

# Virtual Visit to the Royal Stoke University Hospital Fracture Clinic

**1 November 2021 –  
26 November 2021**



# Contents

Executive summary _____	3
Background _____	4
Methodology _____	5
What we found _____	6-8
Conclusion and acknowledgements _____	9
Recommendations and service provider comments _____	10-11



## Executive summary

Due to the outbreak of the Coronavirus Pandemic and the former suspension of the Enter and View Programme, Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent took the opportunity to pilot a series of virtual visits to ensure that public conversations, experiences and concerns can continually be shared with their local Healthwatch. Our Virtual Visit Programme was designed to gain perspective on respective health and social care services by providing an anonymous opportunity for service users, staff and managers or patients to talk about their experiences centred on the planning and delivery of the related service. On this particular virtual visit, engagement with patients was done through face to face targeted promotion in the Fracture Clinic so that patients were well informed and could go home, reflect on the appointment, and complete an online survey detailing personal experiences.

The report features our recommendations and acknowledgements, a background, the methodology utilised, an overview of findings and a selection of experiences from responders who have an understanding of the Royal Stoke University Hospital Fracture Clinic.

Upon completion of collaborative engagement with the Royal Stoke University Hospital, Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent organised an announced virtual visit to the Fracture Clinic between 1 November 2021 and 26 November 2021. The rationale for the virtual visit was to capture the experiences and opinions of patients who have used, or are using the Fracture Clinic to identify what works well, not so well and what could be improved to enhance the quality of service delivery.

A Royal Stoke University Hospital representative supported the visit by coordinating and sharing planned virtual visit details with the Fracture Clinic team. To engage and collect the respective grouped experiences qualitative research was utilised by way of online surveys.

22 patients participated and shared personal experiences. The 22 outcomes were shaped and discussed around the following 3 quality measures:

- COVID-19 Safety
- Effectiveness of Care
- Communication and Access

The report highlights the positive delivery of service at the Royal Stoke University Hospital Fracture Clinic and the adapted service adjustments during COVID-19, but it should be noted that there are **2 recommendations** for consideration which are based upon responder experiences.

# Background

## Who was involved

- 3 HW SOT Representatives
- 22 Patient experiences
- 1 Royal Stoke University Hospital Staff Members who supported the preparation for the visit

## Service details

Royal Stoke University Hospital  
Newcastle Road  
Stoke-on-Trent  
ST4 6QG

## Reason for visit

This visit was one a series of virtual visits to health and social care services in Stoke-on-Trent. With the aim to collect evidence of what works well and what could be improved to make people's experiences better. An opportunity for people to share experiences and opinions.

## Visit details

1 November 2021 - 26 November 2021

Announced visit

No declarations of interest

Online surveys

Real-time promotion of virtual visit in Fracture Clinic

## Service description

The fracture clinic cares for both elective and trauma orthopaedic clinics patients who require follow up care. Both adult and children's clinics take place in the outpatients department of Main Building. There is also neurosurgical and musculoskeletal clinics within the Fracture Clinic department.

## Numbers and figures

22 online surveys completed by patients who attended the Fracture Clinic between July 2021 - November 2021.

**Disclaimer:** This report relates only to the service between July 2021 and November 2021 on the date(s) of the visit and is representative of the views of the patients who contributed to the questionnaires between the noted dates.

# Methodology

In response and adaptation to the Coronavirus Pandemic, Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent introduced a new remote approach to monitor and engage with health and social care services, including those connected to the service. Our visit operated virtually which required participants to complete online survey questionnaires.

Our visit was an announced visit with full support and cooperation of the Royal Stoke University Hospital to facilitate the visit. Initially, we had a virtual meeting with a Royal Stoke University Hospital representative to discuss logistical planning, how to promote equality and inclusion and how to best collect experiences from a range of participants who have recently used, or are using, the respective Fracture Clinic.

The Royal Stoke University Hospital representative and aligned Fracture Clinic team agreed for Healthwatch authorised representatives to visit the Fracture Clinic in person to promote and share information about the virtual visit, to enable patients to later share personal feedback after an appointment at the Fracture Clinic. Furthermore, the virtual visit was promoted online across social media and our website to allow those who have recently visited the Fracture Clinic to partake and engage appropriately. Participants that did not wish to complete an online survey were able to share feedback directly over a telephone conversation. The survey was designed to be targeted and concise with a focus solely on patient experience of the Fracture Clinic. Survey questions were made up of open questions and judgement grades.

Our planned visit grouped questions around the following aspects of care provision:

- COVID-19 Safety
- Effectiveness of Care
- Communication and Access

All returning data was analysed on Snap Surveys Software to provide an accurate account of individual experiences and opinions which enabled a factual summary of findings. During the visit we consulted with:

**13** people shared  
information on behalf of  
themselves

**9** people shared  
information on behalf of  
family, friend or the  
person being cared for

# What we found

## COVID-19 Safety

Due to the nature of physiological elements requiring patients to be seen in person, 100% of responders shared feedback on face to face appointments. Responders went on to share that on arrival at the Fracture Clinic there was visible COVID-19 safety precautions in place, such as social distancing, sign and information guidance and noticeable hand sanitiser for patient use.

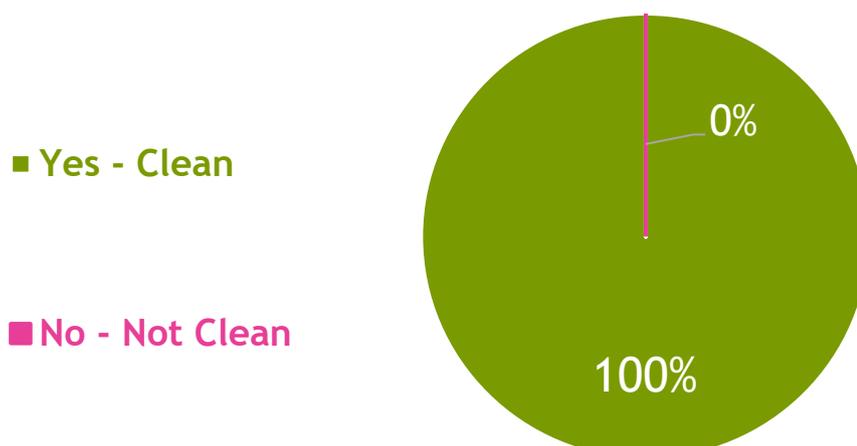
**91%** of patients successfully received an appointment despite COVID-19 pressures

**9%** of patients experienced a slight delay in receiving an appointment during COVID-19

In view of the 9% responders who experienced a slight delay in receiving an appointment at the Fracture Clinic during COVID, the main suggestive comment indicated this was due to a delay and overly long wait in being referred appropriately after attending a walk-in clinic to seek initial treatment and care.

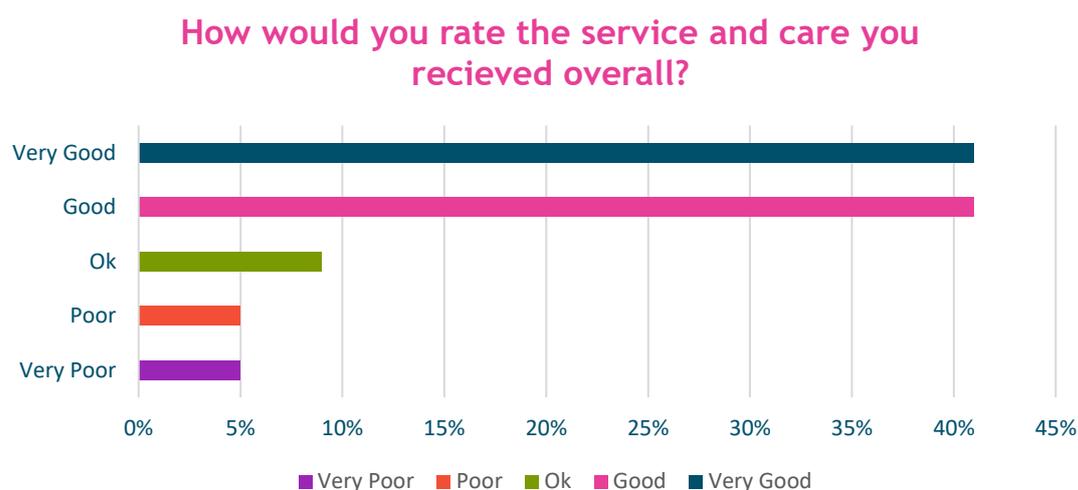
In consideration of environmental cleanliness, responders mutually agreed that the Fracture Clinic was clean and well presented on arrival. 100% of responders shared this same opinion and no negative feedback was left or even any optional areas for development. Therefore, applause and acknowledgment should be offered to the Fracture Clinic team for the attention to detail to maintain a clean working environment for patient welfare.

### Was the Fracture Clinic suitably clean?



## Effectiveness of Care

Responders were asked to rate the service and care received - outcome results can be seen in the graph below. The predominant outcomes were very good or good as these selections shared 82% of the choices. Particular positive examples shared were accurate medical information received, knowledgeable consultants, polite support staff and thorough follow up appointments to monitor progress.



**96%** of responders felt safe and made to feel welcome at the Fracture Clinic

**96%** of responders were satisfied with the outcome of their appointment at the Fracture Clinic

When asking responders about possible areas for improvement, some noted proposals were around awareness of patients' situation; one responder shared that during an appointment a consultant had to attend an emergency but the patient was left unattended for over an hour before assistance was offered by a nurse. Other more frequent suggestions were around strategies to further improve waiting times on arrival or when this is not possible more frequent updates from support staff. An additional suggestion was to ensure patient notes are fully considered as a responder stated they were provided contradictory medical advice which had to be challenged by the patient.

On balance, responders received positive medical outcomes and a good level of treatment and care. A range of complimentary messages were shared including positive and observant staff. Whilst the Fracture Clinic team presented a reassuring mood prior to appointments.

## Communication and Access

Responders explained that they were referred to see an appropriate medical professional. Responders shared mainly positive feedback about being seen quickly and with efficiency. Where there was a delay in being assessed, patients acknowledged alternative solutions that were offered within a reasonable time.

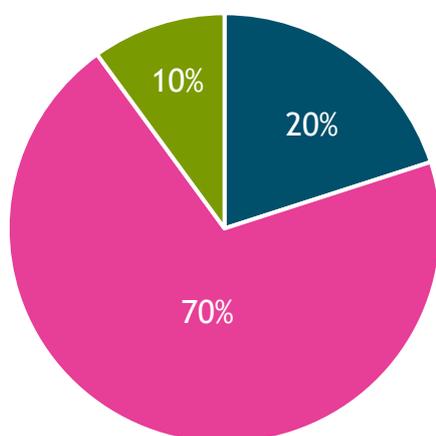
On the whole responders felt listened to and taken seriously during the appointment. Many patients shared they felt confident and able to have an input during the appointment.

**91% of responders stated they were referred to see a suitable medical professional**

**91% of responders felt listened to and taken seriously**

### How long did it take to receive an appointment?

- Less than one day
- Less than one week
- Less than one month



On reflection of time taken to receive an appointment, there was some differentiation as 10% of responders shared it took less than one month, 70% less than one week and 20% less than one day.

Insight into being kept up to date with any appointment delays highlighted that responders had to ask questions for general updates. In addition, a common theme for improvement suggestions was for routine updates whilst waiting or expected appointment times if there is a likely delay. Despite this, responders did equally reiterate that staff were friendly with questions even during extremely busy periods.

*“They were very efficient in dealing with us, our appointment being at the end of the day did worry me that we would be waiting but we weren't long there at all.”*

*“My first appointment I waited over 2hrs to be told I was down as a no show and most staff had left so I didn't receive care and treatment - only a quick word with a doctor who was still there and offered to see me.”*

## Conclusion and acknowledgements

In summary, the 22 completed online surveys highlighted a range of positive elements of the service delivery in the Royal Stoke University Hospital Fracture Clinic. It appears that the Fracture Clinic has responded well to the many ongoing challenges that COVID-19 has presented, as responders were able to get appointments and felt the environment was clean on arrival. Next up, it is clear that responders believed the effectiveness of care was of a good and/or excellent standard and were happy with the outcome of their appointment. Although, within the treatment and care review there were some suggestive areas for development around familiarity with patient notes, awareness of situational factors (emergency needs) impacting patient delays. The final theme of communication and access reflected contentment with the referral process and patients were generally happy with the efficiency of appointment transition. Responders noted on a number of occasions they felt taken seriously and valued. Still, particular areas for development within this section emphasised improvement around routine updates when waiting to be seen by a consultant with welcomed updates on possible expected delays.

Based on the 22 completed surveys, there are **2 areas for consideration and development** which are explained in greater detail in our recommendations below.

**Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent would like to thank all of the 22 participants who shared feedback and experiences on the Royal Stoke University Hospital Fracture Clinic. Further acknowledgement should go to the team at the Royal Stoke University Hospital for positively engaging with Healthwatch throughout planning and conducting the visit.**



# Recommendations and service provider comments

Any recommendations formed are designed to support and offer constructive insight. Moreover none of the feedback items received should be deemed as a complaint but purely as areas for consideration and development for the benefit of the service.

Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent would like to thank the Royal Stoke University Hospital Fracture Clinic team for their comments, feedback, future plans and ideas.

## Fracture Clinic general comments on the visit

We would like to thank Healthwatch Stoke on Trent for carrying out this virtual Enter & View visit during these challenging times. We were delighted to be approached for inclusion in this pilot of virtual visits and feel that this has been successfully implemented in a safe, professional and respectful way.

## Recommendation One

**HW SOT:** Monitor patient settings and situations during emergency callouts to ensure an adaptable recovery plan is in place, to safeguard and prevent patients being left unattended for lengthy periods.

**Fracture Clinic Response:** The Fracture Clinic is an extremely busy clinical area which receives both planned and emergency patients. This leads to an unpredictable workload and an occasional need for a clinician to be called away to an emergency. The team recognise that this can delay patients being seen and may cause stress and anxiety if patients feel they have been forgotten about. The team will be reminded of the importance of keeping patients updated at regular intervals when delays occur including how long these may be for if known. The clinic also have pagers which they can offer to patients who may prefer to go to the canteen or the shop rather than sit waiting in the clinic. Staff will be reminded of the importance of offering these pagers when long waits are expected.

## Recommendation Two

**HW SOT** - Review best practice strategies to efficiently provide routine updates to patients who experience long delays to enhance communication between staff and patients.

**Fracture Clinic Response:** Appointment delays are sadly inevitable during these times of intense pressure on the NHS. The team appreciate that this requires even greater consideration for enhanced communication for those patients who experience long waits. It is reassuring that the majority of patients were seen within a week of the referral and all were seen within a month. All patients are triaged for urgency and this will continue. We will discuss with the directorate team to better understand how the fracture clinic planned appointments are booked as this will have an impact on subsequent communication opportunities.



# About us

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The contract to provide the Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent service is held by Engaging Communities Solutions C.I.C.

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