

# Outpatients Experiences

A report of users' experiences of  
outpatient services at Hull & East  
Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust

May 2015



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Healthwatch East Riding of Yorkshire and Healthwatch Kingston upon Hull undertook this work in response to concerns of residents and issues highlighted by the Care Quality Commission Inspection of the Hull & East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust in January 2014.

Healthwatch conducted a survey to find out directly from patients about their experiences of Outpatients services. Responses to the survey pointed to a number of concerns.

Issues identified were -

- High levels of appointments being cancelled
- Follow-up appointments delayed.
- Poor communication with patients when clinics run late.
- Particular public concerns re ophthalmology and glaucoma follow-up.

Recommendations made include -

- Review the Outpatients appointments system in order to
  - Reduce the number of appointments that are cancelled
  - Reduce the number of appointments that are delayed.
- Improve communication with patients when clinics run late
- Specific to the ophthalmology and glaucoma follow-up, investigate opportunities to reduce pressure on ophthalmology department by developing more widely the integrated role of eye health professionals in primary care in the identification and management of chronic or acute disease.

## INTRODUCTION

Healthwatch Kingston upon Hull and Healthwatch East Riding of Yorkshire are the independent voice for people in our community, helping to shape, challenge and improve local health and social care services. Healthwatch does this by talking and listening to people from every part of the community, and by holding services to account.

Our vision is to enable local people to monitor the standard of provision of local care services and whether and how local care services could and ought to be improved.

## WHY WE CHOSE TO EXAMINE OUTPATIENTS

The publication of the CQC inspection report into Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust (May 2014) highlighted cancellation of appointments at the Trust's Outpatient Department as an area of concern.

Members of the public had raised concerns with Healthwatch about cancellation of appointments but also about the delays between follow-up appointments.

## OUR SURVEY

We created a short survey to gather information on local people's experiences of Outpatients at Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust. The full survey is in Appendix 1.

Healthwatch visited a range of locations across the city such as libraries, Hull City Council Customer Service Centres, Driffield Show and Dove House Hospice to gather responses to our questions. The survey was also available to complete online for those who could not make it to our events but wanted to share their experiences. Our aim was to reach a wide range of people who had experience of using more than one service.

We received 100 responses the results of which are shown below.

Figure 1 shows a breakdown of the Outpatients departments that were commented on.

Figure 1:

Service	Number
Eye Hospital	28
HRI	8
Castle Hill	7
Orthopaedics	6
Cardiology	5
Urology	5
Neurology	4
Haematology	4

Service	Number
MRI scan	2
Rheumatology	2
Ultrasound	1
Chest Clinic	1
Breast Clinic	1
Endoscopy	1
Radiology	1
Oncology	1

Audiology	3
Renal	3
Fracture Clinic	3
Women and Children's	2
Physiotherapy	2
Pain management clinic	2
Gastroenterology	2

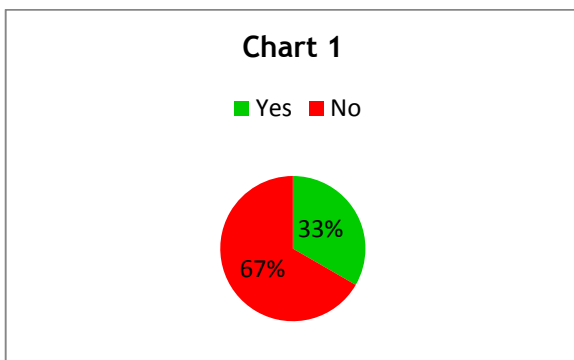
MS clinic	1
Brocklehurst Centre	1
Bone Clinic	1
Dermatology	1
Gynaecology	1
Plastic Surgery	1

As Figure 1 shows the Eye Hospital stood out as the department that had by far the most concerns raised. The returns rate was considerably higher in comparison the other departments and we are confident that our methods in gathering responses would not have resulted in a disproportionate number of Eye Hospital patients completing the survey. There has also been some press coverage of the issue which pointed to concerns about delays among patients. As Healthwatch is evidence-led when raising concerns we focussed our attention on the Eye Hospital.

## RESULTS OF SURVEY

Once respondents had identified the Outpatient department they were commenting on they were then asked a series of questions about their experience. The results of these are shown below.

### Question 2: Were you given a choice of location or appointment time?



99 respondents provided an answer for Question 2. Chart 1 shows that 67% were not given a choice of location or appointment time.

A comments box provided the opportunity for respondents to provide details of the options they were given.

Below are comments from those who had a positive experience regarding the choice of location or appointment time

*“The slot given fitted with me and I could have changed it if I wished. Location wise it was okay I would have preferred Castle Hill as it is closer to home but it was not a problem.”*

*“They gave me an appointment and said that I could ring to change it if necessary”*

*“The clinic were very helpful and booked us in at the first possible appointment to fit in with our prearranged plans. They offered advice about when the appointment should take place and offered options to fit in with the disabilities of the patient.”*

*“Was not given a choice initially but when I received the appointment it was for a date when I was due to be away. I rang to rearrange and they were fine with rearranging it.”*

*“Varies widely. Generally accommodating as I cannot always make the time given to take in my 99 year old mother for lucentis injections”*

Below are comments by those who did not feel they were given a choice.

*“We were not made aware that there was an option where heart problems are concerned but we could not fault anyone concerned first class treatment”*

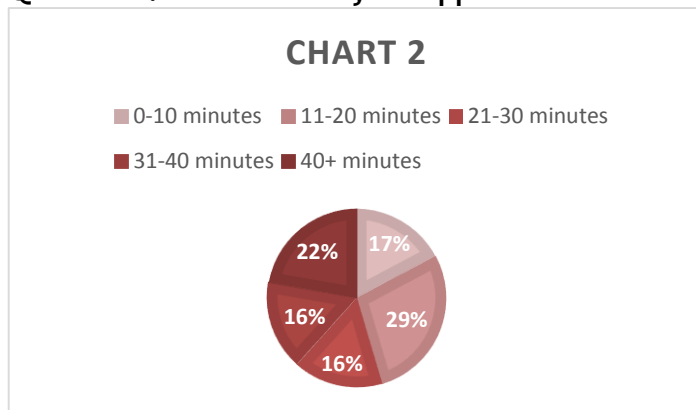
*“Appointment letter just sent out by post”*

*“Received a letter”*

*“I am sure I could have changed if necessary but was not given the choice to begin with”*

Both the positive comments and the comments from those who felt they hadn't had a choice seem to reflect that it is not always obvious that the patient has a choice, however for those that did need to change they found that this was possible and was a positive experience.

**Question3: How close to your appointment time were you seen?**



99 respondents answered. As Chart 2 shows 54% of respondents were waiting over 20 minutes after their appointment time and 22% reported they had to wait over 40 minutes. 17% were seen within 10 minutes of their appointment time.

In the comments box relating to Question 2 some respondents chose to leave a comment regarding the wait they experience these are shown below.

*“I waited over one and a half hours for my appointment. I was not informed of any delay. The area in which you wait is cramped and uncomfortable; I was then taken to a small*

*changing room, without windows and told to change into a gown. I was in this room for 15 mins. “*

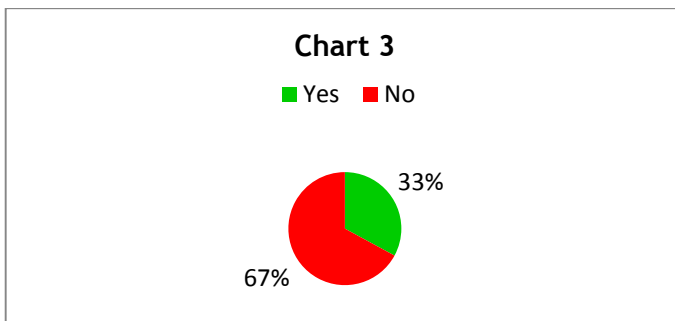
*“Always a long wait at eye hospital.”*

*“Not only were we not given a choice of time but each time the wait is well over half an hour.”*

One respondent also left a comment praising the fact that they had been seen early for their appointment.

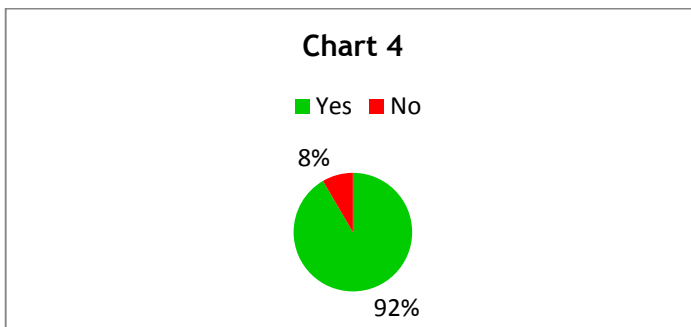
*“The appointment time was convenient and I arrived in good time (in fact rather early) I was seen ahead of time about 30 minutes early”*

**Question 4: If not seen on time were you kept updated on any delays?**



79 respondents answered Question 4. Chart 3 shows that of those who were not seen on time 67% were not kept informed of any delay.

**Question 5: Did staff treat you with respect and dignity at all times?**



95 answered Question 5. 92% of respondents felt that staff had treated them with dignity and respect at all times.

Some respondents provided comments on their positive experience.

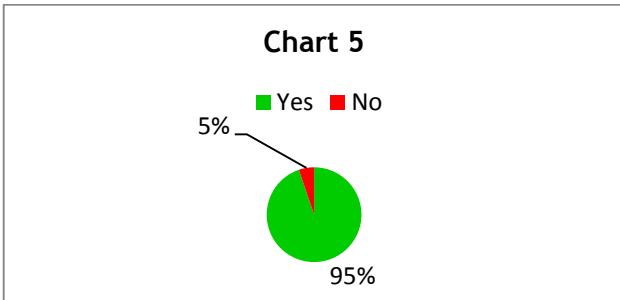
*“Nursing staff all gave their name, explained where they were taking me and what would happen next. This helped enormously in a stressful experience.”*

*“Very caring staff. Treatment very good.”*

*“Staff are wonderful”*

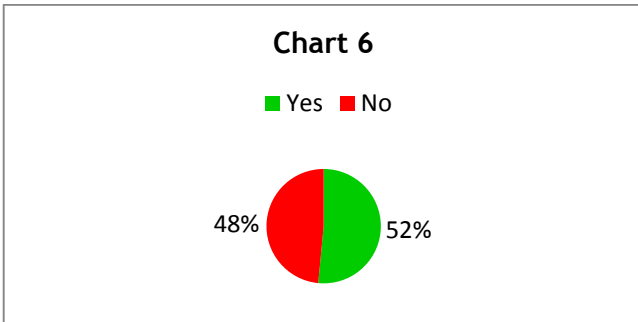
One respondent left a comment regarding their particular condition and the lack of understanding they felt they received from staff.

**Question 6: Did your doctor have your notes and information at the appointment?**



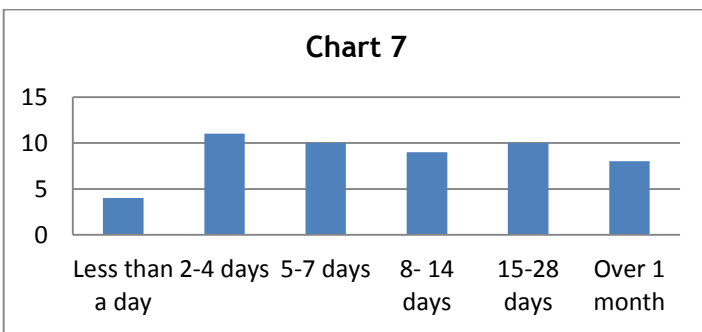
96 answered. As Chart 5 shows 95% of respondents stated their doctor had their notes and information at their appointment.

**Question 7: Have you had appointments cancelled or rearranged?**



99 answered Question 7. As Chart 6 shows over 50% having an appointment cancelled or rearranged.

**Question 8: If yes what notice were you given of that cancellation /rearrangement?**



52 respondents answered. As Chart 7 shows 25 of those respondents had less than a weeks' notice for a cancellation or rearrangements: 4 people being given less than a days' notice.

Several respondents provided comments regarding issues with cancellations.

*“My appointment was cancelled, but I did not receive notification of this. So I turned up at the hospital expecting to be seen. The receptionist was very apologetic and mentioned*



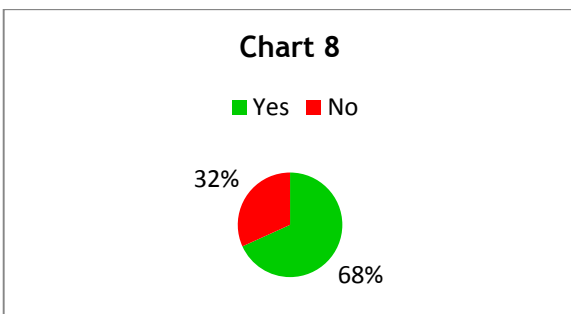
*that a lot of people had experienced the same problem, she managed to rebook me for a month later, but I had already been waiting for well over 6 months by this stage.”*

*“1st appointment cancelled, had to wait 4/6 weeks for next one”*

*“...I have since had two appointments cancelled and have now been given an appointment for the 16th June (which is over 6 months later!), when I should have been seen within 6 weeks. It is very worrying as this condition affects my sight and I would have felt much happier had I had it confirmed by a professional that the treatment is working.”*

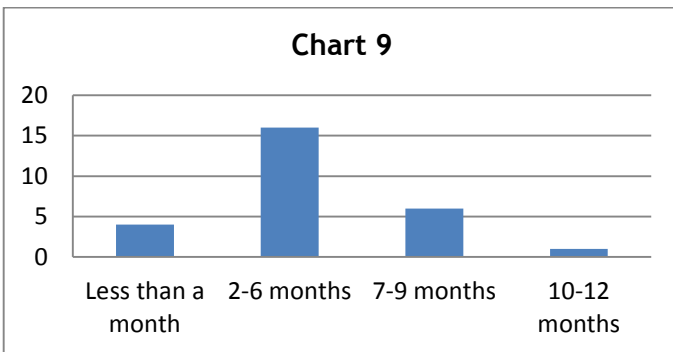
*“Cancelled twice, knee operation but understand why because of pressure.”*

**Question 9: If you were told that you needed a follow up appointment were you seen in the required time frame?**



85 respondents answered. Chart 8 shows that 32% of respondents were not seen for their follow up appointment in the required time frame.

**Question 10: If no how long was the delay?**

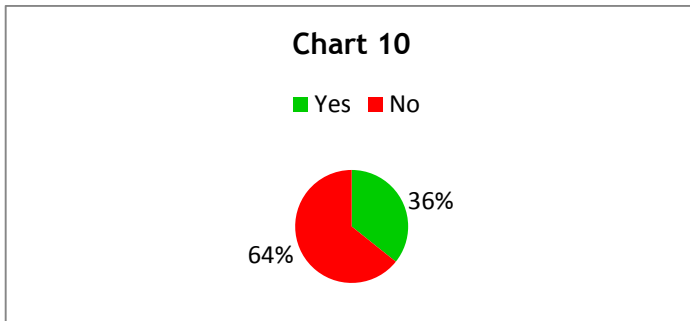


27 respondents answered. As Chart 9 shows 16 respondents did not have their follow up until 2-6 months after the time frame they were told with 1 respondent not being seen for 10-12 months after.

## RESULTS OF EYE HOSPITAL SURVEY

28 respondents gave answers based on their experience at the Eye Hospital. These results are shown below.

### Question 2: Were you given a choice of location or appointment time?



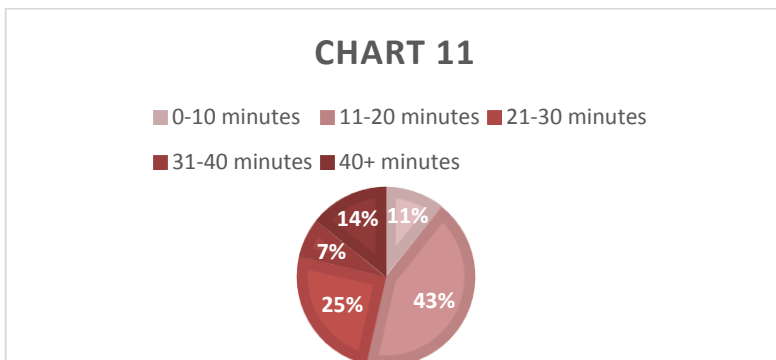
28 respondents gave an answer to question 2 with regards to the Eye Hospital. 64% said they were not given a choice of location or appointment time.

Comments regarding choice of appointment time at the Eye Hospital are shown below.

*“Appointment letter just sent out by post”*

*“Was not given a choice initially but when I received the appointment it was for a date when I was due to be away. I rang to rearrange and they were fine with rearranging it.”*

### Question 3: How close to your appointment time were you seen?

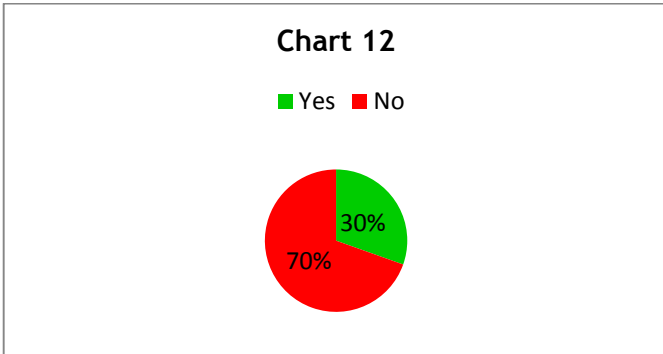


28 respondents answered in regard to the Eye Hospital. As Chart 11 shows, 43% were waiting between 11-20 minutes and 25% were waiting for between 21 and 30 minutes.

There was comment given around waiting times at the Eye Hospital this is shown below.

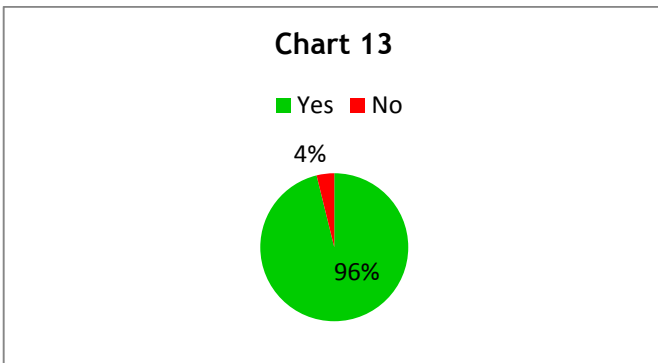
*“Always a long wait at eye hospital.”*

**Question 4: If not seen on time were you kept up to date of any delays?**



23 respondents answered re the Eye Hospital. Chart 12 shows that 70% felt that they were not kept up to date of any delays.

**Question 5: Did staff treat you with respect and dignity at all time?**

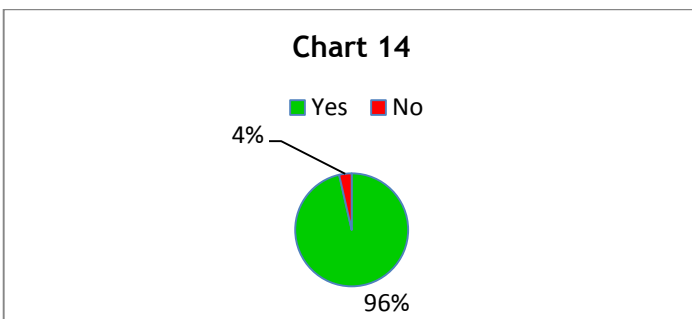


26 respondents answered in relation to the Eye Hospital. 96% felt that they were treated with dignity and respect at all times.

**One respondent provided a comment on their experience of the staff**

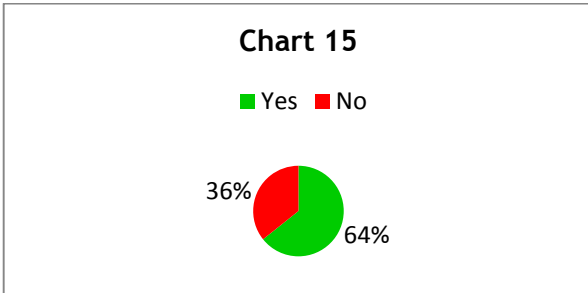
*“Very caring staff. Treatment very good.”*

**Question 6: Did your doctor have your notes and information at the appointment?**



28 respondents answered question 6 in regards to the Eye Hospital. Chart 14 shows that 96% of them stated their doctor had their notes and information at their appointment.

**Question 7: Have you had appointments cancelled or rearranged?**

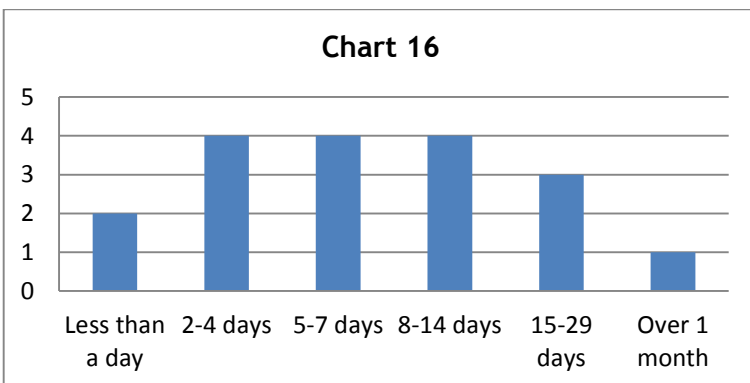


28 respondents answered question 7 in regards to the Eye Hospital. Chart 15 shows that 64% had appointments either cancelled or rearranged.

One respondent commented with regards to cancelled appointments.

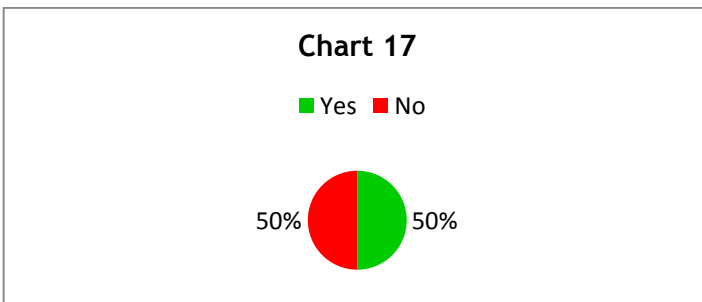
*“They gave me an appointment and said that I could ring to change it if necessary. I was diagnosed on the 9th December and was told that I would be seen within 6 weeks to ensure that the treatment was working. I have since had two appointments cancelled and have now been given an appointment for the 16th June (which is over 6 months later!), when I should have been seen within 6 weeks. It is very worrying as this condition affects my sight and I would have felt much happier had I had it confirmed by a professional that the treatment is working.”*

**Question 8: If yes what notice were you given of that cancellation/ rearrangement?**



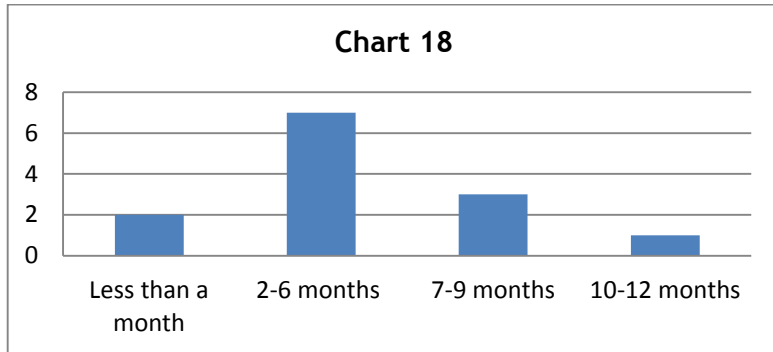
18 respondents had had appointments cancelled or rearranged. Chart 16 shows that 14 of them had appointments cancelled with less than 2 weeks’ notice. 6 respondents had appointments cancelled with less than 4 days’ notice.

**Question 9: If you were told that you needed a follow up appointment were you seen in the required time frame?**



26 respondents answered with regards to the Eye Hospital. 50% were seen in the required time frame and 50% who were not.

**Question 10: If no how long was the delay?**



Of the 13 respondents who were not seen in the required time frame, 7 of those were seen 2-6 months late. With 1 person being seen 10-12 months late.

**TRIANGULATION OF OUR FINDINGS**

Recognising the relatively small numbers of respondents we formally asked Hull & East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust for their data to triangulate our findings. The request was made on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2014 under the provisions of the Health & Social Care Act (2012) under which the Trust has a statutory requirement to respond within 20 working days. The Trust's response was received on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2015 and is found in Appendices 1 and 2. Key questions and responses are listed below:

*1. How many individual patients are under the care of the eye hospital?*

66,572 patients attended appointments within Outpatients Clinics that had a specialty of Ophthalmology for 2014 within the Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust. (This is the number of attended outpatient appointments for clinics under a speciality of Ophthalmology within 2014).

*2. Do you currently have patients awaiting appointments for follow up which are overdue that have not been given a specific appointment slot?*

Ophthalmology currently has approximately 5000 patients overdue a follow up appointment. These patients include a number of sub specialities across Ophthalmology, however the highest number are under the Glaucoma service. It is not possible to provide a breakdown of average time delay per speciality however the current delays range from 1 day to 16 months.

*3. In the last 24 months, have your staff reported any patient safety or clinical incidents where a patient's visual function deteriorated or was at risk of deterioration because the patient was offered an ophthalmology outpatient appointment later than the clinically recommended time?*

Yes                      No                      ✓

4. *Have there been any complaints raised by patients suggesting that they have suffered visual loss due to delayed follow up?*

Yes

No



5. *Taking account of NICE guidance on time interval for glaucoma follow up appointments, in your view what proportion of your Glaucoma follow-up appointments are delayed? This is defined as a patients appointment was delayed by more than 15%. For example a patient whose follow up appointment was due within 6 months and the appointment was offered after 7 months or later.*

At this current time the Ophthalmology Services believes that 25% of Glaucoma patients have some delay to their follow up appointment.

6. *Please provide an estimate of the average delay experienced by Glaucoma patients in your hospital at the present time.*

The estimated average delay experienced by Glaucoma patients at the Hull Royal Infirmary is 4 months.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

- 67% of respondents stated they were not given a choice of appointment time or location - the comments provided indicate that this may be due to a lack of information about the choices available.
- 54% of respondents were waiting over 20 minutes for their appointment with 17% being seen within 10 minutes of their appointment slot.
- 92% of respondents believed they were treated with dignity and respect at all times and 95% stated that their doctor had all their information and notes at their appointment.
- 52% of respondents had had an appointment cancelled or rearranged with 48% being given less than a week's notice of the cancellation or rearrangement.
- 32% of respondents were not seen in the required time frame for a follow up appointment with 59% seen 2-6 months late.
- The rate of cancellations has both a cost and reputational impact on the Trust

## EYE HOSPITAL SPECIFIC CONCLUSION

These responses followed a similar pattern to the general results however 64% reported having a cancellation or a rearrangement (12% higher than the general results). 55% of those who had a cancellation reported having less than a week's notice.

NHS England Call to Action for Eyes North Yorkshire & Humber response (2014) noted “Comments for patient feedback showed high level of dissatisfaction with cancelled and delayed appointments. Appointments could not be made on leaving the clinic but were sent later and one patient commented this usually resulted in him having to re arrange it. A more effective appointment system would possibly lead to fewer appointments not attended which wastes valuable hospital time.”

50% of those who responded with regards to the Eye Hospital were not seen in the required time frame for their follow up appointment which is 18% higher than the general results. Although no harm has been reported nevertheless it is of great concern that 25% of Glaucoma patients have some delay to their follow up appointment and the average delay is four months (as confirmed by the Trust).

Both Healthwatch organisations will work with Eye Hospital management to act on the public’s concerns.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

We are heartened that the Trust is taking action to address the delay for follow up outpatient appointments and make the following recommendations

1. Review the Outpatients appointments system in order to
  - a. Reduce the number of appointments that are cancelled
  - b. Reduce the number of appointments that are delayed.
2. Improve communication with patients when appointments are running late.
3. Work with the NHS England Local Eye Health Network to investigate opportunities to reduce pressure on ophthalmology department by developing more widely the integrated role of eye health professionals in primary care in the identification and management of chronic or acute disease.

## WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT WITH THIS REPORT?

The report will be submitted to the East Riding of Yorkshire Council, Hull City Council, East Riding of Yorkshire CCG, Hull CCG and Hull & East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust under the Healthwatch power to make reports and recommendations. Services have 20 days from receipt to respond. The report will also be presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Healthwatch East Riding of Yorkshire and Healthwatch Kingston upon Hull will monitor responses to our recommendations and keep members of the public and stakeholders informed of progress and actions to deliver improved services.

## Appendix 1

Outpatients Survey

Please complete if you have attended Outpatients at Hull Royal, Castle Hill, Eye Hospital or Women and Children's in the last 12 months.

1. What service or department was the appointment with?

2. Were you given a choice of location or appointment time?

Yes

No

Please give any additional comments below

3. How close to your appointment time were you seen?

0-10 mins

11-20 mins

21-30 mins

31-40 mins

40 mins +

4. If not seen on time were you kept updated on any delays?

Yes

No

5. Did staff treat you with respect and dignity at all times?

Yes

No



6. Did the Doctor have your notes and information at your appointment?

Yes

No

7. Have you had appointments cancelled or rearranged?

Yes

No

8. If yes what notice were you given of that cancellation/rearrangement?

Less than a day

2-4 days

5-7 days

8-14 days

15-28 days

Over 1 month

9. If you were told that you needed a follow up appointment were you seen in the required time frame e.g. you were told you were due to be seen within 6 months.

Yes

No

10. If no how long was the delay

Less than 1 month

2 to 6 months

7 to 9 months

10 to 12 months

12 months +

Appendix 2

HWERY and HWKuH Statutory request for information to Hull & East Yorkshire Hospitals made 14<sup>th</sup> November 2014 and requiring response within 20 working days.

Request for Eye Hospital Information

1. Does your trust experience difficulties in meeting the demand for eye hospital outpatient follow-up appointments? (please specify)

Yes [ ]                      No [ ]                      Other please detail: [ ]

If yes please state on how many occasions in 2013/14 and what actions you have taken or plan to take to address the situation

2. Do you currently have patients awaiting appointments for follow up which are overdue that have not been given a specific appointment slot?

Yes [ ]                      No [ ]

If yes please indicate the numbers and average time delay on their appointment

3. In the last 24 months, have your staff reported any patient safety or clinical incidents where a patient’s visual function deteriorated or was at risk of deterioration because the patient was offered an ophthalmology outpatient appointment later than the clinically recommended time?

Yes [ ]                      No [ ]

If yes please state on how many occasions and give a breakdown by primary diagnosis and what actions you have taken or plan to take to address the situation

4. Have there been any complaints raised by patients suggesting that they have suffered visual loss due to delayed follow up.

Yes [ ]                      No [ ]

5. If yes please breakdown by primary diagnosis
-

b) Average number of ophthalmology outpatient appointment slots available this year at your hospital,

Please breakdown by appointments with a consultant and those offered by junior staff and nurses

c) Of these how many are follow-up appointments?

d) Of these follow up appointments how many are for Glaucoma patients?

6. Taking account of NICE guidance on time interval for glaucoma follow up appointments, in your view what proportion of your Glaucoma follow-up appointments are delayed? This is defined as a patients appointment was delayed by more than 15%. For example a patient whose follow up appointment was due within 6 months and the appointment was offered after 7 months or later

7. Please provide an estimate of the average delay experienced by Glaucoma patients in your hospital at the present time.

## Appendix 3

### HEY Response to information request

Freedom of Information Act Request: **2337**

Our Ref: FOI – 2337/DMH/AJ

26<sup>th</sup> January 2015

Name: - Jennifer Smith

Via E mail: - Jenny Smith Hull [jsmith@healthwatchkingstonuponhull.co.uk](mailto:jsmith@healthwatchkingstonuponhull.co.uk)

Dear Jennifer

Further to your Freedom of Information Request, please find the Trust's response below:

#### Request for Eye Hospital Information

1. Does your trust experience difficulties in meeting the demand for eye hospital outpatient follow-up appointments? (please specify)

Yes  No  Other, please detail:

If yes please state on how many occasions in 2013/14 and what actions you have taken or plan to take to address the situation

The Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust has taken a number of actions to address the delay for follow up outpatient appointments including validation of patients with duplicate pathways on Trust PAS system, clinical validation of patients overdue a follow up appointment, and notes/telephone validation clinics. Further actions will shortly be implemented including submission of a Business Case to establish a Glaucoma Monitoring Unit, review of follow up capacity in the Outpatient clinic and the establishment of a working group to address all follow up backlog issues. This work will also include discussion with Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and Commissioners. Looking for their support to address this longstanding National issue.

The Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust are introducing SMS (text) assisted appointment and reminder systems for all of our outpatient specialties in the next 3 months which should help reduce the number of wasted appointment slots through patients not attending. This will hopefully also contribute to a reduction in the delays encountered by patients when waiting for follow up appointments.

2. Do you currently have patients awaiting appointments for follow up which are overdue that have not been given a specific appointment slot?

Yes  No

If yes please indicate the numbers and average time delay on their appointment

Ophthalmology currently has approximately 5000 patients overdue a follow up appointment. These patients include a number of sub specialities across Ophthalmology, however the highest number are under the Glaucoma

service. It is not possible to provide a breakdown of average time delay per speciality however the current delays range from 1 day to 16 months.

3. In the last 24 months, have your staff reported any patient safety or clinical incidents where a patient's visual function deteriorated or was at risk of deterioration because the patient was offered an ophthalmology outpatient appointment later than the clinically recommended time?

Yes No

If yes please state on how many occasions and give a breakdown by primary diagnosis and what actions you have taken or plan to take to address the situation N/A

4. Have there been any complaints raised by patients suggesting that they have suffered visual loss due to delayed follow up.

Yes No

If yes please breakdown by primary diagnosis

5. Please provide the following information:

a) How many individual patients are under the care of the eye hospital: 66,572 patients attended appointments within Outpatients Clinics that had a specialty of Ophthalmology for 2014 within the Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust. (This is the number of attended outpatient appointments for clinics under a speciality of Ophthalmology within 2014).

b) Average number of ophthalmology outpatient appointment slots available this year at your hospital. The number of Ophthalmology appointments that were available in 2014 was 92,937. This information is the sum of booking units available and held recorded under a specialty of Ophthalmology.

Please breakdown by appointments with a consultant and those offered by junior staff and nurses. I am sorry to inform you that the Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust does not hold the information in the form you requested. We estimate that the cost of complying with your request would exceed the appropriate limit. Whilst we have a clinic table and each clinic is attached to a certain consultant code, we cannot derive which clinics / appointments are consultant led, junior staff or nurses. The information could only be obtained manually. We could however provide the number of patients seen by a specialist nurse in Glaucoma as they have a separate code for their follow ups.

c) Of these how many are follow-up appointments? I am sorry to inform you that the Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust does not hold this information. The clinic codes do not have an indicator to state if the number available are new or follow up appointments, this is determined by the attendance type of the patient which cannot be derived from the available data.

d) Of these follow up appointments how many are for Glaucoma patients?

The Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust have been able to identify specific clinic codes

that see Glaucoma follow up patients only. The number of available slots for these clinics was 8,840 in 2014.

6. Taking account of NICE guidance on time interval for glaucoma follow up appointments, in your view what proportion of your Glaucoma follow-up appointments are delayed? This is defined as a patients appointment was delayed by more than 15%. For example a patient whose follow up appointment was due within 6 months and the appointment was offered after 7 months or later. At this current time the Ophthalmology Services believes that 25% of Glaucoma patients have some delay to their follow up appointment.

7. Please provide an estimate of the average delay experienced by Glaucoma patients in your hospital at the present time. The estimated average delay experienced by Glaucoma patients at the Hull Royal Infirmary is 4 months.