

Charing Cross Hospital Co-Production

Action on Disability and Imperial College Healthcare Trust



Background



Report to HASPAC October 2024

DISABLED PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCES OF THE NHS - A REPORT BY ACTION ON DISABILITY

Introduction

Action on Disability asked its members to contribute their views on the treatment they had received from the NHS. Evidence was collected by distributing a questionnaire to members and holding a hybrid in-person and online group meeting. Contributions were received from 26 disabled people.

1. Overall Experience

Overall experiences with the NHS varied significantly among members, with both positive and negative encounters.

Several members expressed satisfaction with certain aspects of the NHS. For example, one individual who moved to London in 2020 praised their local GP for being attentive and providing phone appointments that were thorough, contrasting this experience with rushed appointments in Portsmouth. Another participant shared a positive experience regarding hip surgery performed at University College Hospital (UCH) in 2020, which was well-coordinated and supported by their GP's efficient referral process. Their autistic son received comprehensive support for allergies and a deviated septum, underscoring a more positive side of NHS services.

However, despite these positive experiences, significant challenges remain. During the group meeting, multiple participants shared instances of inadequate care. One participant spoke about arriving at a hospital after informing staff in advance of their need for a hoist, only to find that the equipment wasn't available. This experience highlights the ongoing problem of insufficient preparedness for disabled patients in medical settings.

Another participant described the difficulty in accessing mental health support, sharing that they had to wait two years to transfer their care to a local service because they were considered "too complex." This issue is echoed by many who feel that mental health support is slow and insufficient. Additionally, one participant explained that GP appointments, which once were easily accessible, had become difficult to book due not only to long waiting lists but also the lack of physical accessibility at some facilities, particularly for those with mobility issues.

Site Visits

March 2025 – Initial Access Visits

AOD Visit to CX (25 & 27 March 2025).

Purpose: Assess accessibility, environment, and patient experience at Charing Cross Hospital.

Areas Visited: Emergency Department, Riverside Ward, Outpatients, Diagnostics, Radiotherapy.

Key Findings:

- Poor signage and inconsistent wayfinding.
- Long waiting times and lack of quiet areas.
- Physical barriers (corridors, toilets) and limited wheelchair access.
- Staff generally open to feedback; radiotherapy team praised for person-centred care.

Resident Suggestions:

- Clear signage and improved navigation.
- Sensory-friendly waiting areas.
- Refresher disability awareness training for staff.
- Ongoing involvement of Disabled residents in redesign.

Next Step: Written summary of actions from Hospital Director Matt Ayres and commitment to co-production.

Meeting

May 2025 – First Co-production Meeting

Attendees: AoD Trustees, Disabled residents, Matt Ayres (Hospital Director).

Main Issues:

- Long appointment delays and unclear processes.
- Need for assistance for neurodivergent patients.
- Poor lift reliability and door accessibility.
- Audio and Braille guidance lacking.

Actions & Commitments:

- Matt to create an action tracker.
- Explore volunteer support for Disabled and neurodivergent patients.
- Investigate door automation and wayfinding (NaviLens, RNIB).
- Improve signage, Easy Read materials, and car park accessibility.
- New Changing Places toilet proposed in redevelopment.
- Nikos appointed as AoD's primary contact with hospital and architects.

Outcome: Agreement for regular (monthly) follow-up meetings and stronger co-production structure.



Further meetings and architect engagement

June 2025 – Co-production Peer Support Meeting

Focus: Review updates since March and May; meet with architects and design leads.

Discussion Points:

- Evaluate progress and areas needing action.
- Plan future engagement of Disabled residents in redevelopment design.

Outcome: Strengthened AoD–Imperial partnership and renewed commitment to continuous dialogue.

May–June 2025 – Concept Design Stage

Documents: Ground & First Floor Concept Sketches (May–June 2025).

Architects: Ansell & Bailey Ltd.

Key Developments:

- Relocated reception and customer care area near accessible lifts.
- Café and courtyard garden spaces to support calm waiting environments.
- Changing Places toilet included in early concepts.

Next Step: Gather resident feedback before sign-off.

Further meetings and architect engagement

July 2025 – Mid-Year Co-production Update

- Tracker shared by Nikos with group:
- heavy doors audit complete
- autism passports awareness week discussed
- disability flags integrated into IT project ongoing
- Plan to link disabled access maps to appointment letters;
- Oxygen cylinders removed to facilitate return of disabled parking bays
- Help alarms issue in disabled toilets resolved.
- Additional issue raised: Lack of BSL interpreters on site and consequences for d/Deaf patients.

3 September 2025 – Follow-up Meeting

Focus: Review of progress on estates and accessibility works, staff awareness, and implementation of previous action points.

Actions: Continued collaboration with Imperial Charity and Estates Team; preparation for next review meeting in October.

Further meetings and architect engagement cont.

August–September 2025 – Detailed Design Stage

Documents: Proposed Ground & First Floor Plans (Aug 2025); WC Layout (Sept 2025).

27 August: Drawings issued for sign-off – included reception, café, and WC layouts.

3 September meeting: Detailed WC plan confirmed Changing Places provision and accessible WCs.

Progress: Accessibility features integrated following AoD feedback.

Remaining Gaps: Sensory design, signage testing, and real-world user validation still pending.

October 2025 – Ongoing Partnership meeting

Meeting (22 October): Matt Ayres and Giorgio Caruso (Volunteering Manager) joined AoD to discuss volunteer support. Inclusive wayfinding guides introduced.

Focus: Embedding lessons from access visits into staff and volunteer training.

Status: Architectural plans approaching approval – further views fed back to architects regarding WCs; AoD remains key co-production partner.

Next meeting 4th December

Summary of progress



Focus Area	Progress	Remaining Gaps
Physical Accessibility (new build)	Incorporated in architectural plans (Changing Places, lifts, WCs)	Confirmation through Disabled user audit
Physical Accessibility (existing build)	Survey of all ground floor and first floors and commitment for all doors to have electric release or magnetic hold backs	Timeline to be confirmed
Wayfinding & Signage	NaviLens and colour coding explored	Further co-designed testing required
Volunteer support	Pilot for booking dedicated support commencing December 2025	
Sensory Environment	Calmer waiting and café zones included	Quiet/sensory room not confirmed
Staff Awareness	Volunteer training in planning stage	Need formal disability awareness rollout
Co-production Governance	AoD recognised as formal partner	Need written protocol for ongoing panel
Staff Training	M S-S to attend December meeting	TBC
Plan for d/Deaf patients and BSL Interpreters	TBC	TBC

Action tracker



Source	Subject	Description / intention	Timeline	Owner	Comments/Next Key actions	Status
CX Walkround	Lack of wheelchair space in ED	Difficult to navigate from front door through to majors in wheelchair	In progress	Matt	Walkround with estates colleagues, tie in to SDEC works?	Ongoing
CX Walkround	Heavy doors in corridors	Lots of heavy doors across site with no push button access make them difficul/impossible for disabled person	In progress	Matt	Walkround with estates colleagues. Audit completed and costs submitted	Today
CX Walkround	Signs in braille	Why don't we have signs in braille	In progress	DO	Review current position and look at Navilens possible solution	Ongoing
CX Walkround	No signs on floor	Why don't we have signs on floor as they have at Paddington station	In progress	Matt	Was looked at and not deemed suitable, to look at with new front entrance	Ongoing
CX Walkround	Easy Reading leaflets	Why don't we have them?	In progress	Matt/MS-S	Find out what we have and ensure clinical areas are aware	Ongoing
CX Walkround	Lack of knowledge regarding Autism passports	Many staff unaware	In progress	MS-S	See if we can have a weeks focus through comms - awaiting date. Margaret joining December meeting	Ongoing
CX Walkround	Disability flags on IT systems	Peoples disabilities should be flagged to all staff dealing with the patient	In progress	Matt/RW	Matt to meet Rachel to see how we can progress. Met with Rachel and is part of current IT project	Ongoing
CX Walkround	No clear wayfinding from car parks	It's not obvious to wheelchair user how to access hospital, epsecially from rear car parks	In progress	Matt/DC/ AA	Acknowledged and Trust to provide proposal to resolve. New signs being ordered	Ongoing
CX Walkround	Disabled access maps/plans should be available/sent with appointments	Letters don't provide maps/plans. Trust does have up to date plans but departments aren't all using them. Project with AccessAble underway	In progress	Matt/AA	Acknowledged and Trust to provide proposal to resolve. Maps developed and will be a link in appointments (date tbc) AA to join December meeting and engage with AOD in meantime to help with design of new system	Ongoing
CX Walkround	Clutter in corridors	Clutter in corridors make it difficult for wheelchair users to navigate	In progress	Matt/GE/SH	Weekly walkrounds with facilities and security arranged. AOD to be invite to attend	Close but BAU
CX Walkround	Dedicated wheelchair lifts	Can we have a deicated lift for wheelchair users	In progress	Matt	Front door project to focus on increasing escalator/stairs usage to free lifts. Use of volunteers	Close but new action for volunteers
CX Walkround	Loss of disabled parking spaces	Storage containers have taken disabled spaces	In progress	Matt	Oxygen cylinders removed 26_07_25	Ongoing
CX Walkround	Height of signs	Signs not at right height for wheelchair users	In progress	Matt	Darius has fed back that wayfinding signs should all be at correct height. Needs fruther investigation	Ongoing
CX Walkround	Help alarms	Help cords tied up in disbaled toilets	In progress	Matt	Gareth has instructed cleaners to ensure this does not happen in future	Close
AOD meetings	Practical support for disabled patients	Difficult for people to access/navigate hospital for appointments	In progress	GC	Pilot being introduced for AOD members to be able to 'book' a volunteer to meet them on arrival at hospital and support visit	Ongoing
AOD meetings	Influence design of new front entrance, including toilets/changing places	Need to ensure AOD meaningfully contributes to design of new entrance and ground floor area	In progress	Matt/DC/NT	DC attended September meeting and incorporated feedback/suggestions into design. Further feedback given after October meeting.	Ongoing

Action on Disability summary

- **Overall Summary for HASPAC**
- The AoD–Charing Cross Hospital collaboration has matured from initial access visits into an established co-production process influencing both design and patient experience. Architectural designs (Aug–Sept 2025) reflect significant accessibility improvements. Ongoing work focuses on ensuring continuous involvement of Disabled residents, sensory design, and sustained staff awareness. AoD remains a coordinating body for co-production with Imperial NHS, ensuring Disabled people's lived experiences directly shape the hospital's future development.

Imperial summary

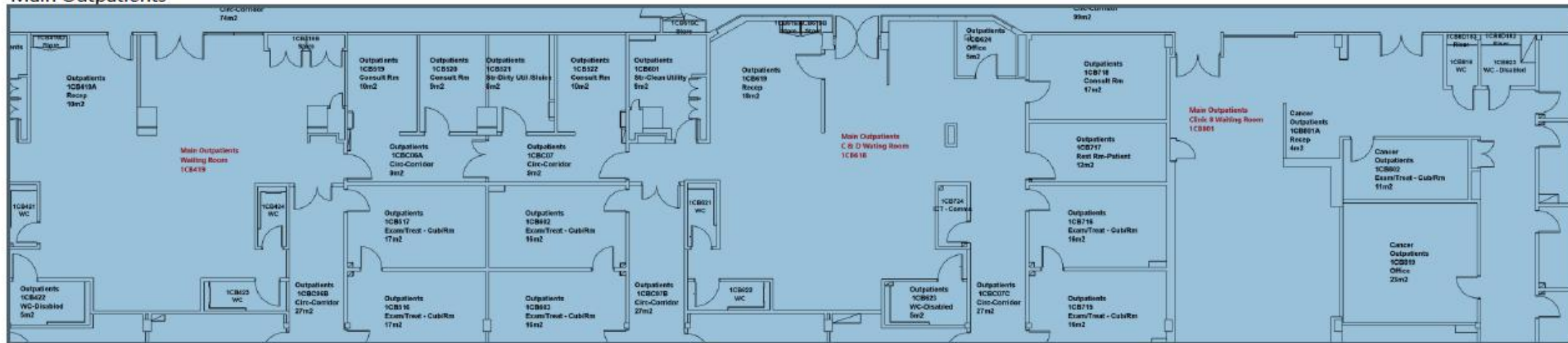
- Offered a new lens and perspective for looking at the hospital
- Challenging
- Need to focus on practical steps (eg estates) and as importantly our person centred approach which will include awareness/understanding/training/whole person view
- Overall an incredibly positive relationship to have built, with the ability to have a material impact on how we deliver services and interact with our local population

Appendices

Appendix 1: Doors survey example

Outpatients Waiting Areas

Clinic Block
Main Outpatients



1CB419 Main Outpatients
Main waiting room
Doors are normally closed.



1CB618 Main Outpatients
Waiting room C & D
Door normally wedged open



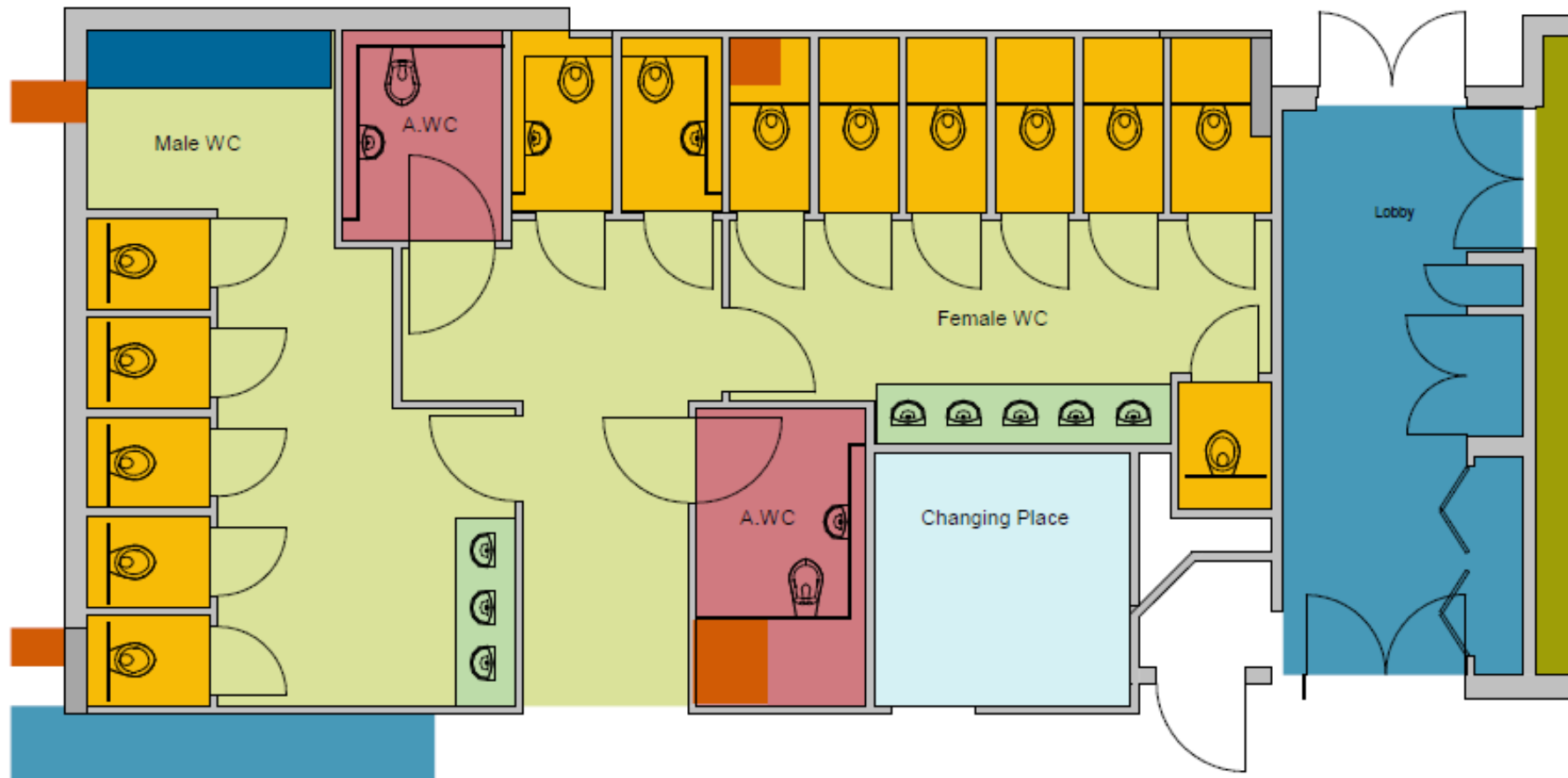
Main Outpatients
Clinic 8 (cancer)
Door is normally held open



Appendix 2: Architect (draft) plans Front entrance



Appendix 2: Architect (draft) plans WCs



Appendix 3: AccessAble summary info

7 North

Charing Cross Hospital, Fulham Palace Road, London, W6 8RF

020 3311 5234 (tel:020 3311 5234)

Send email (multimedia@imperial.ac.uk)

Visit website (<https://www.imperial.nhs.uk/our-locations/charing-cross-hospital>)



Access Guide

Photos



Getting To (7 North)

- The most accessible route from the Main Entrance Car Park has a slight ramp or slope, uneven surfaces, a dropped kerb and bollards.
- **View further information about parking at the hospital (opens new tab)** (<https://www.accessable.co.uk/imperial-college-healthcare-nhs-trust/charing-cross-hospital/access-guides/parking-at-charing-cross-hospital>)
- Access to 7 North is via the Main Accessible Entrance.
- There is a drop-off point at this entrance.
- **View further information about entrances (opens new tab)** (<https://www.accessable.co.uk/imperial-college-healthcare-nhs-trust/charing-cross-hospital/access-guides/entrance-at-charing-cross-hospital>)
- 7 North is located on the seventh floor of the main tower.
- 7 North is approximately 10m from the main tower lifts.
- Enter the hospital via the Main Accessible Entrance and proceed along either corridor to the left or right of the reception desk. Follow the main hospital corridor to the main tower lifts located ahead. Take a lift to the seventh floor. Exit the lift and turn right. Continue along the corridor and the entrance to 7 North is located straight ahead.
- Internally the most accessible route has step-free level access and a lift.
- Some flooring along the route is shiny.
- There are resting areas along the route.
- Wayfinding signage is provided.
- Signage is clearly visible with high contrasting colours.
- The following toilet facilities are available along the route; a toilet with adaptations (with left hand transfer), a toilet with adaptations (with right hand transfer) and standard toilets.
- **View information about accessible toilet facilities in public areas (opens new tab)** (<https://www.accessable.co.uk/imperial-college-healthcare-nhs-trust/charing-cross-hospital/access-guides/toilet-at-charing-cross-hospital>)
- **View more information on getting to and around the hospital (opens new tab)** (<https://www.accessable.co.uk/imperial-college-healthcare-nhs-trust/charing-cross-hospital/access-guides/getting-to-and-around-charing-cross-hospital>)

Parking (Main Entrance Car Park)

