



Press Statement

A&E attendance in Wales is escalating, and patient comfort and privacy is under strain says new report

The number of people visiting A&E departments across Wales is increasing and patients are often experiencing an uncomfortable wait with issues surrounding privacy; according to a new [report released today \(Thursday 14th June\)](#)

The major review of A&E patient experience across Wales shows also reveals people tended to wait longer to be seen during winter months, despite fewer people attending A&E than during the summer.

The report "*Accident & Emergency Patient Experience Review: A view across Wales*" has been prepared on behalf of the seven Community Health Councils (CHCs) in Wales.

The report gathered feedback from 541 people throughout Wales by attending various A&E departments across the country and interviewing patients within the majors and minors

areas of these hospitals to gather their initial feedback on their experience, either while they were still waiting or as they were leaving the Unit. The same survey was also answered online via CHC's website.

Some respondents had complaints regarding their comfort level while waiting to be seen, ranging from being made to sit up when it caused discomfort to a lack of seating, and the seating that was provided being too uncomfortable. One patient stated they were diabetic and had been on the Unit for five hours and 20 minutes and had been standing for a while before a chair became available. This patient had also been advised that pain relief would be provided but the patient was still waiting for this two hours later. Their concern was mirrored by another diabetic patient who worried whether there were any essential refreshments available to them, and if they'd be able to attract attention if necessary.

Other concerns raised include corridor care, as although most people surveyed were happy with the discretion they received, several respondents complained about the privacy levels in corridors. Individuals interviewed for the report also displayed dissatisfaction with the level of privacy at reception desks when checking in and the ability to hear discussions about other patients was also an issue that was raised. The CHCs spoke with one patient who was exposed, and experienced a nurse

continually entering their room even though she was asked not to.

Meanwhile, the overall reaction to A&E staff communication was significantly positive and they received a great deal of praise. Although some patients were frustrated by the amount of time they'd had to wait, most respondents were happy with the communication level they received, commenting that the staff were 'brilliant' and 'doing their best while under pressure'.

Speaking about the report findings, Mutale Merrill OBE, Chair of the Board of CHCs said: "We have real concerns about the discomfort people feel while waiting to be seen at A&E departments across Wales. Some of the stories we have heard, particularly from people who suffer with chronic illnesses such as diabetes are worrying. We are urging health boards to take these concerns seriously and take action to tackle the issues raised. We look forward to more information from the health boards in relation to the management of diabetic patients in A&E who may be waiting for a lengthy period of time.

"It was, however, extremely heartening to hear that A&E staff garnered significant praise throughout the report. While we received some complaints, it is a very positive finding that patients believe staff are visibly doing their best in extremely pressured situations.

“We believe this report provides a meaningful opportunity for decision makers to work towards a year-round standard of quality. This must include recognising the discomfort some patients experience, while working to ensure the good communication from staff continues.”

Note

The Board of CHCs represents the collective voice of the seven CHCs in Wales, provides advice, support and National Standards to underpin the work of the CHCs and monitors their performance. The CHCs are independent statutory bodies that exist to represent the interests of patients and the public in the planning and delivery of NHS services.

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Media enquiries to Sarah Wise @ Working Word on 02920 455 182 or email Sarah.wise@workingword.co.uk | Bethan Jones-Arthur on 02920 455 182 or email Bethan.Jones-Arthur@workingword.co.uk