





# The Young Patient's Voice

at Royal Blackburn Hospital Children's Ward August 2016 - March 2017



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# **Introduction**

Healthwatch Lancashire and Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen were invited to help East Lancashire Hospitals Trust to gather feedback from children and young people being treated on the children's ward at Royal Blackburn Hospital; as often parents or carers complete the Friends and Family Test questionnaire from their own perspective as parents, or on behalf of their children.

# Acknowledgements

We would like to thank:

- Local Healthwatch Champions for creating the games used for engaging with the children and young people on the ward.
- The children and young people that shared their feedback.
- East Lancashire Hospitals Trust staff, particularly those working on the children's ward, for supporting our visits.

All photographs have been included with the young person's and parental consent.

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# Methodology

This activity was undertaken in two phases.

## Phase one: August-September 2016

For phase one, Healthwatch Lancashire representatives attended the children's ward at Royal Blackburn Hospital to speak with children and young people who were patients and collate their experiences of being treated on the ward. Six questions were set around themes which we felt would be the most important to patients, these related to staff, food and the environment. For children below the age of eight, Healthwatch Lancashire worked with the play specialists to adapt the six questions into play activities, whilst the play specialists engaged with the children, Healthwatch Lancashire recorded the feedback and photographed the activity. Healthwatch Lancashire representatives spoke with older children (above the age of eight) and asked the questions.

### Phase two: February - March 2017

For the second phase, a further four visits were undertaken by Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen and a team of their young volunteers, along with Healthwatch Lancashire Champions who are a team of young people supported by The Children's Society. The young people that volunteer for each Local Healthwatch were asked to develop some activities which would help engage children in conversation about their experience on the ward. The volunteers decided to use a game of Jenga with different themes of the children's ward written on so that these were discussed whilst playing the game. They also printed posters with pictures of things which may affect their experience of the children's ward. Healthwatch Lancashire also recorded observations of the ward, including navigating our way to the ward, the environment, staff interactions with patients and identifying existing methods to record the experiences of children and young patients.

As each phase used different methods to collate feedback, the results have been presented differently and divided into phase one and phase two of this report. Overall, we spoke with 45 children and young people who shared over 120 comments.







## **Summary of findings**

Below is a summary of the children and young people's experiences of the children's ward during both phases of the project:

Although each phase of this activity used different methods to engage with the children, both generated the same topics for discussion in staff, food, activities and the environment

#### Staff

The majority of the children and young people in phase one said that their favourite part of being on the ward was spending time with the play specialists. The children said that the play specialists were friendly, helpful and kind. All children and young people in phase two spoke positively about staff, with comments shared including staff are:

'There when you need them'



#### **Food**

• The children and young people that we spoke to in phase one liked most of the food on the ward, although issues were raised about melted ice cream and the taste of some food. Some children said they would like more choice of food, including two children that would have liked fruit and vegetables. More negative comments were received in phase two with the majority relating to quality and choice, including comments such as:

'The main meals could be better, like the mash potato'

#### **Activities**

Most children and young people in both phase one and two said that they liked the
facilities, including watching TV, playing on the PlayStation or Xbox and playing with
the toys. Some comments were made about improving the Wi-Fi and TV availability
and having separate rooms or facilities for older and younger children.

#### **Environment**

 Some of the children commented in phase one that they would like the ward bays to be more colourful and interesting. Some of the children commented that they did not like being woken up early in the morning either by curtains being opened, staff waking them or from younger children crying. More negatives comments were raised in phase two, including issues with noise, temperature and placement of older and younger children on the same ward

<sup>&#</sup>x27;Really helpful',

<sup>&#</sup>x27;Really nice and look after us'

<sup>&#</sup>x27;Listen to you'

<sup>&#</sup>x27;Everyone is friendly'

<sup>&#</sup>x27;The food is horrible and the mash is disgusting'

<sup>&#</sup>x27;I would like better cake'



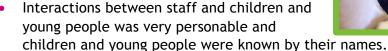




## **Observations**

#### On the days of the visits in both phases we observed:

- Trying to find the children's ward was not easy as there was an external side
  entrance from the car park which appeared to be for the children's ward. Once we
  were given directions by staff, the signposting within the hospital was very clear and
  easy to follow.
- The ward felt friendly, relaxed and homely, with children and young people playing and walking around the ward with other patients, friends and family and talking to staff.
- The ward appeared clean, organised and in good condition.





- Younger children seemed to play together. The playroom seemed to accommodate younger children with the use of play dough, colouring and painting, whereas the older children seemed to stay in their beds.
- We did not see any notice boards in the play rooms.
- Older and younger children did not seem to be separated into different parts of the ward. We observed parents taking their very young children onto bays with older children and older children using the adult area as a quiet room.
- Most children seemed happy on the ward, particularly when with play specialists and interacting with nursing staff.
- Staff appeared to know what each child liked and did not like about the children's ward; however, it did not seem that this information was recorded and shared with the patient experience teams within the trust, therefore losing valuable feedback.





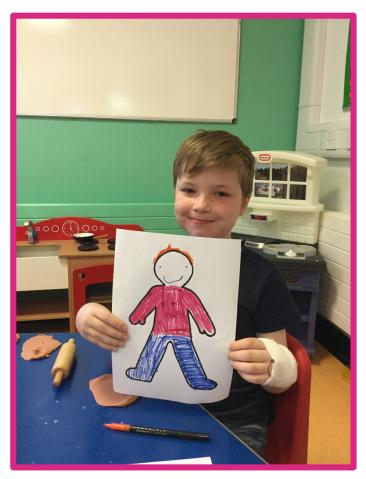


# Findings during our Phase 1 visit

When we arrived to carry out phase one the ward was very quiet, although there were two younger children on the ward that were able to take part.

The activities were designed to facilitate discussions and games around staff, food and the environment. Play specialists on the children's ward created and facilitated these activities. Below is what the children shared:

- The children were asked to draw their favourite member of staff on the children's ward. Both children drew the play specialists who are identified by their pink and blue uniform.
- Both children said they liked all of the food provided on the ward.
- Both children said they liked playing in the play room.



We felt it was more appropriate to ask our questions directly to children above the age of eight rather than in a play environment. Below shows what questions we asked and the responses gained from nine children.



1. We asked "What do you like about being on this ward"?

"I like the play room and making things. I don't miss my parents too much. The staff are nice."

"I like playing in the playroom. It makes it better having a drip. I like the play leaders."

"I like being next to friends. The staff are nice."







"I really like the staff, they're really friendly and helpful. One of the nurses brought me clothes because my mum couldn't - they go out of their way to help. I know the majority of the nurses."

"The staff are friendly and helpful. They gave me my own bathroom to use."

"The staff were kind. They told me about what would happen so I was more prepared for my operation."



#### 2. We asked "What do you think could be improved"?

"The beds are not comfy. I'd like the TV on more."

"Having other patients around my own age just to speak to. It would be nice to have slippers that the hospital provides rather than bringing my own in as it might not always be possible for me to bring my own things. I can't watch DVDs in the play room when other children are in their due to the age restrictions, so a TV room for older children would be good."

"The bed sheets gave me eczema; I think from the washing powder. They asked my mum to bring some sheets in from home this time which she did but it wasn't mentioned until this point. The TV goes off after 7pm unless you pay for it."

"The Wi-Fi is not the best. They make you pay in 24 hour blocks so it is not very good. I think it should be flexible when you want to watch TV, so I had to put it in one hour at a time."

"Nothing, I have only been here a day. The staff have been good."

"I don't like having to go to sleep at 9pm. The nurses won't let me stay awake all night."









3. We asked "Do you like the environment on the children's ward? And, if you could decide, what would you prefer the environment to look like?"

"It is ok here. I'm not sad staying here. I like having my own room."

"The environment is friendly; the staff cheer me up. A bit of colour would be nice rather than just one wall (blue) - being a different colour. The colours of the curtains would be nicer if they were a warmer colour. I think that would make the ward more homely. Also, they open the curtains early everyday about 7.30am which wakes me up. I'd rather they keep the curtains closed even if they have to wake me up for some reason. I don't sleep much because I'm busy at night, that's when my mind is more active, so when they open the curtains I'm fast asleep. I would like to be given a curfew and then I could sleep more. I think if I knew I had to go to sleep I would, but I guess that is personal to me. Children often cry and wake me up when I'm sleeping." The ward is plain and boring. Different colours would be good and brighter. A play area for older children would be good. Apart from the play station and Xbox there is nothing to do."

"I like the Xbox. There is a bit of privacy with the curtains."

"Nothing could be better really. I haven't slept here yet though."

"The TV is turned off at 7pm, I like doing word searches and playing on the PS3."

4. We asked "What food do you like at the hospital? And, is there any food you don't like"?



"I like the food. I like the chips, chicken nuggets and pizza."

"I like the sausages. I want spaghetti Bolognese."

"I am happy with the meals. I have had soup and a burger yesterday. The portion sizes are okay."

"I like the cake."

"I like tuna sandwiches for lunch, jelly and fruit. My mum brought me a sausage roll as well which is my favourite."









"The food is like cardboard. The sandwiches are poor. The ice cream is melted."

"I like the rice pudding, chicken, cheese and onion pie, chips, jelly, bakewell tarts. I don't like the pork, fruit cakes or apple sauce, it is more of a paste. I would prefer lunch and tea to be served earlier by about 30 minutes. The choice of food could be a lot better. I like Japanese food but it would be unreasonable to expect it in a hospital."

"The food could be better, it could be more healthy. It is just burgers, fish fingers, sausages, chips, potatoes. The food is all junk. They don't have vegetables or fruit."

"The food tasted like rubber. I lived off toast when I was here. They knew I was not eating the food so they helped by giving me toast. The choice was not good. The chips were dry, pizza tasted funny. It was all hot enough but I did not like the taste. The ice cream was melted."

"The food has been okay. I chose off the menu and had a tuna sandwich and lemon cake. I want a jacket potato. There was no fruit choice. I would like more fruit like kiwi, oranges, grapes, strawberries. We get jelly or a cake for dessert."



5. We asked "Do you like the staff that look after you here? And is there anything you think they could do better?"

"The staff are kind."

"I love the staff, especially the play workers."

"I like everyone."



6. We asked "Overall, what are the main things you think would improve your time at the hospital?"

"A lot of young people have been in here for self-harm or suicidal thoughts so I guess they like to keep people separate. I feel very supported here. I wouldn't try anything here. The 1-1 support and treatment helps a lot. At home my mum's attention is divided so I don't get the support I need. The nurses are much better to talk to than CAMHS or ELCAS - it is more like they are a friend whereas the psychiatrists talk to me like I'm an experiment and they just assume I'm on my period or have an eating disorder. Whereas the nurses will say my name and ask if I'd like a brew. That's what I need."

"Nothing!"			







## Findings during our Phase 2 visit

Phase two entailed using a modified game of Jenga and posters with key themes displayed to facilitate discussions with the children and young people who were being treated on the ward. The young people that volunteer for local Healthwatch facilitated the activities. Below shows the positive and negative experiences shared by the patients on the ward.

#### Staff

Positive experiences:

"The staff are nice."

"They are always there when you need them."

"They are not as nosey as other hospitals."

"The staff are really nice."

"It's nice, everyone is friendly."

"The staff are good."

"The doctors and nurses are really helpful."

"The doctors and nurses are nice."



<sup>&</sup>quot;They are there when you need them, they listen to you."

<sup>&</sup>quot;The doctors and nurses are really friendly and the information is always discussed with me."



No negative experiences relating to staff were received

#### **Food**



**Positive experiences:** 

<sup>&</sup>quot;The nurses are really nice and look after us."

<sup>&</sup>quot;Doctors and nurses are nice, we sometimes understand what they are saying and they are very gentle."

<sup>&</sup>quot;Doctors always come to check on us which is nice."

<sup>&</sup>quot;They are really kind and they tell us what is going on."

<sup>&</sup>quot;They are very friendly and nice and they explain things to me."

<sup>&</sup>quot;There is a lot of food to choose from."

<sup>&</sup>quot;They have a large range of food and it is usually nice."

<sup>&</sup>quot;The food is nice and there are always drinks available."







#### **Negative experiences:**

"I'd prefer to change the food to pasta and wraps."

"The food for the main meals could be better, like the mash potato."

"Food, like the chicken nuggets and chips is not fresh, it's like they've been there for a week."

"The sandwiches are rubbish, and there was not enough mayonnaise and I didn't want any butter but they put it on."

"The food is horrible and the mash is disgusting."

"I would like better cake."

"I don't like the drinks or the vegetables."

"I am dairy free and have to get my own food."



#### **Activities**



#### **Positive experiences:**

- "The play room has nice toys and the rooms are nice."
- "The TV is good and the entertainment is good."
- "There are lots of pictures around and they have things like Play Station to play on which is really good."
- "I like the playroom."
- "The staff took my bed through to the playroom which was really good."
- "There is a good PlayStation 3 and the ward has good board games."
- "The TV is good."
- "The free Wi-Fi is good."
- "There is an Xbox or PlayStation 3 if you aren't well enough to get involved in activities."
- "The facilities like the TV are good; the TV is free but it's limited in times because children need to go to bed."
- "I like the toys."
- "I like playing in the playroom and I am happy that I make friends and I like that I know what will happen in the hospital."



#### **Negative experiences:**

- "There's no Wi-Fi."
- "I find it very boring, there needs to be more activities."
- "There is not enough entertainment."
- "I think that the TV is not that good."
- "I think that children of similar ages should be put together, some of the entertainment isn't suitable for them. It is only suitable for older children. I have to pay for the TV and that means I have limited time."
- "The TV is expensive to watch at £5 per day."

<sup>&</sup>quot;There are no snacks."







#### **Environment**



#### **Positive experiences:**

"The beds are clean and the environment is nice."

"The bathrooms are clean."

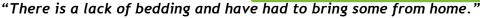
"The beds are comfortable and warm at night and the blankets keep me warm."

"I like that there's a wet room."



#### **Negative experiences:**

"The parent's room could be cleaner."



"I don't always get the best sleep at night."

"The bed is not very comfortable."

"There is no new furniture and the ward gets noisy at night time and too hot."

"The windows only open a bit, they should be bigger."

"I think it's really hot in here, I wake up and can't breathe."

"The temperature of the rooms could be better, like fans could be provided."

"It is too hot and this is bad when children have a temperature."

"I think that the pictures could be suitable for older patients too, and they could have more things for the older children to do."

"Having your own room would be better."

"If I could change anything I would be on a ward with just teenagers."

"It can get noisy with beeps and stuff."

"The speakers behind the TV make a lot of noise, it would be better at the front of the TV so that noise isn't distorted."

"It's too noisy at night and I can't sleep properly."









## Breakdown of improvements or issues raised

Below is a breakdown of the improvements or issues raised by children and young people on the ward:

#### **Improvement or issue**

#### **Environment**

Would like separation from younger children. One young person would have liked separation from older children

Facilities including quality or amount of available bedding, comfort of beds, furniture

Did not like being woken up too early by staff or children crying or from curtains being opened – of those 1 did not like going to bed early

Too noisy on the ward

Temperature too high

Would like different colours/more interesting ward bays

Cleanliness in the adult room

#### **Food**

Issues with the choice of food

Issues with the quality of food

Snacks to be available

Prefer different meal times

Dietary requirements were not catered for.

#### **Activities**

TV on more or problems with TV such as payments in 24 hour blocks and accessibility

Problems with Wi-fi

Would like more activities







# Response

 ${\bf A\,response\,from\,East\,Lancashire\,Hospitals\,NHS\,Trust\,can\,be\,found\,below.}$ 



# **Action Statement**

No.	Issues raised by	Response or action from	To be	Name of		
	patients	provider	addressed	manager		
	·	·	by	responsible		
1.	To explore options to create separation for younger children & young people/teenagers, with age relevant activities.	It is understandable that some children would prefer to be accommodated with other children of the same age. We do try to accommodate a child's wishes wherever possible; however, where a child is accommodated within the ward is often determined by their medical condition.  A wide range of activities are available on the ward for young people, these include arts and crafts, game consoles, board games and we are keen to explore new ideas and suggestions for further activities.  A magician is visiting soon and we are keen to establish this as regular entertainment.	End September 2017 End February 2018	Ward Sister  Ward Sister  Matron & Ward Sister		
		The staff are committed to explore options to create a space where young people have a separate area and provide a wider range of age relevant information. This will include magazines, books,	2018			
		information to sign post young people to different services for help and advice.				



		An exciting project is underway to create a large outdoor area, where there will be play facilities, sensory areas and an area where young		
2.	To explore issues raised with the quality or supply of available bedding and comfort of beds	The staff on the ward can obtain extra bedding for patients. Some children do prefer to bring in their own bedding and we welcome this.  New fitted sheets have been purchased which children and parents have said are much softer and more comfortable.	Completed June 2017	
3.	To explore how noise levels can be minimised, particularly at night	and more comfortable.  The unit is extremely busy with children being admitted 24 hours per day. Every effort is made to keep noise to a minimum particularly at night and staff try not to wake children unnecessarily, however, children may need medicines and treatment at different time throughout the day / night.  The play team are holding a poster competition about reducing noise at night and the winner will receive a prize and have their poster displayed on the ward to remind everyone about the importance of reducing noise.  Staff are exploring options to provide 'noise reduction kits' for young people to include eye masks and ear plugs.	End August 2017 End December 2017 January 2018	Ward Sister / Play Team Ward Sister



4.	To explore how the temperature of the ward can be made more comfortable for children & young people	The unit is air conditioned however the temperature has to be kept at a level to accommodate all ages including babies. Windows do open to allow ventilation however there have to be restrictions to how wide the windows open to keep children safe.  Staff communicate with the works department to request that the temperature is adapted at times when it may be too hot or too cold, as this sometimes happens depending on the temperature outside.	Ongoing	Ward Sister
5.	To ensure the adult room is clean & presentable	Cleanliness of the adult's room is monitored on a twice daily basis to ensure it is kept clean and tidy.  A sign will be displayed in the room advising parents/ relatives who to contact if they have any concerns about the cleanliness of the room.  The adults room was planned to be redecorated and the flooring to be replaced, this has now been completed and is much brighter and modern.	Completed End October 2017 Completed August 2017	Matron / Ward Sister
6.	To explore how children & young people can be involved in the design & décor of the ward to make	All the bays have different coloured feature walls. The issue of décor will be explored further with the children and young people to identify what they would like to see on the ward to make it more appealing and interesting	End October 2017	Matron / Ward Sister



	it more appealing & interesting			
	a meresting			
		Food		
7.	To explore issues with the choice and quality of food	Since the engagement visits were carried out, a new teatime menu has been introduced on the Ward, this combines food from both the children's menu and adult menu and provides more variety and choice. The food is now served on the ward from a trolley so that individual portion sizes can be tailored to the age of the child.	Monitored monthly	Housekeeper
		The new meals service will be reviewed and feedback obtained on the new menu and delivery. Staff will work closely with the children and their parents and the catering manager to ensure that all individual needs are catered for.		
		Healthy snacks such as fruit have been introduced and are available 24 hours per day.		
8.	To ensure all dietary requirements are catered for & these options are effectively communicated to both children & young people,	All special diets are catered for and there is a Childrens dietitian linked to the ward who can offer help and support.  Staff ask about dietary requirements when children are admitted to the ward and there are notices displayed with regards to ensuring staff are made aware	End October 2017	Matron / Ward Sister



	and their parents/carers.	of food allergies or any special dietary requirements.		
		Activities		
9.	To explore the option to increase the availability of free or discounted TV and to improve Wi-Fi	Agreement has been made to extend free television access up to 8pm.	End November 2017	Assistant Director of Patient Experience
	access	Upgrade of Trust Wi-Fi access points to be carried out.	End November 2017	
	Continu	ued engagement with children and yo	oung people	
10.	To ensure the views and experiences of children and young people on the ward are gathered and heard within the hospital trust and used to inform changes and improvements	Staff will continue to encourage the children and young people to be involved in the friends and family feedback and completing the patient experience surveys to ensure their views are gathered and acted on.  The play staff will continue to engage the children and young people in completing the 'Tops and Pants' feedback, drawing or writing suggestions for what is good on the Tops and what could be better on the Pants. We are continually exploring different ways of gathering children and young people's views.  Staff will ensure that all this really important feedback and information is used to inform changes and make improvements	oung people	Ward Sister / Matron



in the Childrens areas and the	
Hospital Trust.	
Children and young people's views	
and experiences are formally fed	
back through the Trusts Patient	
Experience Group, to ensure they	
are heard at every level of the	
organisation.	

#### Additional questions:

- Is the report factually accurate? If not, please state what needs to be changed and why
  Yes the report is accurate and reflects feedback which we obtain through our patient
  experience and friends & family test surveys
  - 2. Have you learnt anything new about the experiences of your patients as a result of this exercise?
    - As above, we are aware of many of the issues raised through our own regular surveys. It is good to see that both exercises have drawn the same conclusion and we have a very clear idea of actions to be taken to try and improve in these areas.
  - 3. What was your impression of Healthwatch Lancashire and Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen during this exercise? Do you think they could have done anything better?
    - They were able to engage with the older children well and used the hospital play team to draw feedback from the younger children and provided the role of 'observer'. It has been a pleasure working with both Healthwatch and the volunteers.