



Enter & View

Newquay Minor Injuries Unit

healthwatch
Cornwall

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1 Introduction

1.1 Details of visit

Service provider: Newquay Hospital Minor Injuries
Unit
Service Address: St Thomas Road, Newquay
TR7 1RQ
Date and time: 17th November 2025 10am-1pm
Authorised representatives: Nigel Oakes

1.2 Purpose of visit

This visit was conducted as part of a rolling programme of service visits across clinical service providers. Our goal was to observe the service in action, hear directly from patients, and make recommendations for improvement.

1.3 Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Cornwall would like to thank patients and staff for providing a warm welcome and their positive contribution to this Enter and View visit and the subsequent report.

1.4 Disclaimer

This report relates to findings observed on the specific date above and is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all patients and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time of the visit.

1.5 About Healthwatch Cornwall

Healthwatch Cornwall is an independent organisation committed to amplifying the voices of Cornwall's residents in the planning and delivery of health and social care services. Through public engagement, we gather their views and experiences with these services. We ensure these perspectives are represented in decision-making processes both locally and nationally, driven by the belief that community feedback is vital to improving standards of care.

1.6 What is Enter and View?

As a local Healthwatch we are authorised to "Enter and View" health and social care services through the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and Local Authorities

Regulations 2013 (part 4). These services can include hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists, and pharmacies.

Enter and View visits are an opportunity to see services in action, listen to and understand the experiences of individuals who use them, and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement. The visits are organised based on feedback received about individual services or in response to themes identified in our research.

2 Visit Summary

Conversations with staff

Healthwatch Cornwall spoke with clinical and administrative teams to discuss the service and view the facilities.

Conversations with patients

12 patients and carers in the waiting room were asked about their experience of the department

Observation of facilities

Observations were made throughout the visit, focussing on the condition of the facilities, administrative procedures and patient experience. Overall, observations on the day and feedback from patients and staff were largely positive, although restricted opening hours were of concern to both staff and patients.

3 Service Overview

The Minor injuries unit (MIU) is situated within the main building of Newquay Hospital. It offers both a walk-in and appointment system and treats a range of minor injuries that have happened in the last 14 days. The unit is staffed by nurses, paramedics and healthcare assistants and has access to x-ray facilities provided by the Royal Cornwall Hospital NHS Trust. The unit is part of the Cornwall Partnership NHS foundation trust (CFT), which had a CQC rating of 'Requires Improvement' when last inspected. The department is open Friday to Tuesday from 8am to 8pm. Information on unit waiting times and number of patients waiting to be seen can be accessed in real time on both the NHS and CFT websites.

4 Observations

There is a large free car park to the front of the hospital, including two disabled bays, both the car park and disabled bays were full on the day of the visit. Several cars were circling the car park looking for a space and one was partially blocking the entrance. At the entrance to the hospital there was a large sign which showed the MIU was currently open.

The entrance to the MIU was clearly signposted and the department was accessed via an automatic security door.

Inside the entrance there was a vending machine selling snacks and drinks, including low sugar options and a free water dispenser with disposable cups. There were several signs displaying information on safeguarding, winter wellbeing, support groups and complaints procedure. These signs were relevant, up to date and neatly displayed. A large sign immediately next to the reception showed that there was a hearing loop installed. Hand sanitiser and facemasks were available.

The reception desk was staffed by two administrative personnel, who were speaking to patients in a supportive and considerate manner. On entry our identification was checked, and we were asked to sign into the visitors book. There was a large poster attached to the reception with a language identification chart and information on translation services.

The waiting room was clean and well lit, there were many seats and a wide choice of reading material, including books suitable for children. The waiting room remained busy throughout the visit, with a steady flow of patients into the MIU. No patients were seen to be waiting more than 30 minutes.

Patients were called through to the MIU by nursing staff. Some of the patients had mobility issues and staff allowed patients adequate time to move safely, did not rush interactions and helped with physical aid where appropriate. Staff were observed interacting with patients in a respectful and unhurried manner throughout the visit.

5 Patient Feedback

A total of 12 patients & carers in the waiting room were asked for feedback on their experience of the department.

Staff attitude

Ten patients described staff as kind or compassionate. A patient who had been told to come to the department after calling the NHS 111 helpline told us, 'I was impressed how patient and kind everyone has been, I wasn't looking forward to coming here but everyone has been so lovely'. The partner of a patient who was receiving treatment said 'From start to finish getting here, everyone has been so kind and caring, we're so lucky to have such dedicated staff on our doorstep'

A patient who had been seen earlier in the day and was now waiting for an x-ray reported 'On the whole it's been a good experience, the staff were very kind and most importantly they explained everything to me in a way I could understand. I was really worried I'd injured myself badly, but they put my mind at rest'

One patient reported a negative experience when they first arrived at the department, telling us 'There were so many questions at reception I had to answer before I could sit down, I can understand they need to know my name and so on but they wanted details on where I fell and which side, which leg and so on and all the time I just wanted to sit down'

Waiting times

Five patients commented that waiting times were good. A patient who had come without an appointment said 'I looked on the website and it said there was only a seven-minute wait to see a nurse or doctor and only three people waiting, so I came here and was pleasantly surprised to find that was spot on' they went on to say 'The website was super helpful and helped me to make an informed decision, I'm just so glad it was accurate'.

A patient who had been told by their GP surgery to come to MIU said 'The GP didn't want me to go there as they thought I'd need an x-ray, so I came here and was seen almost straight away, which is amazing' Another patient echoed this experience and told us 'I went to Treliske yesterday and they told me to see my GP today but I didn't bother as they are always so busy, so I came here because I've been a few times before and it's always quicker than having to wait for a GP appointment'

Access to services

Two patients commented on the availability of x-ray facilities.

A parent who had attended without an appointment after their child had a minor accident said 'I just wanted to know if they were OK and what damage they'd done, it's brilliant that we

had an x-ray straight away and didn't have to travel hardly any distance' Another patient commented 'I didn't even bother with the GP as I knew I'd need an x-ray'

Two patients commented on the department opening times.

One told us 'I've had a problem in the past when I came here and it was shut, in a place like Newquay you need access to healthcare 24/7 and having to go miles away to another MIU was a massive pain' A patient who had attended several different hospital departments over the past few months told us 'I wish I could come here all the time but when they're shut you've got no choice, if they ever want to cut down the opening hours or shut it altogether everyone would suffer'

One carer for an elderly relative reported that he was frustrated that they had been discharged from the Emergency department at Truro the day before but were still in need of care. They told us 'I didn't want to call an ambulance as she's not really that poorly, but she shouldn't be home and the GP won't help, so coming here was the only option'

6 Staff Feedback

A member of the nursing staff told us 'It works really well here, we are often the only service a patient will see, so it's important we provide the care that we do' Speaking about service challenges they said 'It sometimes gets very busy, particularly in the summer but most patients are understanding of the pressure we're under, and we're always careful to explain why they are kept waiting, so they are generally OK'. Speaking about the future of the service they told us 'It's important to think outside the box and realise that patients sometimes can't or won't travel 30 minutes to Truro or Bodmin, so we need to be here for them. We're not able to open every day but we still get people turning up for treatment and some are not happy when they find out we're closed; Newquay really does need us to be open more to take pressure off other clinical services in the County'

A member of the administrative team reported that the greatest challenge they faced was restricted opening hours due to staff shortages. She told us 'The big problem is the wards are always open, so people can come into the hospital and when we tell them on reception that MIU is closed, they are sometimes very unhappy' They informed us that even though the opening times of MIU were on the NHS website, some non-NHS internet services listed opening times in general terms for the whole hospital, which was confusing and made it look as if every department was permanently open. Commenting on the use of the NHS website, a second member of the administrative team said, 'It's surprising how many people don't use the web to

check on service availability or waiting times, but most are understanding if we tell them MIU is closed'.

7 Recommendations

Healthwatch Cornwall have offered some recommendations based on observations and feedback from patients and staff to improve experiences in the department

- 1) Both patients and staff reported issues with restricted opening hours. Extending the days that the department is open would increase patient choice, improve patient satisfaction and reduce pressures on other clinical services in Cornwall.
- 2) A patient reported that being kept standing whilst booking in to the department had caused discomfort. Some patients with mobility issues may benefit from being allowed to sit immediately on arrival in the department and whilst administrative processes are carried out. This would help avoid distress and support patient wellbeing.
- 3) It was reported that many patients do not use the NHS website to check on service availability or waiting times, and web information from non-NHS sources detailing department opening times is confusing. Promoting the use of official websites would improve patient treatment options and prevent unnecessary delays in accessing treatment.
- 4) During busy periods when waiting times may be longer than expected, patients would benefit from a display of up to date waiting times in departments across the county. This is in line with information available in other departments across the county and would manage patient expectations, offer more choice for treatment options and improve patient experience.
- 5) There is limited on site car parking and very few disabled parking bays. Patients would benefit from signage informing them where they can park when the car park is full. This would support patient flow into the department, reduce stress and reduce the risk of inappropriate parking.

8 Provider Response

- 1. Both patients and staff reported issues with restricted opening hours. Extending the days that the department is open would increase patient choice, improve patient satisfaction and reduce pressures on other clinical services in Cornwall.**

As part of our commitment to provide a minor injury service at Newquay, we must ensure we have the capacity to deliver a consistent and sustainable offer for both the public and our referring partners.

Over the past 12 months, recruitment and training have enabled us to strengthen our highly-skilled minor injury unit workforce. We are now able to extend the opening hours of the unit in Newquay to 6 days a week. From Thursday 19 February 2026, the unit will be open Thursdays to Tuesdays. It will remain closed on Wednesdays, which continues to reflect the times when the unit is busier. In line with our operating policies, opening hours remain under constant review and we allocate resources across the county in order to keep our busiest units open and safely able to treat as many people as possible.

As we adapt to changing demands and in line with the national expectation to deliver integrated neighbourhood healthcare, we will continue to develop our workforce and build in the right support. This includes exploring opportunities for joint working with primary care to ensure integrated urgent on the day provision across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

- 2. A patient reported that being kept standing whilst booking in to the department had caused discomfort. Some patients with mobility issues may benefit from being allowed to sit immediately on arrival in the department and whilst administrative processes are carried out. This would help avoid distress and support patient wellbeing.**

We are sorry this person experienced discomfort. Our teams work hard to identify those who may need extra support before being assessed and remain committed to preventing any additional pain or distress. If required, staff ask patients to take a seat and complete a manual record before their details are entered onto our clinical system.

- 3. It was reported that many patients do not use the NHS website to check on service availability or waiting times, and web information from non-NHS sources detailing department opening times is confusing. Promoting the use of official websites would improve patient treatment options and prevent unnecessary delays in accessing treatment.**

While we have little to no control over non-NHS platforms, the Trust, Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust, and NHS Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Integrated Care Board regularly promote our official live waiting and opening times website via print and social media channels. The website contains accurate, up-to-the-minute information for all urgent and emergency care sites across the county. It is designed to allow patients to make an informed choice about where they go to receive treatment and reduce longer waits. Posters featuring the web address and a QR code link for the website are on display in all Trust units, including Newquay.

- 4. During busy periods when waiting times may be longer than expected, patients would benefit from a display of up to date waiting times in departments across the county. This is in line with information available in other departments across the county and would manage patient expectations, offer more choice for treatment options and improve patient experience.**

As well as posters to promote the live opening and waiting times website, in-house waiting times are regularly updated by staff and displayed in reception.

In addition, all minor injury units have digital screens which feature a range of useful resources and information for patients. These include the web address and QR code link to the live opening and waiting times website. The Trust is also exploring options to display real-time waiting times direct onscreen.

- 5. There is limited on site car parking and very few disabled parking bays. Patients would benefit from signage informing them where they can park when the car park is full. This would support patient flow into the department, reduce stress and reduce the risk of inappropriate parking.**

We fully appreciate the concerns raised around parking at Newquay. While there are no options to expand onsite parking due to the site being landlocked, there are signs around the hospital site to inform patients and visitors of the overflow parking. The car park is due to be re-lined over the coming months. This will help better define the available spaces and create some additional accessible bays.

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