

Listening events report

May – July 2025

St Helens Hospital

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About Healthwatch Halton

Healthwatch Halton is the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Halton. We are one of more than 150 local Healthwatch across England. We exist to ensure that people are at the heart of care.

We help people find the information they need about services. We also go out and speak to local people about what they think of local care and share what people like and what could be improved with those running services.

We have the power to ensure that people's voices are heard by the government and those running services. As well as seeking the public's views ourselves, we also encourage services to involve people in decisions that affect them.

Our sole purpose is to help make care better for people.

About this report

This report highlights the public feedback received during outreach sessions held at St Helens Hospital between May and July 2025.

During these 'Listening Events' we use a short questionnaire to gather people's experiences of each hospital.

St Helens Hospital Listening Events feedback

Between May and July 2025, we spoke to 58 people at St Helens Hospital about their experiences of care, facilities, and getting around the hospital. We heard from patients, visitors, and carers across a range of wards and outpatient departments. The comments reflect people's experiences of care, facilities, and accessibility. Due to the overall number of responses received the views and experiences expressed cannot be considered representative of all patients. People often told us the same things about their experience. Rather than include every single comment, we've picked out a few quotes and grouped the rest into themes. The quotes are just examples, but they reflect what many people said. This report gives a snapshot of the experiences people shared and highlights areas for the Trust to look at.

Please rate the treatment and care you have received from staff

Excellent	79%
Good	17%
Fair	3%

Nearly four out of five people rated their care at St Helens Hospital as excellent, with very few reporting lower levels of satisfaction. This reflects a strong overall experience of care.

What do you think is good about this hospital?

People were overwhelmingly positive about St Helens Hospital. They often spoke about the kindness and professionalism of staff, the efficiency of services, and how clean and well looked after the hospital feels. For many, the hospital felt more welcoming and less stressful than larger sites.

Staff and care

- *'I supported my client today with an appointment at the eye clinic. The staff were excellent and he said he was very, very well looked after.'* (Eye Clinic, 12/05/2025)

- *'My mum is a cancer patient at this hospital. The treatment and care have been good.'* (Bloods, 12/05/2025)
- *'Staff are very good.'* (Outpatients – Rheumatology, 09/06/2025)
- *'Quick and staff friendly. Don't have to hang around too long.'* (Urology, 14/07/2025)
- *'Everything is good about St Helens Hospital. The staff are friendly, professional and quick.'* (Dermatology, 12/05/2025)

Appointments and efficiency

- *'Amazing! I was referred for an urgent appointment. Within 6 days I had been seen, had an ultrasound, bloods and a diagnosis. The staff are good and pleasant.'* (Eye Clinic, 12/05/2025)
- *'I am here today to get my hearing aid serviced. Both Audiology and the Eye Clinic are superb.'* (Audiology, 09/06/2025)
- *'I had my referral upgraded and my appointment was brought forward twice – which was great for me.'* (Dermatology, 12/05/2025)
- *'I have had two appointments so far and both times I was seen early. The staff are very nice.'* (Cardiology, 09/06/2025)

Environment and cleanliness

- *'It has a relaxed feel and friendly staff. I prefer the smaller building here rather than Whiston.'* (Gynae, 14/07/2025)
- *'Everyone is so helpful and kind. It is a clean, nice environment.'* (Physio, 14/07/2025)

Accessibility

- *'The blue badge parking is very helpful, especially as I can be here for 3 hours for injections.'* (Eye Clinic, 10/06/2025)
- *'The hospital is well laid out and easy to get around.'* (Outpatients, 12/06/2025)

Volunteers

- *'Seems a caring hospital. Volunteers are friendly.'* (Dermatology, 14/07/2025)
- *'The volunteer greeters are what I like. They put you at ease straight away.'* (Purple Zone, 12/05/2025)

What could be improved?

While most people were happy with their care, a third mentioned things they felt could be better. Parking was by far the most common frustration, with queues at the barrier and a shortage of disabled bays at busy times. Waiting times in certain clinics, especially the eye clinic, were also raised, as well as occasional delays in follow-up communication.

Parking

- *'The car park is horrendous, and the long queue make it hard for me to drop my mum off at the hospital.'* (Bloods, 12/05/2025)
- *'The car park queues are a nightmare. They hold up traffic even on the main road.'* (Dermatology, 12/05/2025)
- *'More disabled spaces are needed. All were full and one was blocked by a maintenance van.'* (Physio, 12/05/2025)
- *'The car park barrier is not accessible to me as I've got older. It is hard to lean over for the ticket.'* (Dermatology, 12/05/2025)

Waiting times

- *'Waits can be long in the eye clinic – I have waited 3 hours in the past.'* (Eye Clinic, 14/07/2025)
- *'I had to wait seven months for my knee to be fixed.'* (Orthopaedics, 14/07/2025)
- *'Getting an appointment was slow. After my knee op I had to wait a long time.'* (Physio, 09/06/2025)

Communication

- *'Receiving treatment was very slow to begin with, and I didn't get much advice while waiting.'* (Outpatients, 09/06/2025)
- *'My appointment was cancelled and I wasn't notified. I travelled down for*

no reason.' (Eye Clinic, 19/05/2025)

- *'Communication between trusts isn't good. I get stuck in the middle when information isn't shared.'* (Outpatients, 22/05/2025)

Do staff have enough time to spend with you and other patients?

Most people felt staff made time for them even when busy. A few noted that appointments in busier departments felt more rushed, but the overwhelming view was that staff worked hard to ensure patients were supported.

- *'The staff are very chatty and nice.'* (Eye Clinic, 12/05/2025)
- *'Lack of time to spend with patients. Wait around for hours.'* (X-ray / Orthopaedics, 14/07/2025)

Have you been given enough information about your treatment by the hospital?

The majority of people felt well informed about their care. Many valued clear explanations and written materials they could take home. A smaller number would have liked more timely updates following tests or scans.

- *'My treatment is explained but I am discussing this with the doctor each time.'* (Neurology, 12/05/2025)
- *'They explained everything and gave me an information booklet on my treatment.'* (Outpatient, 14/07/2025)
- *'It took me three years to get an appointment for my condition.'* (Outpatient, 14/07/2025)

How accessible do you think the hospital is in terms of getting around?

Most people told us the hospital was easy to get around. Clear signage, colour-coded zones, and the presence of helpful volunteers all made a positive difference.

- *'The zones are colour coded so all dead easy to access.'* (Dermatology, 12/05/2025)

- *'Very accessible with help from the colours and volunteers.'* (Purple Zone, 12/05/2025)
- *'Parking is very stressful but the building itself is easy to access.'* (Bloods, 12/05/2025)

Have you been treated with dignity and respect by the staff at the hospital?

Everyone we spoke to said they felt respected and well cared for. People highlighted the kindness of staff and the professional way they were treated.

- *'Always have time for you and are more respectful than other hospitals we have used.'* (Eye Clinic, 14/07/2025)
- *'Very much so!'* (Dermatology, 12/05/2025)

Any other comments

Finally, we asked people if they had any other comments to make about the hospital. Many people took the opportunity to share their appreciation for the hospital more generally. They praised the friendly atmosphere, the cleanliness of the environment, and the efficiency of services. A few also noted that parking charges can add up, particularly for regular visitors.

- *'Nicest hospital I've been in.'* (Lilac Centre, 19/06/2025)
- *'This is one of the best hospitals I've been to.'* (Dermatology, 22/06/2025)
- *'They are helpful and quick here. I really appreciate it.'* (Dermatology, 02/07/2025)
- *'All the staff I've dealt with have been brilliant.'* (Bloods, 28/06/2025)

Summary

Thank you to everyone who took the time to speak with us.

Overall, people were very positive about St Helens Hospital during our visits. Staff professionalism, efficiency, and the hospital environment were consistently praised, with 100% saying they were treated with dignity and respect. The main areas for improvement were parking, waiting times, and communication between appointments – areas that, if addressed, could make a great hospital even better.

Balancing what we hear

Most people rated their care very highly and praised staff for being kind, professional and caring. Our role is to reflect the full range of what people told us – celebrating these strong positives while also fairly highlighting the smaller but recurring frustrations. These are not criticisms of care, but practical issues that, if addressed, could make already strong services even better. We believe this balanced approach recognises the Trust's strengths while also highlighting where improvements could make a real difference.

Recommendations

These recommendations are drawn from the three main improvement themes people raised most often. While most feedback was positive, addressing these points would help remove common frustrations and make a good experience even better.

- 1. Parking** – People regularly told us about long queues at the car park barrier and difficulty finding empty disabled parking bays. Reviewing the car park entry and exit systems and increasing accessible spaces could help.
- 2. Waiting times** – Long waits, particularly in the eye clinic, were frustrating for some. Reviewing clinic scheduling and staffing could help reduce delays.
- 3. Communication** – A few people said they were left waiting for updates after tests or scans. Ensuring follow-up information is timely and clear would improve confidence in care.
- 4. Across all the feedback we received, three things stood out:**
 - The professionalism and kindness of staff.
 - A clean, well-kept hospital environment.
 - The support and welcome offered by volunteers.

These are important strengths that should continue to be recognised.

Mersey & West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust response

We would like to thank Healthwatch Halton for undertaking outreach events to meet with our patients at Whiston hospital between January and July 2025 and St Helens hospital between May and July 2025.

The reports have provided the senior team with an additional method of feedback that has highlighted both the positive feedback we receive to enable us to share the gratitude of our patients with the wider team, as well as affording us the opportunity to make ongoing improvements where required.

We have noted the content and are pleased to see that 93% of our patients receiving care at Whiston and 97% of patients receiving care at St Helens hospital rated care as excellent/good. We were pleased to see evidence in the report that

our staff are viewed as having a strong commitment to providing patient centred care and that our staff were commended for being kind, caring and professional, and that patients felt listened to and well treated.

We apologise to those patients that have not been fully satisfied with our services, we are happy to investigate individual cases if those patients would like us to.

Although listening Events only offer a snapshot of the experiences of patients who attend our hospitals on a given day, they allow us the additional opportunity to receive, acknowledge, and use feedback from our patients into our robust improvement plans. Thank you for sharing recommendations within the report, all staff are committed to making the improvements needed to ensure a positive patient experience is achieved.

We look forward to welcoming Healthwatch again in the future to work collaboratively in the support a positive experience for our patients.

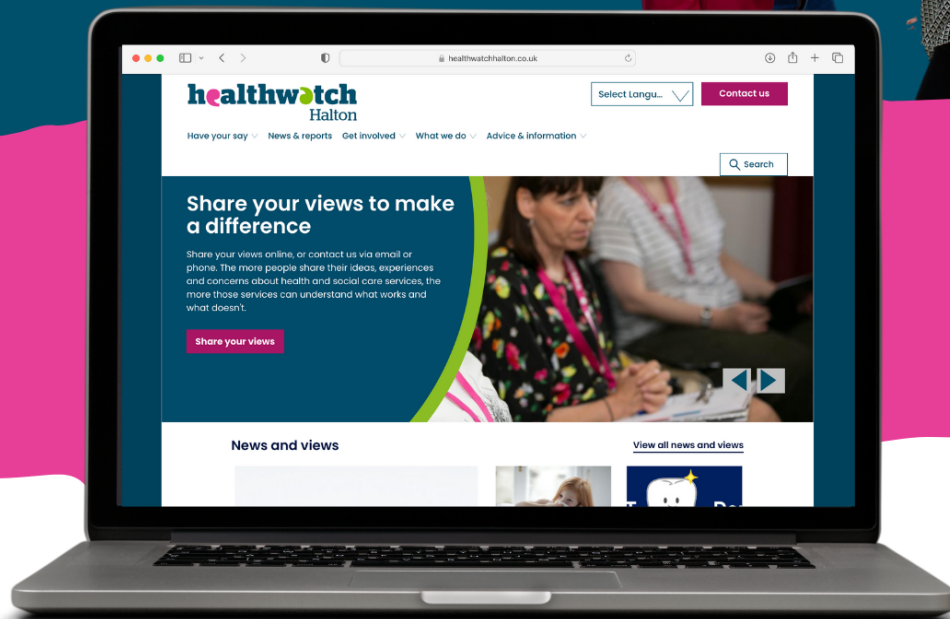
Yvonne Mahambrey, Quality Matron – Patient Experience

Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

Have Your Say

Share your experiences of health & social care services in Halton on our website or with your mobile phone.

Visit our webpage:
www.healthwatchhalton.co.uk
click on the tab 'Have Your Say'



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We are committed to the quality of our information.
Every three years we perform an in-depth audit
so that we can be certain of this.



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