

**Visit Date:** 25<sup>th</sup> August 2017

**Service name:** Ambulatory Care – Northwick Park Hospital

**Summary**

Healthwatch Brent made a visit to Ambulatory Care at Northwick Park Hospital to engage with patients and to hear their views on the service that they are receiving. Ambulatory care is a service that offers same-day treatment to patients. The service enables patients to be treated without the need to admit them to an inpatient bed. There are three ways a patient can be referred to Ambulatory Care; either by GP, A&E or an inpatient at Northwick Park Hospital. On the day, I was told that there were 40 patients that had been referred to Ambulatory Care. We were able to obtain feedback from ten patients. Six patients were having their first appointment and two patients were having their second appointment.

**Discussions:** Patients feel involved with discussions about their care. Carers also feel involved.

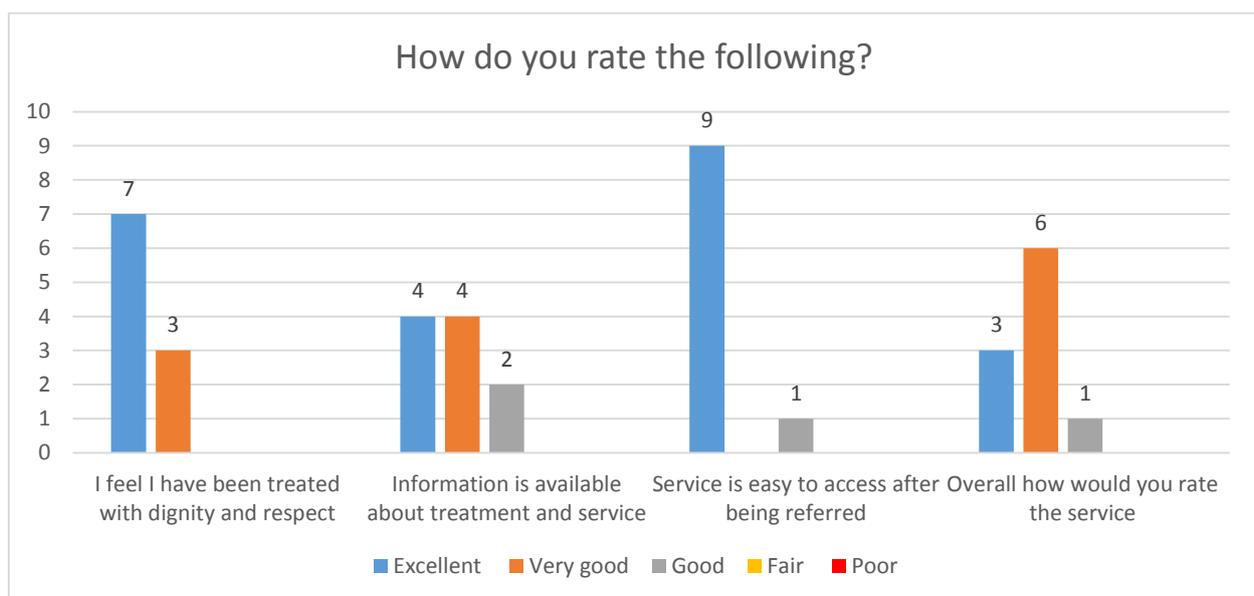
**Staff relationship:** Patients’ relationship with staff is good. Staff were described as helpful, kind and respectful. Not all staff members introduced themselves to patients when giving treatment.

**Treatment plan:** As the majority of the patients I spoke to were having their first appointment and some only having their second, they were not aware of a treatment plan.

**Referral:** Five patients were able to get an appointment on the same day after being referred and three patients got their appointment the next day, two patients had to wait for one week.

**Call for assistance:** Patients were not told how to call for assistance if needed, but patients said there are staff around and the reception desk is clearly visible when in the waiting room. If patients need assistance they would ask at reception.

We asked the patients and carers to rate the service from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). The results are in a graph below:



### What patients said:

“Staff have been really good and pleasant”

“Never met medical staff so kind”

“I was told to help myself to tea and coffee then they offered me a sandwich, very impressed”

“I don’t know how long I will wait until I am seen again”

“Staff have been excellent”

“Referral was great, I got an appointment on the same day after my GP phoned”

“I had my blood pressure done and have not been seen since, don’t know how long I will be waiting for”

“Quickest appointment I have ever had [after referral]”

### Recommendations

- To ensure that patients are made aware on how to ask for assistance if needed.
- To provide a rough estimate of how long patients may be waiting, after they have been seen for the first time and waiting for the results in the waiting area.
- Staff should introduce themselves to patients when delivering treatment.
- Some patients did not know if they had a Treatment Plan. For the purposes of this report, we would like to clarify whether this is something the patient should be aware of and contribute to after their first visit.

### Overall experience

When we visited ambulatory care at Northwick Park, patients raised a number of positive observations and suggestions to improve the service. They were happy with how quick the referral process was to get their first appointment and how respectful and kind the staff were. On the day of our visit, patients had been waiting a while after first being seen by a member of staff and did not know how long they would be waiting until they were called again. Patients appreciate that whilst waiting they are provided with sandwiches and beverages free of charge. There is also a television with subtitles on. Overall, patients were happy with their experience of ambulatory care.

### Service response

- To ensure that patients are made aware on how to ask for assistance if needed.  
There is a Healthcare assistant who is responsible for looking after patients in the waiting area. A sign has been put up with this information and asking patients to ask the receptionist if they need anything.
- To provide a rough estimate of how long patients may be waiting, after they have been seen for the first time and waiting for the results in the waiting area.  
Staff are expected to keep patients informed about the next steps in their treatment including how long they are likely to wait. They will trial giving patients a note about this too.
- Staff should introduce themselves to patients when delivering treatment.  
We agree. This feedback has been shared with staff and they have been reminded to offer this basic courtesy.
- Some patients did not know if they had a Treatment Plan. For the purposes of this report, we would like to clarify whether this is something the patient should be aware of and contribute to after their first visit.  
All patients do have a treatment plan and this is discussed with them. The matron has put up a sign saying: ‘Do you know your treatment plan? If not, please ask the Nursing/Medical staff who will be happy to discuss it with you.’