



Stories and responses

About this report

This report lists a selection of stories and responses published on Patient Opinion.

It was created on **21 February 2013**.

Which postings are included?

This report shows made change about Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust

Frequently asked questions

How do I find the original story online?

If you are viewing the report on a computer, you may be able to click the reference number to the right of the story. This will take you to the story on the Patient Opinion web site. If you are viewing the report on paper, you can find story number X online at: <http://www.patientopinion.org.uk/opinions/X>

Why might a story appear more than once in the list?

Some stories are about more than one service. If so, the story will be listed under each service it is about.

What do the story counts mean?

To the right of an organisation/service you will see a count. This tells you the number of stories listed in the report about that organisation or service (including any services run by that organisation/service).

Why might unexpected services appear in my report?

The services listed in the report depend on the stories that are included, and that depends on how you have filtered the report. So, for example, if you have filtered only according to where authors live, you may find they have used services some distance away.

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About Patient Opinion

Patient Opinion is a not-for-profit social enterprise which enables patients and carers to share the story of their care, and perhaps help health services make changes.

For more information, contact us:

Patient Opinion, 53 Mowbray Street, Sheffield S3 8EN. +44 114 281 6256.

info@patientopinion.org.uk

Show/hide responses

This report lists **12** stories

Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust	12 stories
Crawley Hospital	1 story
Trauma and orthopaedics	1 story

My recent operation for removal of wire from my little finger, following fusion on it in June this year.

80807

Agolfer the patient 14/12/2012

In June this year I had an operation in Crawley hospital and to be honest was not looking forward to it following so much adverse publicity with regard to both Crawley and particularly East Surrey hospital, however the staff were extremely nice, very courteous and respectful and the whole thing ran very smoothly. They were fantastic! This week I had to go back into hospital and have the wire removed from my finger and had to go to East Surrey hospital. I was very apprehensive about it but I cannot praise them enough, the nurse who saw me initially, Elizabeth, was cheerful and efficient. Mr Bhat is charming and also has a sense of humour! The Anaesthetist was so nice, reassuring, patient, delightful! The operation over I went into recovery and was kept warm and comfortable, the man, sorry can't remember his name, who looked after me was attentive and kind, superb! Then I moved into the final ward before going home. I was looked after by Fiona, she was so helpful & pleasant, very efficient and so busy, she never seemed to stop for breath, nothing was too much trouble, the place ran like clockwork. The ward was spotless and beds, mattresses etc were cleaned so thoroughly, it was fascinating! The staff interacted so well with each other whether bringing in patients or working in other areas of the ward I felt comfortable and at ease, I was happily reading my magazine when my husband came to collect me. Two issues arose which could be easily sorted, firstly the nurse who met the patients and advised what would happen, ie see nurse, up to theatre, recovery etc was insistent that patients must leave their bags in the waiting room when going up to theatre. This was a bit disturbing as most people had just one bag and everything, including mobile phones etc, would have to stay there, in practise however this did not happen, quite the opposite, personal items were labelled carefully and taken up to theatre where they were then removed to the recovery room. I am certain that the nurse said the bags must be left in the waiting room as I asked her to repeat what she had said to me again personally. Secondly, when my husband was rung to collect me he asked if there was an area to park for a few minutes for collecting patients, he was told no he would have to park in the car park. Not satisfied that this made sense he rang the switchboard and after being passed from person to person who were far from helpful he gave up and parked in the main car park. When we were coming out of the hospital and went to the pay machine, I said to my husband what a con! making you pay £2 for a few minutes, whereupon a man, don't know who he was, sitting at a desk to the side of the machine said have you only been a few minutes in the hospital? my husband explained he had come to collect me, then this very kind and well informed man said "Oh you don't have to pay for just a few minutes", we couldn't believe it, seemingly if you are less than 20 minutes there is no fee, you have, he said, 5 minutes to get to your car and out of the car park. Now £2 won't break the bank but I can tell you that my husband and I came out from there thinking that common sense was being used - now that is really good news! Why don't the administration staff/ receptionists pass this information on to patients prior to and after surgery, it seems to be a well-kept secret! What a shame, it is a big plus, it's not the value it's the thought! Happy Xmas to you all!

Ian Mackenzie Director of Information and Facilities Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust

Dear Agolfer,

Thank you for your kind words about your recent stay in East Surrey Hospital. I will ensure that your comments about staff are passed on where possible.

With regard to your specific comment about car parking I'm sorry that you weren't notified of this, but actually our ticket machines would have automatically charged you nothing as they are set to calculate any stay of less than 15 minutes as being free. This applies to all users of our car parks at any time.

We have done this for the very type of reason that you mention - we want to let people drop off and pick-up without being charged. We try and advertise this - for example it is on our website here:- <http://www.sash.nhs.uk/finding-us/car-parking/> although I think I will ask our communications department to update it as it is slightly ambiguous.

I'm pleased that you mention using common sense as we try to apply this in all that we do and endeavour to provide our services as we would wish to receive them ourselves

Kind regards

Ian

We are
preparing to
make a change

East Surrey Hospital

12 stories

I experienced rudeness and discrimination

68222

osiris the patient 16/06/2012

Since I made a serious complaint about my wife's treatment last year, I have had to make several visits to the outpatients department. We all do not like people who complain, but once again the lessons are not being learnt. Of the three times I have been back, I have been deliberately messed about by administrative staff and support staff, my files have been mislaid and put at the bottom of the files or not put in the right place. It took me 3hrs on Friday, until I asked where my file was, and then suddenly I was next on the list. Also I felt there may be ethnic minority conflict amongst admin staff, based on the way the person I saw at reception speak to their colleagues.

Fionnula Robinson *Director of Communications Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust*

Thank you for taking the time to comment about your experience at East Surrey Hospital. We're sorry that your experience hasn't been as we would wish. We are undertaking a review of our outpatients department with a view to increasing patient satisfaction and we would welcome your feedback as part of that process. If you would be prepared to be involved by talking us through your experience please contact Caroline Francis-Goulds, Associate Director for Clinical Support Services, Tel: 01737 768511 ext. 6008; email: Caroline.Francis-Goulds@sash.nhs.uk

Alternatively, our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is available to listen to concerns, suggestions or queries and can help sort out problems quickly on your behalf. You can contact PALS by telephone on 01737 231958, email: pals@sash.nhs.uk, or by writing to: PALS, East Surrey Hospital, Canada Avenue, Redhill, Surrey RH1 5RH.

We are
preparing to
make a change

Communication with a patient at East Surrey hospital

69464

Silence a relative 27/06/2012

My mother was admitted into ES Hospital last week. I live 3 hours journey from the hospital but have managed to visit most days (6 hours travel per day). I bought her a mobile phone and put money on it only to discover that her Ward has no phone signal. I try to phone her every morning but rarely does anyone answer and they cannot bring a phone to her bed. There are no portable landline phones in this ward. I feel this is a really significant shortcoming as the morale of patients directly impacts on their physical well being. Why cannot something be done about this?

Ian Mackenzie *Director of Information and Facilities Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust*

Thank you for your comment about telephoning patients whilst they are inpatients at East Surrey Hospital. Having received this comment I went down and looked at a number of wards to check what was currently available. Some wards have handsets that can be passed to patients and some don't.

I have therefore arranged for all wards to be upgraded to portable handsets; this will take a couple of weeks to arrange. I have however ascertained which ward this comment refers to and a portable handset is being put in that ward this afternoon.

I appreciate that it won't affect your own situation but all new wards we open (such as Copthorne and Charlwood wards in February 2012) have individual patient phones – as part of an individual patient entertainment system - as we identified this as a service we wished our patients to have. We intend to roll this out across the hospital, but it will take some time to complete the whole site.

Ian Mackenzie *Director of Information and Facilities Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust*

As an update the phone is now on this ward and the other portable handsets are on order.

We have made
a change

The expertise and concern of all staff alleviated...

75002

02/08/2012

What I liked Clarification of medical procedures to be performed was given by the consultants and nursing staff at all times. Important to me as a patient. Concern regarding my medical condition and comfort was expressed by all staff from arrival to departure. What could be improved The noise of snoring in the night! Anything else? Invitation letter to attend hospital should state that medication should be in the original packaging. My own box of pills was not acceptable.

East Surrey Hospital

Thank you for your positive comments about your experience. We will take on board the comment about medication and sorry for the snoring!

Ian Mackenzie *Director of Information and Facilities Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust*

Further to this response we have now just started a piece of working reviewing all the letters we send to patients. The main purpose of this is to ensure that all letters we send are accurate and understandable. Frustrations like the one above will be addressed by this work.

We are
preparing to
make a change

Ups and downs but the delivery suite was top notch

76819

24/09/2012

What I liked The caring attitude of my nurses. The midwives on delivery suite were outstanding. I was looked after by one, then another and then the first one again as it was a long process for me. My actual time on the delivery suite couldnt have been better care, they were amazing and i will slways be grateful to those 2 midwives plus the student who looked after me. I was also very pleased to receive great one-to-one care but i know if i had gone in another day, it may have been a different story. I just wish there were more staff so the ones there could have the chance to do an even better job. What could be improved I was induced due to low fetal movement. Unfortunately induction didn't go smoothly and it took 5 days for our daughter to be born! When i was in esrly stages of labour on the antinatal ward, staff were supportive and friendly although because they not only run a ward but also the day unit, they were ridiculously busy and so sometime us in patients would be left waiting. This was not the fault of the nurses at all, just that they are overworked with too much to look after. I was waiting 3 days to get sent to have my waters broken on delivery suite as again that was very busy and because i was in a stable condition i kept being bumped for ther people which was very upsetting as i was in pain, had had no sleep for days and had serious concerns about my baby's welfare. Any not the fault of the nursing staff but they are just given too much to fit in! I also found the fact that everytime i saw a new consultant on their rounds each day, they had conflicting ideas and so my plan of care kept getting changed which was very difficult to deal with. I also found the manner of one particular consultant extremely brisk and hard and uncaring to be honest but most were great. Perhaps some consistency in advice given would be better. I also found the post natal ward to be just too busy so the nurses couldnt give you any care unless you asked for it, they were just too busy. Perhsp more staff. No complaints as such, as i coped well but some ladies found it very hard and could have used a bit more time.

Fionnula Robinson *Director of Communications Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust*

Hi Deb_b

Thank you for your comments and kind words about our nurses and midwives. We share all comments with the teams so the consultants will be informed as well.

As you say maternity units can be exceptionally busy at times but I'm glad to say that we have recently recruited 15 (whole time equivalent) midwives and have had funding approved for 2 additional Consultant Obstetricians. Additionally, we now have a lead Consultant for the Antenatal Day Unit and a core team of midwives in that area which has improved continuity of care.

If you decide to have another baby I hope you will choose us again.

Kind regards,
Fionnula

We have made
a change

Very good experience, apart from the appendicitis....

76893

26/09/2012

What I liked Entered A&E Saturday 8th Sept 2012 - lunchtime. Admitted within 15 mins even though busy with sports injuries. Triage nurse reacted quickly when I felt faint. Abdominal pain symptoms. A&E doctor gave me a run down of possibilities and what tests. Delayed scans because of volume of patients (those sports injuries again), but in SAU by tea time. Suspected appendicitis. Surgical team visited and booked me in for surgery Sunday am. SAU team were great under the trying circumstances they have, particularly one nurse from Woverhanpton. Didn't get her name. Surgery on time, Surgical team, Anesthetic team and proters were all brilliant. Taken to Brook Ward for recovery. Again exceptionally good care and accomodation. aprt from some bland and lukewarm food (Again, I appreciate the difficulties). Discharged monday afternoon. Staf were attentive and very good to me. Please pass on huge thanks to A&E, SAU, Surgical team and Brook Ward for all they did... What could be improved Food could have been improved, but its a quibble

Fionnula Robinson *Director of Communications Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust*

Dear BJ Hawtin

Saturday and sports injuries - synonymous with the NHS! I'm glad we negotiated you around them and hope you're now fully recovered. Sorry about the food but we are piloting heated trollies to improve the food service to our wards and hope to roll-out them out hospital-wide in the not too distant future.

Kind regards,
Fionnula

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My recent operation for removal of wire from my little finger, following fusion on it in June this year.

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Ian Mackenzie *Director of Information and Facilities Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust*

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Kind regards
Ian

We are
preparing to
make a change

Poor standard of food

66416

backlead a carer 25/05/2012

My partner was admitted to East Surrey hospital on in May 2012. He had a stay of one week. During this time we feel the standard of the food was extremely poor. Hot meals were served cold, some were not cooked properly ie pizza was burnt on top but the base was still raw and tasted like raw dough, roast potatoes were not cooked through so they were hard in the middle. There were other issues with getting the right meals but to this end we feel that his stay could have been made much better if he could have had a better standard of food.

Fionnula Robinson *Director of Communications Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust*

Thank you for your feedback regarding your experience at East Surrey Hospital. As the Director responsible for catering at East Surrey I wanted to respond personally to your comments. I'm sorry that the food your partner received was not to an acceptable standard. We have implemented a new food service on three wards in the last few months to address the type of issues you mention and plan to roll it out across the rest of the hospital as soon as we are able to. I would be keen to discuss your comments so if you felt able to contact me please call either 01737 231988 or e-mail ian.mackenzie@sash.nhs.uk

Regards

Ian Mackenzie

Director of Information and Facilities

We are
preparing to
make a change

General medicine

1 story

Unable to get through to Tilgate ward

82243

PLM a relative 07/01/2013

Trying to contact Tilgate Ward by phone to request that if my mother, when being discharged, if they could advise me so that I can be there to arrange for her care. I spent some three hours off and on trying to get through. In the end I have just given up. Surely there could be just someone there - a volunteer - to answer the phone even if its to either take a message or a number to call back on, it would save so much frustration on all sides? In taking your request I did not want to come to the hospital as I, like a lot of people, am suffering with flu symptoms and did not want to spread it around to others.

Eloise Clarke *Communications Manager Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust*

Dear 'PLM'

I can understand your frustration. I am not sure why you have experienced this as it is not usually a problem to reach the wards. Please can you contact me to give me your telephone number and I will ask the ward manager or matron to call you back asap. Apologies about this and I will try to establish what the problem is so others don't have the same experience.

eloise.clarke@sash.nhs.uk or 01737 768511 ext 6844.

Thanks

Eloise

Philip Stone *Acting Head of Logistics Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust*

Dear PLM,
Thank you for contacting us via Patient Opinion and for our subsequent email conversation. As the Manager responsible for telephony here at the hospital I share your concern with regard to answering times. As discussed in our emails our telephone exchange has been configured to allow queuing from external callers to a busy extension. The advantage of this is that callers are placed in a queue and then answered in turn as the extension becomes free. This saves time and the need to keep redialling when an extension is busy. The disadvantage of this system is that whilst in the queue you will be listening to ringing tone unaware that you are in a queue. This on occasion leads to the impression that a phone is not being answered when in fact it is actually busy dealing with a previous caller.
We are currently investigating the feasibility of introducing call queue messaging technology to our current systems. This will give us the ability to give comfort messages that will indicate your position within any queue and reassure callers that calls are being answered.
As soon as I have any additional information I will post a further update.
Best Regards
Phil
philip.stone@sash.nhs.uk

Philip Stone *Acting Head of Logistics Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust*

Dear PLM,
Further to my previous response, I am pleased to be able to tell you that we have made several changes on Tilgate ward to improve our telephone service. We have introduced a new direct dial number (01737 284605) to bypass the switchboard and speed up direct access to the ward. We have introduced new technology to greet callers and if they are in a queue to keep them informed of their position within that queue. At the same time I am working with the Deputy Chief Nurse to look at ways of further reducing our answer times and improving service.
The changes made on Tilgate ward and the technology introduced will be rolled out to our other wards over the next few weeks.
Thank you for highlighting this issue and I hope the changes introduced will help in the future.
Best Regards
Phil

We have made
a change

General surgery

1 story

Amazing nursing care but terrible food

75384

Nectar532 a relative 10/09/2012

My wife was admitted to East Surrey Hospital in Redhill 5 weeks ago. She was suffering from a perforated bowel. It took 13 hours from her admission to being operated on and her problem seemed to be worsening during that time. After this, she was in intensive care for 1 week and was then transferred to the Copthorne Ward. Her nursing care throughout was absolutely wonderful and first class. The staff were lovely. The one major problem was the food which was disgusting, not fit for purpose and often cold. I joined other patient families by bringing my own food instead.

Rebecca Mintrim *Communications Officer Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust*

Dear Nectar532

Thank you for comments about East Surrey Hospital. I am very concerned to read your unhappiness with the food on Copthorne Ward, particularly as this is one of our new wards with new hot and cold food serving trolleys. I will be going down to Copthorne at lunchtime today to review what is being served today and will take appropriate action as necessary. I will post an update later.

In the meantime if you would like to discuss your comments with me please could you call me on 01737 231988 or e-mail ian.mackenzie@sash.nhs.uk

Regards
Ian

Ian Mackenzie
Director of Information and Facilities
Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust

Fionnula Robinson *Director of Communications Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust*

Further to my previous posting I have now been down to Copthorne Ward and watched and tasted the lunch serving.

I am sorry to say that there were issues that I hadn't expected, mainly due to the temperature that the food was served at. I need to get to the bottom of what the problem is as we have specifically purchased trollies that should address this issue. This will take a few days to resolve and I will post a further update as soon as I can.

What I was impressed by was how efficiently the lunch was served and how well the housekeeper and nurses worked together to ensure all the meals were served as quickly as possible.

Regards

Ian Mackenzie

Director of Information and Facilities

Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust

01737 231988

Ian Mackenzie *Director of Information and Facilities Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust*

Further to my visit to Copthorne ward on tuesday and two further visits since then by our catering team we have identified that there was a training issue with the new hot/cold serving trollies. Basically the temperature was not being boosted quickly enough when the trolley arrived on the ward because too low a setting was being chosen. We have now ensured that the correct procedure is in place and will continue to monitor it.

I appreciate that the temperature may not have been the only contributor to the dissatisfaction you felt with the food, but I hope that you see that we are very keen to make changes to try and provide the best possible patient experience.

Another change we will be introducing is ensuring that all our housekeepers are given the opportunity to taste all the food we serve so that they can help ensure its quality.

If you would like to contact me about this please e-mail me at ian.mackenzie@sash.nhs.uk or telephone 01737 231988

Kind regards

Ian Mackenzie *Director of Information and Facilities Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust*

A quick update:

From Monday 1st October all our housekeepers will receive a meal from each day's menu so that they can taste all items that we serve. This will help them understand the food that they are serving much better. This will only take a week as we currently have a one-week menu cycle. We have asked each housekeeper to note what they think of the food they have tasted and we will then bring them all together so that they can discuss what was good and what wasn't. From this we will make changes based on their input. Additionally they will also be able to better explain the food to the patients so that they have a better idea of what they would like.

Having met with almost all of the housekeepers they are really pleased to get this opportunity and are keen to help make improvements.

Kind regards

Ian

Ian Mackenzie *Director of Information and Facilities Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust*

Further to my previous responses I met this week with most of our housekeeping staff (now that they have the opportunity to taste all the food) and we discussed their views on the food and its serving on their wards. As a result of this we will be making some changes to how we cook some items - such as vegetables which were felt to be too hard - and reviewing some dishes completely. We are also planning to move to a less repetitive menu but this will require an additional chef which we will hopefully be able to do soon. An important part of our meeting was their being able to see how important what they do is to patient experience and that small things can make a big difference - I was particularly pleased that they all felt proud of the role they play in providing excellent care for our patients.

Regards

Ian

We have made
a change

We are
preparing to
make a change

Appointments promised, still waiting.

68436

Meterman the patient 18/06/2012

I recently suffered what appears to have been a T. I. A. and for half an hour lost all my right side of the field of vision. I visited my local GP surgery the following day. My GP contacted the East Surrey Hospital and told me to visit Limpsfield Ward later the same day. I visited the ward and after waiting for some time, I was seen by an ophthalmologist. She checked my eyes very thoroughly but did not have the equipment to check for blind spots. The doctor told me I would be contacted a few days later with appointments for the other eyes tests and a scan on my neck. Despite many phone calls to the hospital and further visits to the GP surgery, I still await these very necessary tests nearly two weeks later. According to the NHS website a TIA is treated as a medical emergency, so why do they not seem to be bothering to arrange these other tests I need?

Fionnula Robinson *Director of Communications Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust*

Thank you for commenting on your experience at East Surrey Hospital. Without more information it is difficult to know if you have had a TIA, however, we run a TIA clinic every morning in our Acute Medical Unit at 8.30am and would be happy for you to come along to talk to a consultant. Please be aware that you shouldn't eat after 10pm on the evening before the clinic and only drink sips of water and you may be there for quite a few hours as tests are carried out. Our clinical lead for TIA is Dr Natalie Powell who can be contacted through her secretary on 01737 768511, extension 2994.

Fionnula Robinson *Director of Communications Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust*

Thanks to Patient Opinion this patient was seen by a consultant at East Surrey Hospital this morning.

We have made a change

Thoracic medicine

1 story

Worried about staff responsiveness to my mother whilst she's in hospital

80438

Lobbythornton a relative 29/11/2012

My mother is currently on Tilgate Ward, East Surrey Hospital. Unfortunately, she is seriously ill. Being in her condition, she is unable to carry out basic functions - washing herself, going to the toilet and getting out of bed. When I visited her this week, she was very depressed and wanted to give up on life. When I enquired as to why she felt this way, I was astonished to find out that earlier that day, my mother had requested to go to the toilet. Staff provided her with a commode, assisted her onto it and then left her. When my mum had finished, she rang the bell for assistance, no one responded for over 30 mins. This obviously upset my mother and left her feeling totally incapable of looking after herself, which in turn prompted her desire to 'end it all'. Whilst I appreciate staff are busy, my mother is seriously ill and should never have been left for that length of time. My other concern is the lack of response to her repeated requests for help.

Ian Mackenzie *Director of Information and Facilities Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust*

Dear Lobbythornton
I have just spoken to Sally Brittain - our Acting Chief Nurse - who will look into this immediately. It would be helpful if you could e-mail or call me to let me know your mother's name; my details are ian.mackenzie@sash.nhs.uk or 01737 231988
Regards
Ian

Lobbythornton

The response from the senior ward staff has been fantastic!
My mum has been moved closer to the nurses station in order for them to be able to respond far easier. The matron spent nearly an hour talking to family, discussing the treatment and care plans. The staff have been attentive to my mother's needs, making her feel more comfortable. They have also implemented a new hand over policy where the staff walk round the ward talking to patients, ensuring staff are aware of problems and patients have an opportunity to voice any concerns. All in all I experienced the true NHS, caring and treatment second to none!

Ian Mackenzie *Director of Information and Facilities Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust*

I am very pleased that we were able to resolve the issues that you identified in your original posting.
Kind regards
Ian

We have made
a change

Trauma and orthopaedics

1 story

Long wait for hip replacement

82472

retiredsparky a relative 12/01/2013

Why has my mother been waiting so long for her hip replacement?

Eloise Clarke *Communications Manager Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust*

Dear 'retiredsparky'
If you can contact me with some details I will look into this for you.
Thanks,
Eloise Clarke
eloise.clarke@sash.nhs.uk

Eloise Clarke *Communications Manager Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust*

This issue has been resolved thanks to the comment on Patient Opinion which highlighted the problem. This was an error as it seems there are two patients with the same name. 'Retiredsparky' has been kept informed of the process and his mother is now on the waiting list and will have her pre assessment soon.

We have made
a change

Horsham Hospital

1 story

My recent operation for removal of wire from my little finger, following fusion on it in June this year.

80807

Agolfer the patient 14/12/2012

In June this year I had an operation in Crawley hospital and to be honest was not looking forward to it following so much adverse publicity with regard to both Crawley and particularly East Surrey hospital, however the staff were extremely nice, very courteous and respectful and the whole thing ran very smoothly. They were fantastic! This week I had to go back into hospital and have the wire removed from my finger and had to go to East Surrey hospital. I was very apprehensive about it but I cannot praise them enough, the nurse who saw me initially, Elizabeth, was cheerful and efficient. Mr Bhat is charming and also has a sense of humour! The Anaesthetist was so nice, reassuring, patient, delightful! The operation over I went into recovery and was kept warm and comfortable, the man, sorry can't remember his name, who looked after me was attentive and kind, superb! Then I moved into the final ward before going home. I was looked after by Fiona, she was so helpful & pleasant, very efficient and so busy, she never seemed to stop for breath, nothing was too much trouble, the place ran like clockwork. The ward was spotless and beds, mattresses etc were cleaned so thoroughly, it was fascinating! The staff interacted so well with each other whether bringing in patients or working in other areas of the ward I felt comfortable and at ease, I was happily reading my magazine when my husband came to collect me. Two issues arose which could be easily sorted, firstly the nurse who met the patients and advised what would happen, ie see nurse, up to theatre, recovery etc was insistent that patients must leave their bags in the waiting room when going up to theatre. This was a bit disturbing as most people had just one bag and everything, including mobile phones etc, would have to stay there, in practise however this did not happen, quite the opposite, personal items were labelled carefully and taken up to theatre where they were then removed to the recovery room. I am certain that the nurse said the bags must be left in the waiting room as I asked her to repeat what she had said to me again personally. Secondly, when my husband was rung to collect me he asked if there was an area to park for a few minutes for collecting patients, he was told no he would have to park in the car park. Not satisfied that this made sense he rang the switchboard and after being passed from person to person who were far from helpful he gave up and parked in the main car park. When we were coming out of the hospital and went to the pay machine, I said to my husband what a con! making you pay £2 for a few minutes, whereupon a man, don't know who he was, sitting at a desk to the side of the machine said have you only been a few minutes in the hospital? my husband explained he had come to collect me, then this very kind and well informed man said "Oh you don't have to pay for just a few minutes", we couldn't believe it, seemingly if you are less than 20 minutes there is no fee, you have, he said, 5 minutes to get to your car and out of the car park. Now £2 won't break the bank but I can tell you that my husband and I came out from there thinking that common sense was being used - now that is really good news! Why don't the administration staff/ receptionists pass this information on to patients prior to and after surgery, it seems to be a well-kept secret! What a shame, it is a big plus, it's not the value it's the thought! Happy Xmas to you all!

Ian Mackenzie *Director of Information and Facilities Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust*

Dear Agolfer,

Thank you for your kind words about your recent stay in East Surrey Hospital. I will ensure that your comments about staff are passed on where possible.

With regard to your specific comment about car parking I'm sorry that you weren't notified of this, but actually our ticket machines would have automatically charged you nothing as they are set to calculate any stay of less than 15 minutes as being free. This applies to all users of our car parks at any time.

We have done this for the very type of reason that you mention - we want to let people drop off and pick-up without being charged. We try and advertise this - for example it is on our website here:- <http://www.sash.nhs.uk/finding-us/car-parking/> although I think I will ask our communications department to update it as it is slightly ambiguous.

I'm pleased that you mention using common sense as we try to apply this in all that we do and endeavour to provide our services as we would wish to receive them ourselves

Kind regards

Ian

We are
preparing to
make a change