

Front sheet: Board of Directors
Item number: 17
Date: 24th September 2025

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| Private/ public paper: | Public |
| Report Title: | Patient Led Assessment of the Care Environment (PLACE) 2024 Action Plan update and Overview of PLACE 2025 planning |
| Author(s) Accountable Director: | Samantha Crosby, Head of Facilities and Health & Safety James Drury, Director of Strategy |
| Presented by: | James Drury, Director of Strategy |
| Vision and values: | The PLACE process supports the Trust's vision to improve the mental, physical, and social wellbeing of the people in our communities. This is achieved by ensuring safe, sustainable, and high-quality environments that enable excellent care. The group aligns with the Trust's values of working together, respect and kindness, ensuring everyone counts, commitment to quality, and improving lives. |
| Purpose and key actions: | The aim of this report is to provide a high-level update of the action plan identified for PLACE 2024 and the planning process for PLACE 2025. |
| Executive summary: | <p>The Patient Led Assessment of the Care Environment (PLACE) is an annual assessment of the non-clinical aspects of the patient environment.</p> <p>PLACE assessments involve Patient Assessors as part of teams alongside staff. Patient assessors must make up at least 50% of the teams assessing how the environment supports the provision of clinical care</p> <p>The 2024 inspections were undertaken during October 2024 and an action plan was developed to address the findings of the assessments. A total of 67 actions were identified, spread across the Trust's sites, with Birch Avenue and Woodland View having the highest number of actions required.</p> <p>At the present time 33 actions remain open, the majority of which (24) relate to maintenance and capital plans. Seventeen maintenance actions are due to be completed this year, as are two of the seven capital actions.</p> <p>Progress is being made with preparation for the PLACE 2025 reviews which will take place in line with the nationally set time frame from 1st September to 21st November 2025.</p> <p>Recruitment of staff assessors has been successful, but recruitment of patient and carer assessors has been more difficult. This is a common issue, not specific to this Trust. However a way forward has been identified and subject to successful implementation of our recruitment plan, we will be able to deliver a full programme of PLACE visits in line with the nationally set timetable.</p> |

Which strategic objective does the item primarily contribute to:

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|-------------------------------------|-----|---|----|--|--|
| Effective Use of Resources | Yes | ✓ | No | | |
| Deliver Outstanding Care | Yes | ✓ | No | | |
| Great Place to Work | Yes | ✓ | No | | |
| Ensuring our services are inclusive | Yes | ✓ | No | | |

What is the contribution to the delivery of standards, legal obligations and/or wider system and partnership working.

The criteria included within the PLACE Assessments represent those aspects of care which patients and the public have identified as important and good practice, as identified by professional organisations whose members are responsible for the delivery of these services, e.g.; the Healthcare Estates and Facilities Managers Association (HeFMA), the Association of Healthcare Cleaning Professionals (AHCP) and the Hospital Caterers Association (HCA).

BAF and corporate risk/s: N/A

Any background papers/ items previously considered: PLACE results shared with Board annually - April

Recommendation: The Board is asked to note the content of this report and the proposed way forward in relation to the recruitment of patient assessors.



Meeting Title: Board of Directors

Report title: Patient Led Assessment of the Care Environment (PLACE) 2024 Action Plan update and Overview of PLACE 2025 planning

1. Purpose of the report

The aim of this report is to provide a high-level update of the action plan identified for PLACE 2024 and the planning process for PLACE 2025.

2. Background

The Patient Led Assessment of the Care Environment (PLACE) is an annual assessment of the non-clinical aspects of the patient environment.

Good environments matter. Every patient should be cared for with compassion and dignity in a clean, safe environment.

PLACE assessments help provide motivation for improvement by providing a clear message, directly from patients, about how the environment or services might be enhanced.

PLACE assessments involve Patient Assessors as part of teams alongside staff. Patient assessors must make up at least 50% of the teams assessing how the environment supports the provision of clinical care, focusing on areas such as:

- Cleanliness.
- Food and Hydration.
- Privacy, Dignity and Wellbeing (how the environment supports the delivery of care with regards to the patient's privacy dignity and wellbeing).
- Condition, Appearance and Maintenance of healthcare premises.
- Dementia (whether the premises are equipped to meet the needs of people with dementia against a specified range of criteria).
- Disability (the extent to which premises are able to meet the needs of people with disability against a specified range of criteria).

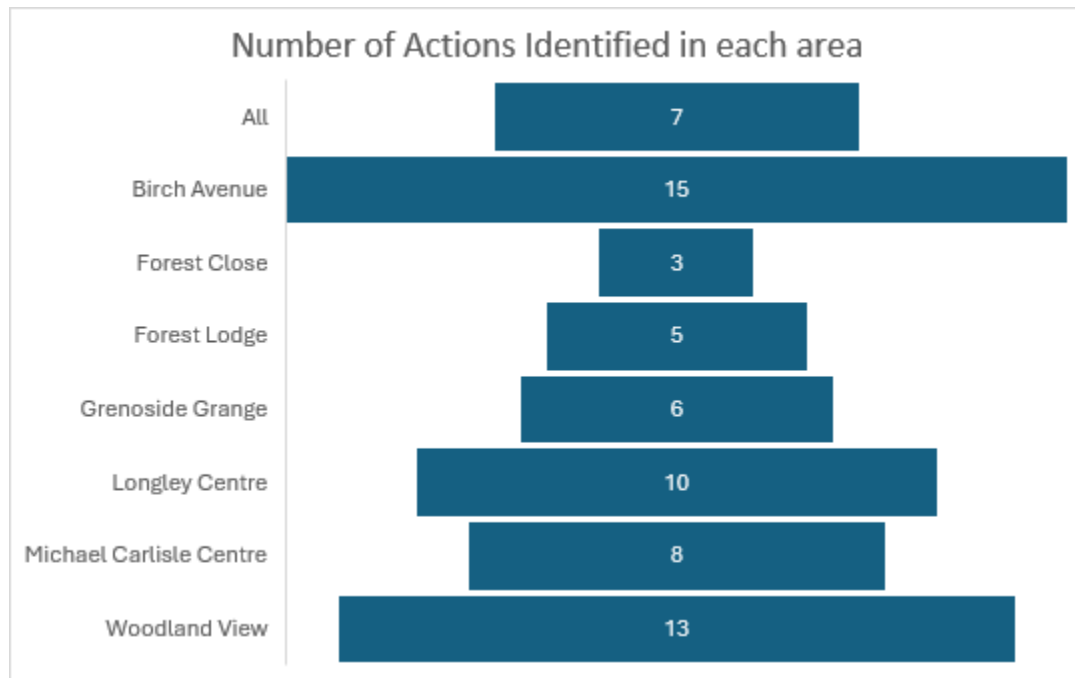
There is specific guidance in relation to who can become an assessor, patient assessors cannot be employees cannot be currently employed by the Trust or have been in employment within the last two years. Patient assessors is a voluntary role.

PLACE aims to promote the principles established by the NHS Constitution that focus on areas that matter to patients, families and carers:

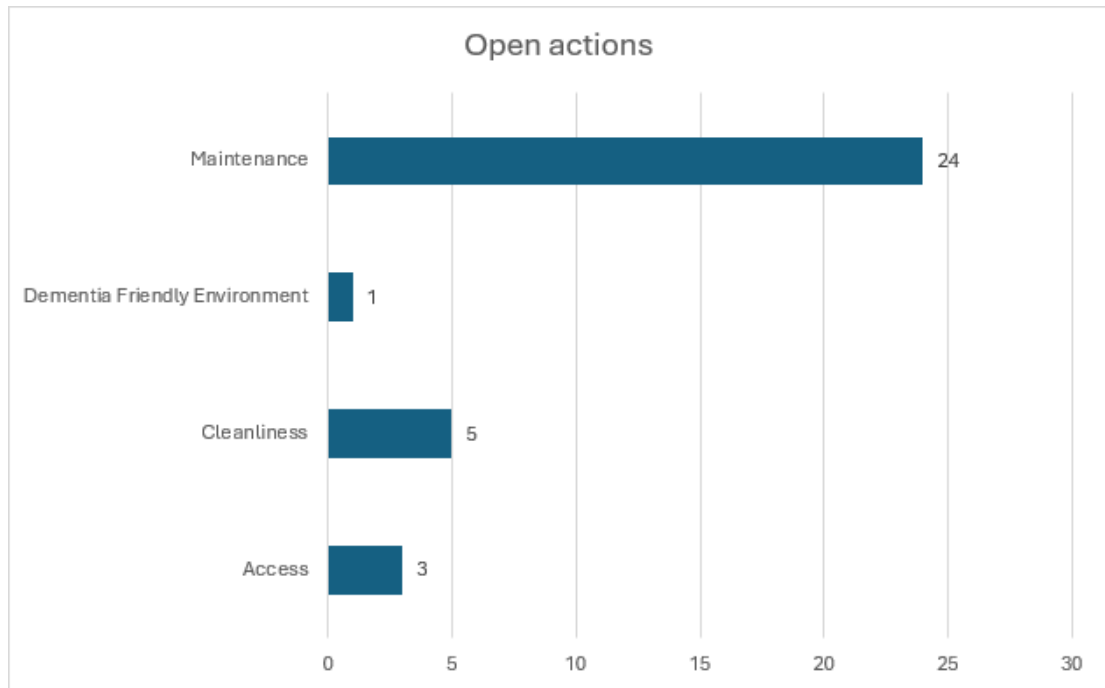
- Putting patients first;
- Active feedback from the public, patients and staff;
- Adhering to basics of quality care;
- Ensuring services are provided in a clean and safe environment that is fit for purpose.

3. Action Plan 2024

The inspections were undertaken during October 2024 and an action plan was developed to address the findings of the assessments. A total of 67 actions were identified, spread across the sites as follows:



At the present time 33 actions remain open, the majority of which (24) relate to maintenance and capital plans. Seventeen maintenance actions are due to be completed this year, as are two of the seven capital actions. Five capital project related actions will remain open into 2026/27 and will be subject to our capital prioritisation process.



One of the factors which has slowed progress with completion of maintenance related tasks has been a higher than usual number of vacancies in the team throughout the first half of 2025/26. This situation is now improving with successful recruitment leading to some posts being filled from October. Additionally it has been agreed that a number of actions will be progressed via external contractors. Quotes have been requested and completion should follow this year.

4. PLACE 2025 planning process

The PLACE 2025 dates were announced on the 31st July 2025 and PLACE 2025 is live from 1st September to 21st November 2025.

Up to date the following has been completed:

- Timetable completed of visits to undertake inpatient services assessment
- Induction dates of new assessor agreed and planned
- Staff recruitment has been successfully completed, with several new volunteers responding to an internal communications campaign and direct approaches
- Assessor recruitment pack completed and used to engage service user and carer assessors via Healthwatch, Flourish and Voluntary Action Sheffield. Unfortunately this has not resulted in successful on-boarding of assessors.



- The Experience and Engagement team have been engaged to support with marketing of the opportunity to the network of Experts by Experience who hold bank contracts with the Trust. This approach encountered some challenges with the technical eligibility rules for becoming a 'patient' assessor. However following further exploration a way forward has been identified.

The next step to complete assessor recruitment will be to revisit the engagement of Experts by Experience with a clear offer. The use of the recruitment pack developed earlier for VCS partners will be helpful in this regard. It is anticipated that subject to successful delivery of this step, we will be able to deliver a full programme of PLACE visits in line with the nationally set timetable.

5. Recommendations

The Board is asked to note the content of this report and the proposed way forward in relation to the recruitment of patient assessors.