough assessment of our patient accessibility and the services we provide.

Following the recommendations, we have replaced the clock in the main patient waiting room to one which demonstrates numbers one to 12.

We will look to replace the chairs available when they are no longer fit-for-purpose to include chairs with variable heights. In the short term we have moved two high backed arm chairs from the clinical area to the waiting room to offer an immediate choice of seating arrangements for patients that are waiting to be treated.

We will continue to monitor the communication patients get from their GP surgeries regarding their referral to our ESDMI clinic because we have noted that some patients are disappointed because they have not understood they are being referred to a Practitioner-led clinic rather than a GP face-to-face appointment.

This is challenged by the changeable process implemented in primary care which patients have to follow to obtain an appointment. If contacted via text by the surgery and have not been to us before, this can sometimes cause confusion and unmet expectations; we will ensure this is fed back at our next contract discussion with the PCN.

We receive monthly patient feedback reports from the trust and were very pleased to see from the Healthwatch visit that patients' comments mirrored the reports we receive and are happy with the service we provide.

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