



**Diana, Princess of Wales
Hospital, Eye Clinic
Sept-Dec 2024**

healthwatch

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Who are Healthwatch North East Lincolnshire?

Healthwatch North East Lincolnshire (HWNEL) is the independent champion for people who use health and social care services. HWNEL exists to make sure that people are at the heart of their care. We listen to what people like about services and what could be improved. HWNEL share their views with those with the power to make change happen. We also help people find the information they need about services in their area. HWNEL has the power to make sure that people's voices are heard by the government and those running services. As well as seeking the public's views ourselves, we also encourage services to involve people in decisions that affect them. Our sole purpose is to help make care better for people. In summary, HWNEL is here to:

- Help people find out about local health and care.
- Listen to what people think of services.
- Help improve the quality of services by letting those running services and the government know what people want from health and care.
- Encourage people running services to involve people in changes to health and care.



Mission Statement



Our vision

To bring closer the day when everyone gets the care they need.



Our mission

To make sure people's experiences help make health and social care better.



Our approach – what is important to us?

- **Listening** to people and making sure their voices are heard.
- **Including** everyone in the conversation – especially those who don't always have their voice heard.
- **Analysing** different people's experiences to learn how to improve care.
- **Acting** on feedback and driving change.
- **Partnering** with the Government, health and care services and the voluntary and community sector to make care better whilst retaining our independence.

Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital Eye Clinic

The Eye Clinic at Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital, Grimsby is situated on the ground floor of the Hospital within the Outpatients Department and forms part of the Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust (NLaG) The Department currently has three Consultant Ophthalmologists. The Eye Clinic also comprises of a team of Nursing staff and Health Care Assistants. Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital forms part of the Yorkshire and Humber Deanery Ophthalmology Rotation and the Yorkshire and the Humber School of Ophthalmology is the second largest outside London.

The Eye Clinic has various specialities including Oculoplastic, Glaucoma, Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD), Diabetic Retinopathy, Low Vision Assessments (LVA) and Fundus Fluoresceine. The eyes are a very fragile organ and need a great deal of care and expertise. The Ophthalmic Surgeons carry out many different procedures on patients including Glaucoma, Retinal and Eye Lid Surgery, Laser Treatment for Diabetic Retinopathy and a Botox Service for Dystonia and Ocular Motility problems. Referrals can be made to the Orthoptic

Department who work closely with the Ophthalmologists, and form part of the Allied Health Professionals Team. The Orthoptics Department assess patients of varying ages with eye conditions such as Eye Strain, Squints, Reduced and Double Vision. The Eye Clinic can also signpost to the Eye Care Liaison Officer (ECLO) who works in conjunction with the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) and Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust.

The Eye Clinic see patients of all ages and varying needs, including Physical Disabilities and Learning Disabilities. Some of the Eye Clinic patients were referred directly from the Emergency Department. The clinics are generally held between 9am and 12.30pm and then 1pm to 5pm Monday to Friday.

Eye Care Liaison Officers (ECLOs)

Eye Care Liaison Officers have knowledge both on a local and national level regarding various eye conditions and are there to offer individualised advice and support to patients. ECLOs act as an important bridge between Health and Social Care Services and are central to the support and well-being of patients in Eye Clinics. They also help to prevent avoidable sight loss, by talking through treatment and helping people understand their medication if necessary. ECLOs form part of the RNIB Sight Loss Advice Service. ECLOs can support patients with the process of becoming registered blind or partially sighted, and the benefits of being registered. ECLOs provide advice regarding Welfare Benefits, remaining in employment or re-training. They also support with mental health and emotional well-being, children's services and help with difficulties at school and signposting to voluntary organisations and local support groups. The ECLO at Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital, Grimsby is available on a Wednesday and Thursday, however patients can email or telephone for advice Monday to Friday between 8.30am- 4pm.

Aims of the Project

Between September and December 2024, the Project Officer for Secondary Care at Healthwatch North East Lincolnshire began to visit the Eye Clinic at Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital, Grimsby. The purpose of the visit was to gain patients views and opinions of the Eye Clinic and issues surrounding Health and Social Care in North East Lincolnshire. This project had the following aims:

- To gain the views of seldom heard groups and communities.
- To engage with patients who use the Eye Clinic.
- To build strong relationships with Secondary Care Services.
- To collaborate with the Eye Care Liaison Officer to empower patients throughout the Eye Clinic.

Information Gathering

The Project Officer for Secondary Care at Healthwatch North East Lincolnshire began initiating contact with the Outpatients Department at Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital Eye Clinic, with the primary aim of gaining patients views and opinions regarding the Eye Clinic and general Health and Social Care issues within North East Lincolnshire.

Healthwatch North East Lincolnshire conducted Engagement within the waiting area of the Eye Clinic between the times of 10am and 12pm on seven separate occasions. During each visit the Project Officer would initially be greeted by the Outpatients Reception staff and then speak to the Outpatients Deputy Manager or Nursing staff to discuss if there were any existing or new issues that may have presented. The Project Officer visited the Eye Clinic on either a Tuesday, Wednesday or Friday every two weeks. Healthwatch North East Lincolnshire engaged with xx people throughout this project.

The Project Officer for Healthwatch North East Lincolnshire also met with the ECLO on two occasions, one for an Introduction to the role of the ECLO and Healthwatch, and on another occasion to work in partnership and speak to patients attending the Eye Clinic.

The following Themes and Trends were identified from the Engagement at the Eye Clinic within Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital:

Waiting Area

The Eye Clinic is one of the busiest Outpatients Clinics at Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital and can get easily congested. Patients attending the Eye Clinic have a small waiting area on the ground floor of the Hospital located in Zone 3, with a few further seats located in the corridor. Due to the nature of the clinic and the varying ages and needs of the patients, they usually bring a companion, parent or carer with them to the appointment. This takes up extra seats and leads to many patients/carers having to stand for the duration of their wait or to sit in another waiting area of the Outpatients Clinic. When patients are called for their appointment, the Nurse will usually say their name and take them to their allocated appointment/treatment room. On many occasions staff will go to other waiting areas looking for patients. There is also only a limited amount of wheelchair spaces in the waiting area, and this can congest the corridor area, especially on busy clinic days. Some patients said they had to sit in another area as there wasn't space for their wheelchair.

Personal stories:



"I might have to sit in another area, as there is no space"



Signage

The Outpatients Department at Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital is divided into four zones on the ground floor of the Hospital. Patients usually attend the Outpatients Department by coming through the Main Entrance next to the Emergency Department. On entering the Main Entrance patients are usually

greeted by a Volunteer who will direct them to the correct clinic. There is a sign located near to the Volunteer Desk showing a map of the Hospital site, however some patients have found this confusing, and would rather see the names of the clinics alongside the zone number. Some patients are unable to locate where they need to be without asking for directions. The Eye Clinic see patients from other areas, such as Louth, these patients found it difficult to find their way to the Eye Clinic from the car park, as there was no clear signage telling them to go through the Main Entrance.

Personal stories:



“I come from out of town, there was no clear signage about where to go from the car park”



You Said, We Did

The signage issue has been raised with Northern Lincolnshire & Goole Foundation Trust, who have stated that a pilot project has been planned for Diana, Princess of Wales Hospitals signage. It has been developed, and they are awaiting confirmation as to when this will be completed.

Waiting Times between procedures

Patients attending the Outpatients Eye Clinic may need to have several procedures during their appointment. These procedures can include having eyedrops administered and Visual Field Tests. These procedures can take time especially on busy clinic days and healthcare staff availability. Many of these procedures need undertaking before a patient can see a Consultant Ophthalmologist for their appointment time and to enable them to provide the correct treatment. Patients attending the Eye Clinic feel that the appointment times for patients need to be spaced out a lot more during the clinic day, as they can be there between 2-3 hours. Some patients said they had been waiting a long time for their initial procedure and when enquiring with the Eye Clinic staff had found that their clinical notes hadn't been retrieved for the appointment. This was usually rectified once they had spoken to the reception staff but had added on extra time to their wait to be seen.

Personal stories:



“I might have to re-book my appointment;
I’ve been waiting too long”



Summary

The Project surrounding the Eye Clinic at Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital aimed to engage patients, especially those in seldom heard groups, and listen to their views and opinions regarding the Eye Clinic and Health and Social Care issues in North East Lincolnshire. The purpose was to enable patients to have a voice and to put their point across in an effective way. The effectiveness of the Project could be measured in the following ways.

Engagement within the Eye Clinic

- Healthwatch North East Lincolnshire attended clinics on a monthly basis
- Healthwatch have interacted and listened to over 50 patients within the Eye Clinic at Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital.
- The Engagement activity has allowed Healthwatch North East Lincolnshire to gain a rapport and have in-depth conversations with the patients regarding the Eye Clinic and Health and Social Care in general.
- Regular contact with the ECLO

Intelligence Gathering

- Three Key Themes and Trends were identified amongst the patients that use the Eye Clinic at Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital. This has exposed some of the patient barriers within a Target Audience.
- Congestion at some of the Eye Clinics has become apparent, as more patients are being referred to the clinic. North East Lincolnshire has a high population of people over the age of 65.

Partnership Building

- Healthwatch North East Lincolnshire have gained a rapport with Secondary Care providers.
- Healthwatch North East Lincolnshire are working in collaboration with the Eye Care Liaison Officer (ECLO).

Impact of the Project

- The data collected from the Engagement at the Eye Clinic has allowed Healthwatch North East Lincolnshire to see the bigger picture, bringing key Themes and Trends to the forefront regarding the Eye Clinic and Health

and Social Care in general. This has supported larger projects such as the Access to GP's Survey.

- Healthwatch North East Lincolnshire have given Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) to patients regarding the ECLO Service based at the Hospital, supporting them to make informed choices of whether this service would be beneficial to them in their Eye Care journey.
- Some of the patients that Healthwatch engaged with did not know about the role of The ECLO and how they could be supported by them. Healthwatch co-ordinated a clinic time with the ECLO and worked in conjunction with them during an Eye Clinic. Many patients were able to be signposted to the ECLO straight away for advice and support.
- The patients would speak to Healthwatch regarding their concerns or compliments regarding the Eye Clinic and other Health and Social Care issues within North East Lincolnshire, and these patients were signposted accordingly. This has meant that patients have accessed services and support when they needed it most.

Next Steps

- The patient voice during Engagement at the Eye Clinic within Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital will support with larger impactable Projects.
- The patient voice will support the GP Appointment Access Survey.
- To maintain regular contact with the ECLO so feedback can be received at Healthwatch North East Lincolnshire on a regular basis.
- To visit the Eye Clinic once the new signage is up in the hospital to see if this has made a difference to this cohort of patients.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch North East Lincolnshire would like to thank the patients and Healthcare staff at the Eye Clinic within Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital for their ongoing support, and for sharing their experiences of the Eye Clinic and Health and Social Care experiences in North East Lincolnshire.





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