

Enter & View Report

Audiology department at Bedford Hospital

Visited 10th February 2016



Enter and View (E&V) report – Audiology Department, Bedford Hospital, South Wing

Name and address	Audiology Department, Beeden House, First Floor Reception D, Bedford Hospital NHS Trust, Kempston Road, Bedford, MK42 9DJ
Description of care /service provided	The audiology department offers an all-age diagnostic and rehabilitative audiology service
Names of Authorised Representatives	Steve Clark, Terry Darlow and Kamila Naseova
Date of visit	10 th February 2016

Background

The Audiology department provides diagnostic and rehabilitative service for adults and children. It is located in Beeden House at Bedford Hospital, South Wing. The purpose of the visit was part of a wider project that Healthwatch Bedford Borough (HBB) is undertaking to investigate children’s (and their parents’ and carers’) experience of accessing health services across Bedford Borough. As part of this project HBB are seeking both parents’ and carers’ views as well as those of children.

Welcoming

The team was met at the main hospital reception by Susanna Lennox-Lamb, PA to the Associate Director of Nursing Workforce and the Associate Director of Nursing Quality and Safety. We were then escorted to the Audiology department, based on the first floor at Beeden House and introduced to Roslyn Young, the The team had a room made available to them for the pre-visit meeting.

The reception area, which is shared between the Audiology and the ENT (Ear, Nose and Throat) departments was very calm and relaxed, with a sign on the reception desk, informing patients of the HBB visit. There was also a sign to let patients know about the availability of the paging alert system. This enables patients waiting for their appointment to know when they are being called, as it flashes and buzzes to alert them thus stopping them worrying about missing their appointments.

There were up to date notice boards containing a wide range of information for the general public and specific information for patients i.e. which clinic was running, who the consultant was and other members of staff on duty.

On the date of the visit a junior doctors’ strike was taking place at the hospital, however, the audiology department was not affected by this, as they do not have any junior doctors working within the department.

The team were shown around the department by Anna Lazenby, Consultant Audiological Scientist, head of the service. Anna explained to the team how the department operated and answered questions from the team, that were specific to the children's project.

Safe

Access to the 'treatment rooms' is by a door adjacent to the reception and members of staff come to the door and escort patients into the appropriate room. This provides a safe and secure environment. There is a separate, enclosed and very nicely decorated, area for children where there are some toys and a 'treasure hunt' to keep children occupied. This also contributes to the safety and security of the facility.

All staff in the paediatric audiology department have paediatric qualifications. The team is small and has been together for a long time, which has produced a safe continuity of care for patients. CPD programme is well developed and the department takes part in peer reviews with other organisations.

There are clear pathways for children needing cochlear implants and parents/ carers can choose to receive treatment either in London at Great Ormond Street hospital or the UCL or in Cambridge at Addenbrooke's.

The staff are aware of the safeguarding process, which is followed if deemed necessary. The Health Visitors are informed accordingly.

Caring and involving

Most referrals to children's audiology are made through the NHS Newborn Hearing Screening Programme (NHSP), which ensures that all parents are offered the opportunity for their newborn baby to have a hearing screening within the first few days or weeks of their life. If deemed necessary and parents are not engaging, a home visit can be arranged. Other referrals come from the ENT departments, GPs, Speech and Language therapists, Health Visitors and Paediatricians.

If a referral is urgent, it will be made by phone. However, apart from this urgent referral made by phone, professionals making the referrals are not informed that a referral has been accepted.

Referrals are logged onto a paperless patient management system and the waiting times targets are adhered to. Patients are seen within 6 weeks of their first referral. A letter is sent out about appointment details and requirements. A new draft leaflet describing the nature of the appointment has been developed to describe the patient journey. This leaflet is planned to be developed further and used to send to parents and children to help them prepare for their appointments. It is believed that this information, provided beforehand, will make appointments run better as parents and children will know what to expect.

Referrals are seen by the date of referral, however urgent cases can be prioritised.

Before a referral is made, consent is sought from the parent/ carer. The refusal rate is very low as every effort is made to engage with families.

The team works very closely with the sensory impairment education team and they do joint clinics with them twice a week. However, the social services are not present at the MDT meetings. It was felt, that this would be beneficial for the team, to have a social worker present at these meeting to ensure any problems are picked up early.

The department is a suitable environment for children. A dedicated waiting area previously mentioned is available as well as baby changing facilities. Some treatment rooms were designed to be child friendly with toys, pictures and an interactive element to the tests. Staff came across as caring and professional. Appropriate size furniture is also available.

Literature about various audiology issues was available in English but the department are able to provide printed information in other languages on request. For literature in braille, the department relies on charities to provide this.

Audiology staff are aware of interpreting services and regularly use those. When appointment letters are sent out, parents/ carers are asked if interpreting services are required. Also, the screening service will let the team know about interpreting requirement of parents/ carers.

A leaflet giving transport information to and from the venue is sent out with the initial appointment letter. If hospital transport is required, it can be booked. However, a problem with this service has been reported recently as the criteria have changed. The department operates their dedicated audiology email as well as the emails forwarded to them from the dedicated 'deafhelp@bedfordhospital.nhs.uk' email. There are clear contact details on the appointment letters if people have queries prior to appointments or if they need to cancel an appointment.

DNAs (did not attend) cases are followed up with a phone call.

Summary

The overall impression of the Audiology unit was one of a calm and well organised department. The team have been told about the comprehensive appointment and monitoring system and shown how the sophisticated equipment used was controlled in terms of calibration and maintenance. The referral process via the on ward screening team (a nation programme), GPs and education specialists was explained along with the waiting time targets.

An analysis of the Patients Survey 2015 was produced showing overwhelming satisfaction with the unit.

The department is child and family friendly with a dedicated and professional staff.

The following recommendations were made:

- Progress with the pre-appointment information leaflets to enable a smooth and well informed visit to the department by children and their parents/ carers.
- Improved multidisciplinary working with other professionals such as Social workers would be beneficial. A process should be developed to improve joined up working.
- There are some issues for families who are no longer eligible for the patient transport. This is not specific to audiology but needs further exploration across the Healthcare economy.

About Healthwatch Bedford Borough (HBB)

HBB is the independent consumer champion for the local community, influencing all local health and social care services.

HBB seeks to ensure that the views of the public and people who use health and social care services are taken into account.

Our vision is that

Healthwatch Bedford Borough will be:

- *a critical friend in challenging service providers to ensure that their services are person-centred and responsive to local community needs.*
- *seeking to empower all patients with confidence to make an informed choice about their health and social care needs.*

Our Mission is that

Healthwatch Bedford Borough will consult, engage and empower the wider community in a fair, transparent and realistic way. It will:

- *provide positive influence and encourage improvements in local health and social care services, acting as a critical friend to service providers and establishing valid outcomes against which changes can be measured.*
- *act as the voice of the public, providing a bridge between the commissioners and providers of Statutory Health and Social Care.*

HBB is for everyone in the community - adults, young people and children. It is vital that HBB actively seeks the views from all sections of the community, particularly those who seldom have their voices heard to ensure that information gathered is representative of the local community that it serves.

HBB Board

This is the body responsible for overseeing the work of the organisation. Board members are:

- Anne Bustin (Chair).
- John Weetman (Finance Director).
- Linda Hiscott (Strategic Director).

There is also one non-executive Director - Lyz Hawkes.

The Board meets on a regular monthly basis.

Contact Information

Healthwatch Bedford Borough
21 - 23 Gadsby Street Bedford MK40 3HP
Office telephone: 01234 718018

Signposting telephone: 01234 866477

Office email: enquiries@healthwatchbedfordborough.co.uk

Signposting email: signposting@healthwatchbedfordborough.co.uk

Website: www.healthwatchbedfordborough.co.uk

HBB Staff

Emma Freda - Communications and Public Engagement Officer.
Jennifer Foley - Signposting Officer.
Kamila Naseova - Service Development Officer.
Laurie Hurn - Administrator and Company Secretary.
Shanice Dadhira - Administrative Assistant.

Important Note

HBB is a Community Interest Company (CIC). It is registered with Companies House as Company No 8385413.

The three Directors (Board) have an important position of trust and general company law imposes on them a range of duties and in ensuring that the CIC meets its statutory and other obligations.

The HBB strapline is as follows:

“A strong voice for local people”