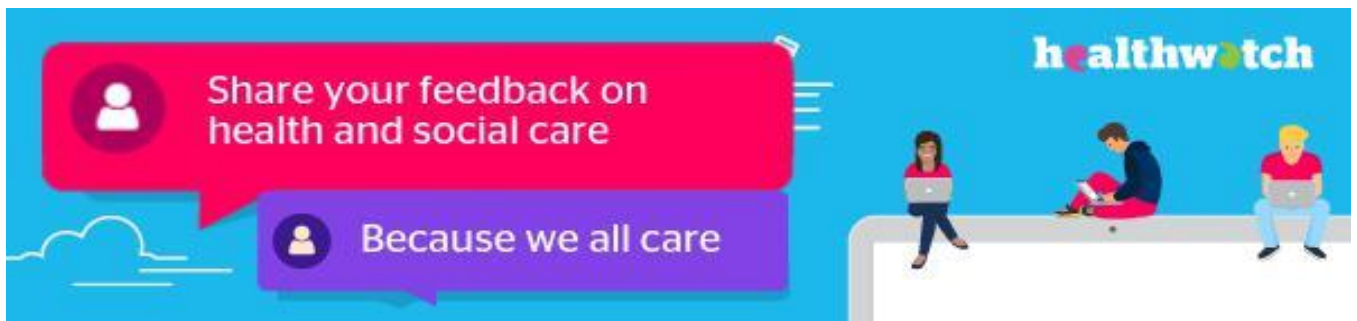


Public Experience of Imaging Services

April 2021



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Share your Health and Social Care Experience

Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent is the independent champion for people using local health and social care services. We listen to what people like about services and what could be improved. We share the views of the public with those with the power to make change happen. People can also speak to us to find information about health and social care services available locally. Our sole purpose is to help make health and social care better for people.

Please contact us if you have an experience or opinion on health and social care services that you would like to share. To share an experience with us you can do so online through our Website Feedback Centre, email, telephone or via our active social media platforms, Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram.

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What you're saying *quality public*
helping A&E ease support doctors
friendly waiting health long-term
improvements good Happy patient 

Executive Summary

Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent is the independent champion for people using local health and social care services. We listen to what people like about services and what could be improved. We share their views with those with the power to make change happen. People can also speak to us to find information about health and social care services available locally.

The report details our recommendations, the methodology utilised, an overview of results and the verbatim patient experiences.

In April 2021, we designed a short question centred on local Imaging Services and if the need for masks caused a problem for patients to interact through talking or facial expressions. This question was shaped to enable us to understand the experiences of patients during the Coronavirus Pandemic. The rationale for the report was because of the recognition to continue to gain patient feedback during this period, to endeavour to identify whether any changes could be made to improve and enhance patient experience. We worked alongside the Royal Stoke University Hospital Imaging Department to agree and form the style of questioning.

To collect the public experiences, the methodology used a qualitative research design by means of social media comments, website forms and verbatim transcripts. However, it should be noted that the report does not reflect the needs and views of those who are digitally excluded; an important issue that needs to be addressed as services recover and are redesigned.

A total of 63 patients participated and shared experiences. The 63 responses were shaped into six resulting themes: 6 responders shared concerns about claustrophobia which was not mask related, 35 responders indicated that mask wearing was tolerable, however 8 responders believed that mask wearing was not tolerable, 2 responders thought PPE affected communication with staff, 11 responders alleged that communication with staff was supportive and positive and 1 responder expressed a query around infection control.

To conclude, overwhelmingly the patient feedback from attending the Imaging Department during the pandemic period was positive. This is particularly welcome because many new procedures that have been put in place due to COVID-19. However, specific points do need clarification such as the guidelines surrounding mask wearing whilst inside the scanners, improvements to support claustrophobic patients and patients hard of hearing should be reviewed.

Consequently, we formed 4 leading recommendations for the Royal Stoke University Hospital Imaging Department to review and consider in order to continue to demonstrate treatment and care quality for attending patients.

Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent will review the 4 recommendations after 3 - 6 months to consider action taken and developed strategies for the benefit of patient experience.

Recommendations

Recommendations formed as a result of shared public feedback between 23 March 2021 and 12 April 2021. The recommendations have also been adopted by the Royal Stoke University Imaging Department.

- Confirm procedure for mask wearing inside of scanners. Review guidelines with patients. Can patients be asked what they would prefer pre scan? Or can this be added to the appointment letter so patients know what to expect?
- Feedback positive stories with modality teams as this can boost morale and further improve communication and patient experience.
- Consider how further support can be applied to hard of hearing patients more, especially whilst staff are wearing full PPE.
- Continue with the PPE audit and cleaning audits to ensure department compliant with current guidelines.

Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent will review the 4 recommendations after 3 - 6 months to consider action taken and developed strategies for the benefit of patient experience.



Background

The Imaging Department at the University Hospitals of North Midlands (UHM) had to implement many new processes and procedures due to strict national guidelines set by NHS England because of the Covid 19 pandemic. These include PPE for staff, masks for patients, attending alone due to social distancing measures and one way systems. Imaging felt it is important to continue to gain patient feedback during this period, as this could help to identify whether any changes could be made to improve and enhance patient experience during this challenging time.

Consequently, the Imaging department within UHM Royal Stoke united with Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent to engage with local residents in anticipation of capturing the views and experiences centred on imaging service delivery.

You can find out more about Imaging at Royal Stoke [here](#).



What We Did

From 23 March 2021 to 12 April 2021, Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent completed a 21 day callout across social media and our website to collect and understand patient experiences of having an X-ray, CT or MRI scan whilst wearing a mask because of COVID-19 measures. With particular focus points on identifying if masks caused a problem for patients to interact through talking or facial expressions.

In total 63 feedback experience from residents of Stoke-on-Trent.

The virtual callout post addressed the following areas and was structured as followed:

** Question to Stoke-on-Trent residents **

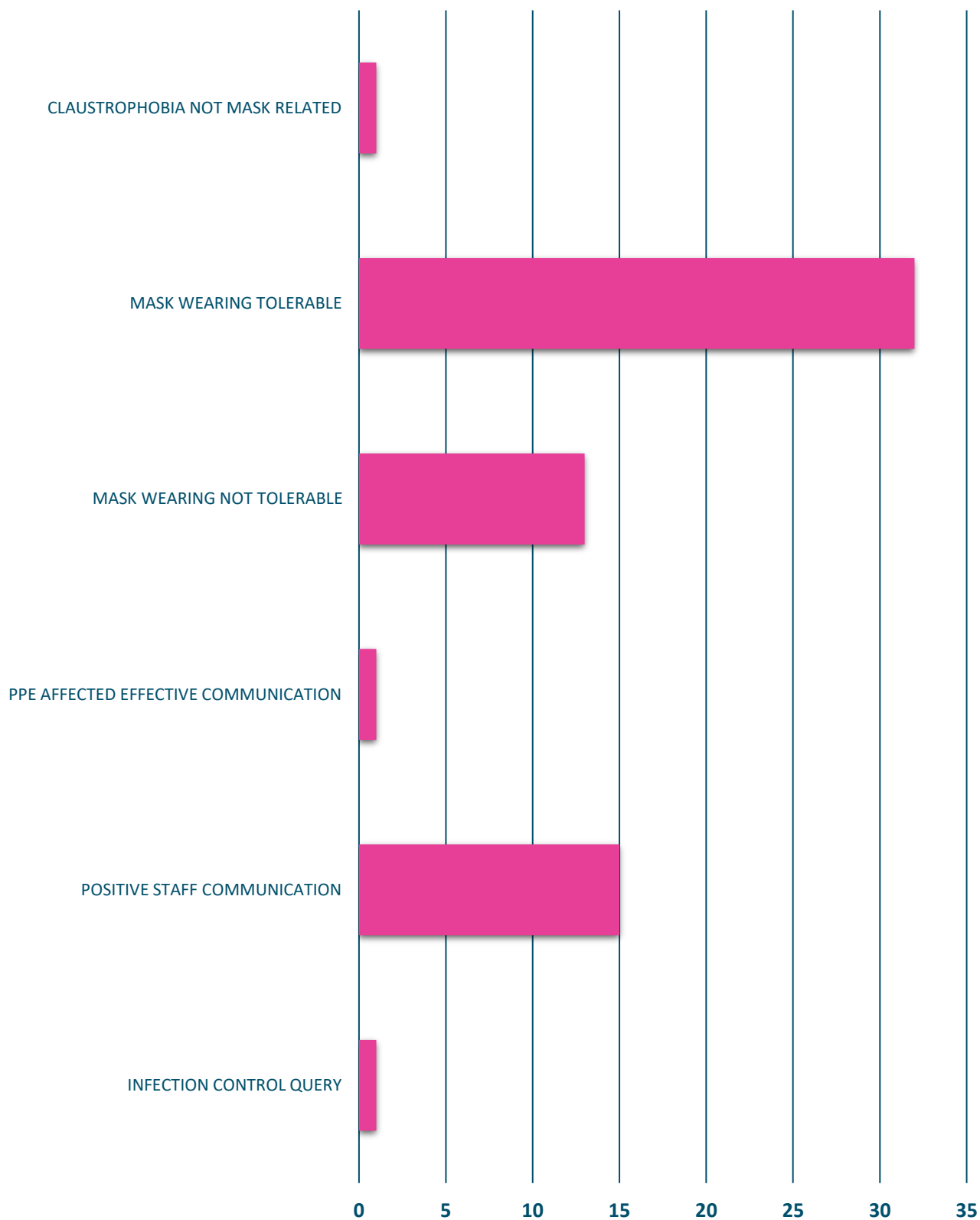
Have you been for an appointment for an X-ray, especially for CT or MRI as this involves being in a confined area whilst still having to wear a mask? A local Hospital User Group would like to understand what it feels like from the patient perspective and if masks have created any problems in terms of being able to interact through talking or facial expressions.

If you have any feedback or are aware of a friend or family members' experience, please let us know by commenting on this post, emailing or phoning us.

<https://www.healthwatchstokeontrent.co.uk/contact/>



What We Found



Appendix 1 - Feedback Received

Mask wearing - tolerable inside the CT/MRI scanners

1. I have had 2 MRI scans in the last month one lasting over an hour I wore a mask for both, and they were fine.
2. I recently had MRI scan no problem.
3. 2 CT scans one with dye and a pet scan and a CT guided biopsy within the last month plus 3 x-rays all wearing mask, plus suffer from anxiety, tomorrow got go for operation per op scans speaking to doctor so on, then if all OK operation next Thursday to be honest the scans was least of my worries near fell asleep twice in them lol anything you need to know ask away.
4. I had a CT scan wearing a mask in December. To be truthful it does not bother me being in the scanner. Last year I had radiotherapy, you must do controlled breathing for that, holding just the right amount of air in your lungs / so I imagine wearing a mask for that might be difficult.
5. I have not experienced any problems having CT scans wearing a mask. I was asked to reverse mask for head scan, & the reason for this was given. The staff were very friendly, radiographers explained exactly what to do & to expect. Very grateful to have scans done & all wearing masks for everyone's protection.
6. I had CT scan on Sunday I chose to wear my own (cloth) mask all the time. I had no issues at all. Very good one-way system. Staff masked and good at distancing. I remember from a previous visit staff just saying to me, if you need to stop at all raise an arm.....I'd tell them about any issues or concerns as you go into CT /MRI room. They staff are great, well trained and no doubt come across the issues with other people.
7. I had a chest / lung CT, but I wore a mask with no wire. Did not experience any issues.
8. Had MRI in Cannock last week wore mask all way through bearable just about.
9. I had an MRI scan. Wore the face mask provided by the hospital. It was fine. No problem at all.
10. I had an MRI in January and had to wear a mask. It was no problem. I hate all the noise from the MRI so that probably distracted me. I suffer from asthma but just got on with it.

11. I went 3 weeks ago for a CT scan at Royal Stoke I wore my face mask everything was fine, no problem at all.
12. I have had MRI (and x-ray) recently at Royal Stoke. Wore face mask provided no problems.
13. I've had an MRI during covid no issues here I'm mask exempt but wore one all through being in A&E and the MRI just like I have any other time I have left my house however apart from when I was rushed to A&E I didn't attend X rays and other appointments as we were in a pandemic, I have tried not to leave the house unless absolutely necessary like a fire or something.
14. Yes, I have been quite a few times, had three since Christmas, it was fine, they did tell me if I wanted to remove my mask I could, as I was the only one in that room at the time, and the staff were in a closed room, then they told me when they were coming back in allowing enough time for me to put my mask on again.
15. Had Angiogram with dye, wore a mask all through, not a problem for me other than I couldn't get the tab out my mouth after.
16. I have had two MRIs in the past fortnight. It was claustrophobic with the mask but not unbearable. Totally appreciate why they are needed.
17. Hello, I have had both an MRI and a CT scan during the pandemic. They swap the mask so that the nose pinch is plastic rather than metal. The MRI is a little daunting as it is a long time and with lying flat you cannot see over the mask so can literally only see direct above you, so makes tight spaces feel worse. Other than that, it is not a problem. Quick CT is completely fine.
18. I have had a standard CT Scan and Venous CT Angiogram with no problem. Wearing the mask is just part of the procedure as I see it.
19. I recently had an MRI scan whilst having to wear a mask. It did not cause me any difficulties during the process.
20. I have had an MRI and CT and had to wear masks both times. They swap them so the nose pinch is plastic and not metal.
21. Mask did not bother me I usually fall asleep in the MRI really quick.
22. I have had both and you only wear a mask when you enter the room not when you are in the machines so it was fine.
23. I had an MRI yesterday and said I would comment on how it was wearing a mask. I had a breast MRI, it was fine with the mask although I always use a plastic guard inside my mask, so I do not feel uncomfortable, I also asked for the air conditioning to be high, so I did not get too hot.
24. I recently had an MRI and wore a mask all the way through. Was fine.

25. I have had MRI twice this year and wore a mask in the waiting area and in the machine and I was fine. No worries at all.
26. I had to wear a mask in the MRI scanner the other day. It was not very pleasant especially when they told me at one point to not to swallow. I thought I was going to choke at one point. I really took some brain power and concentration to stay level-headed.
27. I had my own mask, but it was night-time so did not change it but when you go to the Haywood you have to have one of their masks and take yours off.
28. I have also had an MRI recently, wore mask both in the waiting room and the machine itself. They gave me a new mask immediately after changing clothes to have the scan, that did not have a strip to pinch on the nose. Was absolutely fine.
29. Have had at least 12 CT and MRI scans in the last year and always wear 2 masks.
30. Over last few months have had MRI's & CT's & ultrasounds & yes wore mask each time. MRI's can be very claustrophobic & wearing a mask did not help. However, there are far worse situations to be in. Close your eyes & think of a warm sunny beach. Cannot praise the staff at North Staffs & County Hospital highly enough. Unfortunately, I had a reaction to MRI dye, staff were not aware, felt like I was having a panic attack. As I had heard staff say only 5 mins to go, I tried to stay calm.
31. I had both 2 weeks ago have asthma and COPD were a mask but was fine.
32. I had a MRI last year and had to wear a mask, I had to swap to one of the hospital masks as the mask I had on had a metal nose pinch. I did not mind it at all, I wear glasses and have to have them off for the MRI so I lay with my eyes shut as everything is out of focus. So the mask wearing did not bother me.
33. Had a CT's scan last week as had headaches (is a long covid patient) - did not experience any problems with wearing a mask it just made her a little bit hot.
34. I went on Thursday for NM MPS MIBI/TF stress gated at the Nuclear Medicine department. I wore my mask for the first part of the test but when I had my scans, I did not need to wear it. I did not have any problems at all.
35. I had to go Stafford's hospital for an MRI scan with a mask and 2 gowns I feel asleep as I was comfy. The staff were very pleasant.

Mask wearing - not tolerable inside the CT/MRI scanners

36. 20 min MRI scan. Difficult enough if claustrophobic, but worse when you also struggle to breathe through a mask, to be honest - though understand all the reasons why they are needed.

37. The only thing I found difficult was hearing what was being said especially when you are hard of hearing you find it difficult as you must ask them to repeat themselves.
38. Yes, in October and it was awful! especially when you are in pain anyway. I had a DYT and pe's so I was struggling to breathe anyway.
39. Yes, I had both. The MRI was horrendous, and I think it was made worse with wearing the mask.
40. Hello, I have seen your post about an MRI with a mask on. I had one in December and it was awful, in the end they let me pull my mask down just before going in the scanner - otherwise I could not have done it. I had never had an MRI before and the head case, the small space and a mask was just too much for me.
41. I could not do my scan the first time with my mask far to claustrophobic. I explained this the second time around and was allowed to remove it once on the bed and also went in feet first.
42. Yes, I had one the other week and had to wear a mask. I was very panicked at first as I had never had one before and I was hot, the mask did not help at all. Once the scan started, I got a breeze of cold air and it calmed me down but the whole thing quite stressful.
43. I have been for an MRI scan at Stoke Royal throughout the pandemic and have needed to wear a mask for this procedure. As I was having a liver MRI scan, I had to hold my breath for 10-12 seconds repetitively throughout the scan. I have got to say I found this really difficult to do (very unusual for me). I found the only part of my face exposed was my eyes after the ear plugs, then headphones, then face mask and not wanting to open my eyes due to being in an enclosed space. It really was challenging to complete the breathing requirement but was achieved. I felt unusually shaken after the MRI and was physically shaking for 20 minutes post procedure.

Positive staff communication

44. I am autistic, I had to have scans October, November time. due to staff encouragement I was kept calm, everything was explained this was because I was experiencing loss of sensation in my back, arms and legs.
45. Yes X-ray, 2CT scans. The staff were wonderful talking to me throughout and giving plenty of reassurance. Glad to wear my mask to protect these lovely nurses and doctors thank you

46. No problems whatsoever, you may have to turn your mask, so the wire bit on the nose is under your chin, for facial scans. Other than that, it's a normal procedure with no problems of communication.
47. My husband attended for a CT scan yesterday evening, (Tuesday) no problems/issues wearing his mask. No problems with communication. Staff were very helpful and friendly.
48. I've been through this as I was diagnosed with prostate cancer late in 2018 and underwent brachytherapy treatment, which involves seed implants directly placed in my prostate which are eradiated and slow release to get rid of the cancer, I won't know I am cancer free for at least another two years, but the CT scan i think it was called, I went in a tunnel and couldn't move at all as in the picture, but I found it to be ok, of course I didn't have to wear a mask then as covid wasn't about but it wasn't daunting at all or scary, just at the time was scary as to what they were going to find, id got an idea that id got cancer because I was told that there may be a chance of it after the medical staff doing PSA checks and exploratory checks of my back passage, but this procedure was not at all scary to me and the staff were brilliant a I cant praise them enough, I was referred to the Christie hospice in Manchester for all MT treatment under a doctor logue, and he was fantastic, apart from the obvious apprehension the whole process was a breeze for the most part because of the professionalism of the doctors and nurses
49. I had a c t scan a few weeks ago and there was no problem with communication *** the lady who supervised the scan was outstanding.
50. I too had an MRI scan, my own masked was changed for a hospital mask. no problems as staff explained procedure and was not the first MRI I had had.
51. Yes, had an hour long MRI of head and neck on Sunday. Not only had to wear mask but also head brace. However, the radiologists were great and kept checking I was ok. Just have to chill and enjoy the rest.
52. The staff were lovely! I found the end a bit panicky as once it was over, I just wanted out, but I had to wait for them to come back in the room and let me out.
53. I had an MRI and had to wear a mask. I struggle normally because of asthma and being claustrophobic so that plus going into a tunnel whilst wearing a mask was extremely stressful for me but I would have at least tried. However, the woman that came to fetch me could see that I was distressed, and they did my MRI feet first which I feel really helped.
54. I went for my annual MRI scan and they put part of this plastic frame on over my face but left the other piece off as I said I felt like I would panic they told me I could take my mask off once I was in. But the radiologist and colleges were great and put me at ease and made sure I was comfortable as much as they could before and through my scan.

Safety / PPE affected effected communication

55. I went for an MRI on my neck and had to wear a mask, they also put some type of plastic frame over my face. It was the longest hour of my life, I had to keep breathing deep or I think I would have had a panic attack. I have had MRIs done before and I was fine without having to wear a mask.
56. I have, yes. I wore a mask until I went into the MRI room, and then did not wear one, but the two technicians I was in there with, wore full PPE, so masks, gloves, and gowns. It was absolutely fine, and I felt safe. They took every available precaution.

Claustrophobia - not mask related

57. I requested not to wear one for the very reason of being claustrophobic, no problem at all.
58. I can understand people being anxious when in a scanner and wearing a mask. I have done my breathing exercises when in the scanner previously as I get claustrophobic. They help me, but would be more difficult, I feel in a mask. I once had an MRI scan with a periscope mirror, so I could see the operator in the booth. It helped me a lot. If only all the scanners were like that.
59. I hate being in the MRI as I am claustrophobic. I have learnt to deal with it over the years by closing my eyes and counting. Found it no different with the mask (took my own lightweight cotton mask).
60. I had CT scan couple of weeks ago, felt a little claustrophobic but was not too bad.
61. I did not wear a mask and I very much indeed recall feeling very sick but I was not sick and felt lightheaded.
62. I should be having a scan done at some point but suffer with claustrophobia, I had my knee done a few years ago and even though my head was out it was terrifying, so the thought of my whole body and head in is a no-no.

Infection control query

63. I had an MRI before Christmas and I am waiting for an appointment for another one. I went in the portable cabin and I was told that I could remove my mask to go in the scanner. It did cross my mind that less than 10mins prior I watched the previous person come out from their scan and I wondered if that were long enough for the

two staff to do their paperwork and clean down the scanner, especially where their head was and would their breath still be in the enclosed area. (You can overthink things when you are lying there for a while!) I do think that if I had to wear my mask as well though I would have felt even more claustrophobic and if given the choice next time, I would remove the mask again.