

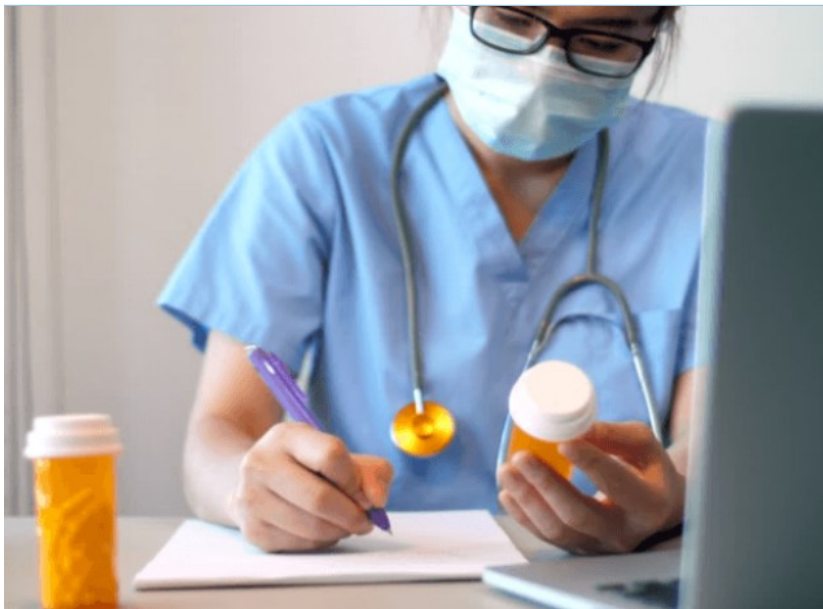
# **Widnes Urgent Treatment Centre**

**Patient Led Assessment of  
the Care Environment  
(PLACE)**

# Contents

About Widnes Urgent Treatment Centre.....	page 3
What is a PLACE Assessment?.....	page 4
Why PLACE is important.....	page 6
PLACE 2022.....	page 7
Findings.....	page 8
Summary and next steps.....	page 10
Our thanks.....	page 10

*“Good environments matter. Every NHS patient should be cared for with compassion and dignity in a clean, safe environment” ([NHS Digital](#)).*



# About Widnes Urgent Treatment Centre

Urgent Treatment Centres (UTCs) act as an alternative to A & E.

They treat minor injuries and illness and provide emergency contraception. They do not treat illnesses such as cardiac arrest, stroke, breathing difficulties or chronic conditions.

The UTC in Widnes is based at the Health Care Resource Centre and is run by Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.



## WIDNES URGENT TREATMENT CENTRE

- ✓ Minor cuts & wounds
- ✓ Bites & stings
- ✓ Coughs, colds and sore throats
- ✓ Urine infections
- ✓ Minor burns or scalds
- ✓ Eye injuries & infections
- ✓ Ear pain
- ✓ Minor head injury
- ✓ Fractures, muscle or joint injuries
- ✓ Rashes or allergic reactions
- ✓ Emergency contraception
- ✓ Childhood Injuries

The UTC is one of several services based at the Health Care Resource Centre.

It is open seven days a week including on public holidays.

# What is a PLACE Assessment?

PLACE stands for Patient Led Assessment of the Care Environment.

This is when local people, known as patient assessors, visit healthcare services as part of a team to assess how the environment supports clinical care. PLACE happens once a year, giving services an annual snapshot of how patients experience their environment.

PLACE is organised centrally by NHS Digital, a public body who use data, IT and research to support the NHS. The results and recommendations of each local PLACE assessment are led by local people. Their findings are shared with NHS Digital and with the service so that staff can see what is working well and what needs improving.

A PLACE assessment focuses on the healthcare environment. It does not assess clinical care or how well staff do their job.

Anyone who could potentially use the service can be a patient assessor. This includes patients, their family members and carers, patient advocates and foundation trust governors. Staff attend the assessment with patient assessors. However, patient assessors have the final say in what scores are given in the assessment. There can also not be a greater number of staff assessors in any one team than there are patient assessors.

## What is assessed?

Assessment questionnaires are provided by NHS Digital. They look at:

- how clean the environments are
- the condition – inside and outside – of the building, fixtures and fittings
- signs and car parking facilities
- the quality and availability of food and drinks (if provided)
- how well the environment protects people's privacy and dignity
- how well the environment supports people with dementia
- how well the environment supports people with a disability.

## Scoring Criteria

Patient assessors score the cleanliness and condition of different parts of the environment, for example, floors, seats, curtains etc. They give each one a score of 'Pass', 'Qualified Pass', 'Fail' or 'Not Applicable' and can add comments and suggestions.

P	A 'Pass' means all items meet the guidance.
Q	A 'Qualified Pass' means a small number of items (no more than 20%) do not meet the guidance.
F	A 'Fail' means more than a small number of items do not meet the guidance or where blood or body fluids are present.
N/A	Not applicable if the item is not within the area being assessed (choosing N/A does not affect the scoring).

Patient assessors also answer questions relating to hand hygiene, accessibility, how dementia friendly the environment is, the privacy given to patients, and their overall impression of the service.

If assessors see anything that they think is important or relevant but that is not on the questionnaire, they are encouraged to report it.

It is important that at least half of the assessment team is made up of patients. When patient assessors take part, services can see the environment as patients see it and, crucially, how they would like it to be. This unbiased perspective is what makes the results and recommendations from a PLACE assessment so useful.

# Why PLACE is important

We know that good environments matter. A good environment helps make a patient's experience of using the service a good one.

A clean environment leads to a lower infection rate. A well maintained building is a safer, more comfortable one. We know we can make environments easier for people with dementia or disability to navigate. We know that the layout and design of spaces impact on our patients' sense of privacy and dignity.



---

*“PLACE assessments will provide motivation for improvement by providing a clear message, directly from patients, about how the environment or services might be enhanced. ” ([NHS Digital](#)).*

---

People who use our services are best placed to tell us how well they are working for them, and this includes the environment where clinical care takes place. People using the service can tell us if the environment makes them feel confident in the care they are going to receive, comfortable, respected and safe.

PLACE gives patients and local people the opportunity to tell services directly what they think of the environment and make recommendations for change. In this way, patients and local people can influence how the service is run and, ultimately, improve the service for everyone.

# PLACE 2022

This is the first year that a PLACE assessment has been held at Widnes Urgent Treatment Centre. PLACE assessments will be carried out annually from now on.

On 29<sup>th</sup> September 2022, 4 patient assessors and 4 staff assessors completed the PLACE assessment as a group. They looked at the communal downstairs waiting room (shared with several other services), bathroom facilities (both those within the communal waiting room and those within the Urgent Treatment Centre) and a sample of triage rooms, clinic rooms and the x-ray room within the Urgent Treatment Centre. They were shown around by the Operational Manager, who acted as a guide and enabled access to triage and clinic rooms in use on the day.

The patient assessors took their time to look within these areas thoroughly and put questions to the Operational Manager to clarify how the systems worked for patients and how the environment supported this. Assessors then met separately to agree on the final scores and provided comments and recommendations to feed back to the service.

The input of the patient assessors was invaluable and the service is grateful for the time they took to assess the environment from the perspective of the patients and for the suggestions they made to make the service even better.



# Findings

The results of the first PLACE assessment show that, overall, patient assessors were happy with the environment of Widnes Urgent Treatment Centre. They commented that the building was modern, generally clean and light and said that the recommendations they were making were generally 'tiny touches' to make it better.

An action plan has been made based on patient assessors' recommendations. This action plan has been shared with the Operational Manager of the Urgent Treatment Centre and with Bridgewater's Estates Team.

Below is a summary of the key findings.

## Accessibility

After completing the PLACE assessment, patient assessors said that the most pressing issue was the need for a portable hoist to help people with physical disabilities into beds. This facility is currently not available and could impede on patient care.

They also gave several other recommendations to make the UTC more accessible including improvements that could be made to the positioning of pull cords in the accessible toilets to make them safer.

## Waiting Area

Patient assessors were particularly impressed with the main waiting room which was spacious and offered chairs of different size, height and styles to suit people with different needs.

However, they suggested improving signage in the waiting room so that the Urgent Treatment Centre is easier to find. As several services operate inside the building, it needs to be clear where patients should go when they enter. This was something they felt was particularly important for people coming to use the service who may be feeling anxious or worried about a medical condition.

They also recommended improving the current system of calling patients into triage and clinic rooms so that patients do not miss their name being called and



to prevent staff from having to call the same name over several occasions. This was something that was witnessed by assessors on the day.

Other recommendations included reporting empty hand gel dispensers to facilities and advising they add a water dispenser for patients to use.

## Wear and tear

Patient assessors were generally pleased with the environment but did notice some instances of wear and tear. This included some wobbly/broken fixtures, watermarks on ceilings, and scuff marks on doors and walls.

They recommended that all chairs in the children's room should be either wipeable or have removable covers.

They also noticed a small number of fabric tears in the furniture and some rough patches of flooring. Patient assessors made suggestions for how these could be addressed and prevented.

## Cleanliness

Patient assessors agreed that the environment was very clean. The main area which needed additional cleaning were the vents which were noticeably dusty.

When asked about their first impression upon entering the building, patient assessors said that they were 'confident' that a good level of patient care and experience would be delivered.

After having completed their assessment and having seen the whole department, they changed their response to 'very confident'.

# Summary and next steps

The results of the PLACE assessment at Widnes Urgent Treatment Centre were generally very positive with several recommendations to make the service even better for patients, their families and carers.

The questionnaire results have been uploaded onto the EFM system used by NHS Digital to collect data on PLACE assessments nationally.

The action plan has been shared with both the Operational Manager of the Urgent Treatment Centre and Bridgewater's Estates Team to implement recommendations.

A PLACE assessment will take place at Widnes Urgent Treatment Centre next year to make sure that the voice of both patients and the public is regularly being listened to and acted upon and that the environment of the Urgent Treatment Centre is continually improving to meet patients' needs.

## Our thanks

Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust would like to say a big thank you to the patient assessors who volunteered their time to come to Widnes Urgent Treatment Centre, assess the environment thoroughly, and make practical recommendations. The PLACE Assessment would not have been able to happen without them. Their advice will ultimately enable the trust to improve the service for everybody.

For information about Widnes Urgent Treatment Centre or to share a concern, complaint or compliment, please contact Patient Services on 0800 587 0562 or [bchft.patientservices@nhs.net](mailto:bchft.patientservices@nhs.net).