



A day in the life of

Runcorn NHS Urgent Care Centre

8th December 2015

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	1
Executive summary	3
Recommendations and observations.....	4
Summary	4
Introduction.....	6
What is the Runcorn NHS Urgent Care Centre?	6
Methodology	7
Survey - Results & findings.....	8
Service & satisfaction	11
Sundry questions & comments.....	13
Demographics.....	14
Recommendations and observations.....	15
Appendix 1.....	16
Comments.....	16
Did you seek help elsewhere?.....	16
Staffing & service, waiting times.....	16
Other comments about your experience?.....	17
Car parking.....	17
Urgent Care Survey - Questionnaire	18

Acknowledgements

We'd like to thank the management and staff at the Runcorn NHS Urgent Care Centre for making us feel so welcome during our visit.

We'd also like to pass on thanks to Louise Wilson, Development Manager - Urgent and Integrated Care, at Halton Borough Council for her help in arranging our visit.

Executive Summary

We spent a day at each of the two Urgent Care Centres (UCC) in Halton during December 2015. On December 3rd we visited NHS Widnes Urgent Care Centre and on December 8th we visited Runcorn NHS Urgent Care Centre. This report covers the visit to the Runcorn UCC, which is based in Halton General Hospital

We arrived at the UCC at 7.15am and stayed through to close at 10.00pm.

Our survey consisted of two parts. Part one was completed with the patient while they were waiting to receive treatment. Part two was completed by the patient after treatment.

During our visit, **49 people** took part in the survey. Of these, **39** were receiving treatment themselves and **10** had brought a family member to receive treatment.

For **51%** it was their first visit to the UCC in the previous 12 months. **49%** of people had attended the UCC more than once averaging just under **2.3 visits** each

41% of people surveyed said they had tried to seek help elsewhere before visiting the UCC. Of these, **16** people had initially contacted their GP. **3** people had been successful in getting an appointment with their GP's and were then referred on to the UCC by their GP.

Of the **49** people surveyed, **29 (59%)** hadn't looked for help anywhere elsewhere before attending the UCC. The main reason we were given for people not seeking help elsewhere was they didn't think they would be able to get an appointment with their GP.

When asked, **50%** of people said they would have visited A&E instead if the Runcorn UCC hadn't been available to visit.

Results from Part 2 of the survey showed a very high satisfaction rate with the service in general, with **96%** saying they would be '**Likely**' or '**Extremely Likely**' to recommend it to friends or family. Asked to rate their experience on the day, **93%** rated it as **4 or 5 star**, (out of a maximum of 5 stars).

59%

of people went straight to the UCC without seeking help elsewhere

"I didn't try my GP as I struggle to get an appointment."



The entrance to the Runcorn UCC is located just inside entrance 2 of Halton General Hospital.

The reception area and waiting room were redesigned as part of the conversion from the Minor Injury Unit and now has a large mural of a forest scene across one wall.



The waiting area was very clean and contained seating for approximately 20 - 25 people. There was one bariatric wide chair in the waiting area. There were no high-back chairs or armchairs.

During the evening the reception area is also used by people attending the Halton Out of Hours GP service.

The waiting area had two flat screen TV's in it.

One large one, on the wall by the door through to the triage area, which was displaying TV channels. The second, an information display, screen showed various health related information.

A large whiteboard, on the waiting room wall, displayed the names of the staff on duty on that day.

Within the waiting area were also a water dispenser and a hot drinks vending machine.

A hand sanitiser was located on the wall just inside the entrance to the UCC

When patients arrive at the centre they give their details to the reception staff before waiting to be triaged. If a number of people arrive at reception at one time it may, due to the limited space around the reception area, cause a potential blockage of the corridor or lead to issues around privacy as patients are giving their personal information to the reception staff.

Recommendations and observations

The recommendations and observations from our visit to Runcorn NHS Urgent Care Centre are listed on page 15 of this report.

Summary

Our survey gathered views from 49 people which was almost **75%** of patients attending the UCC on the day. The reception staff explained that the numbers of people attending on the day was fairly typical. The average daily attendance at the Runcorn NHS UCC for December 2015 was 55.

Patients attending the UCC during our visit came from all **9 GP practices** across Runcorn.

Our results show that the overall satisfaction with the service was very high, with patients valuing the increased range of treatment available at the centre.

The comments received regarding the staff at the centre were extremely positive and we can also echo these comments. During our time at the centre we were able to observe the way the staff interacted with patients and we can't praise them highly enough for their professionalism.

“All staff were very friendly & extremely helpful.”

“The treatment I received was both professional and civil and is most appreciated as I was treated urgently and at extremely short notice.”

We spent a good part of our time in the waiting area talking with patients, waiting to be triaged, and received many positive comments on the improvements to the waiting area since the opening of the UCC.

“Good that there's free parking and a TV to watch while waiting to be seen.”

Currently, the number of people attending the Runcorn NHS UCC is less than those attending NHS Widnes UCC. Whether this is partly due to the on-going roadworks for the

Mersey Gateway, a general lack of awareness of the service, or capacity issues is difficult for us to tell. If the lower numbers are due to lack of awareness a promotional campaign may be helpful.

It was a slight surprise to find that patients from one Runcorn GP Practice accounted for over 25% of the people we surveyed on the day. Whether this was a one off anomaly or not we don't know. We would hope that this data is collected by the service and passed on to NHS Halton CCG to help highlight any potential issues.

The fact that **50%** of those surveyed said they would have attended A&E, if the Urgent Care Centre had not been in place, highlights the vital role the centre has to play in the local health system and the difference it can make to people.

As with our visit to the NHS Widnes UCC, we are aware that this centre is likely to get busier if it succeeds in helping reducing attendances at A&E. This could lead to a corresponding growth in waiting times for patients. We would hope that this centre will continue to be well resourced to ensure it can meet any increase in patient numbers without any corresponding increase in waiting times for patients.

Introduction

During 2014 we carried out a piece of work looking at access to GP services across Halton. This report highlighted that a large percentage of people who couldn't get an appointment to see their own GP were then attending local A&E departments.

We followed up this report by visiting our two local A&E departments (Warrington Hospital & Whiston Hospital), to ask people how they'd ended up in A&E and whether they had sought help elsewhere prior to attending A&E. Feedback gathered for these reports also pointed to the fact that many people said they would have accessed other local services if they had been available on the day.

The upgrading of the 'Walk-in Centre' in Widnes and the Minor Injuries unit at Halton Hospital to Urgent Care Centres, during 2015, was seen as a way to help provide local people with fast access to urgent care services much closer to home; reducing the need for many patients to travel to A&E and easing the pressures on local A&E units.

What is the Runcorn NHS Urgent Care Centre?

The Runcorn NHS Urgent Care Centre is based in the old site of the Minor Injuries Unit at Halton General Hospital and replaces the services that used to be delivered there. The centre provides care for illness as well as injury and offers a real alternative to visiting A&E for many people.

Dependant on the severity of the condition, the Urgent Care Centre can treat a wide variety of problems including but not limited to:

- Cuts and grazes
- Sprains and strains
- Broken bones (fractures)
- Bites and stings
- Infected wounds
- Minor head injuries
- Eye problems, such as minor eye infections, scratches or something that is stuck in your eye
- Low severity chest pain
- Respiratory problems like asthma
- Abdominal pain
- Fever
- Rashes
- Water infections
- Diarrhoea and vomiting
- Any new or exacerbation of a long term health problem that needs urgent attention

Methodology

To capture patient feedback we carried out a survey in two parts. Part one consisted of nine questions, and was completed face to face with the patient while they were waiting to receive treatment. These questions focused on asking how people had made the decision to visit the UCC and their initial views of the service.

Part two consisted of three questions, to be completed after treatment, asking for people to rate their experience and add any comments they would like to make about their experience.

A copy of the survey is included in Appendix 1.

Due to rounding, numbers presented throughout this and other documents may not add up precisely to the totals provided and percentages may not precisely reflect the absolute figures.

Survey - results & findings

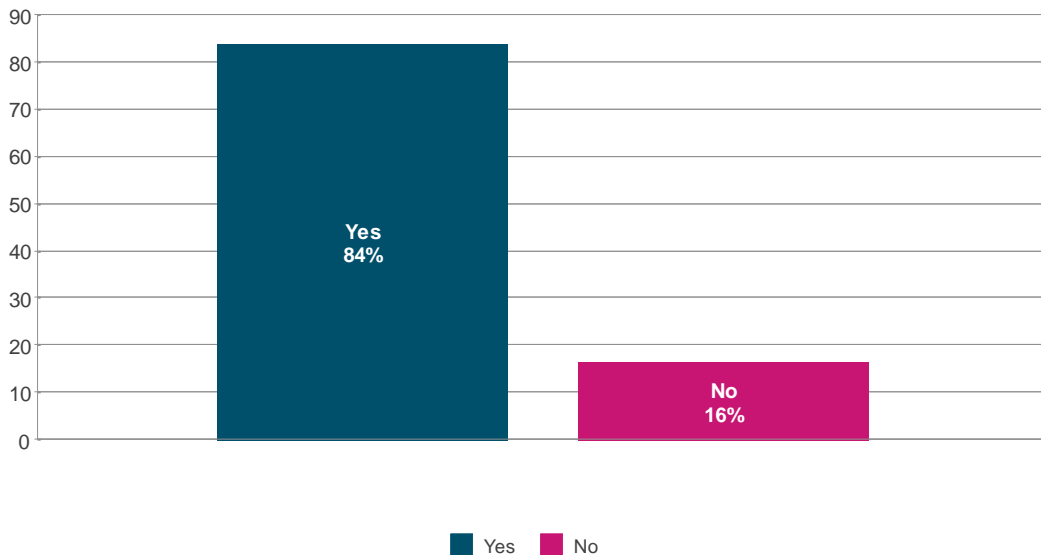
The Runcorn NHS Urgent Care Centre (UCC) is housed within Halton General Hospital.

The UCC is open 365 days of the year from 7.00am through to 10.00pm. We carried out our visit to the centre on 8th December 2015 from 7.15am through to 10.00pm.

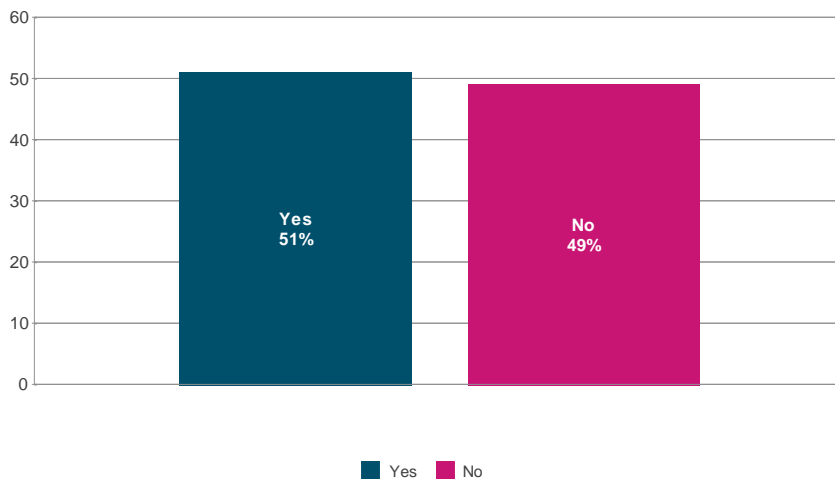
Our survey consisted of two parts. Part one being completed while the patient was waiting to receive treatment and part two to be completed following treatment.

During this time, **49** people took part in the survey. Of the **49** people, **41** were receiving treatment themselves and **8** had brought a family member to receive treatment. The family members were all children under 16.

Q1. Please tell us if it is you who is seeking help today?

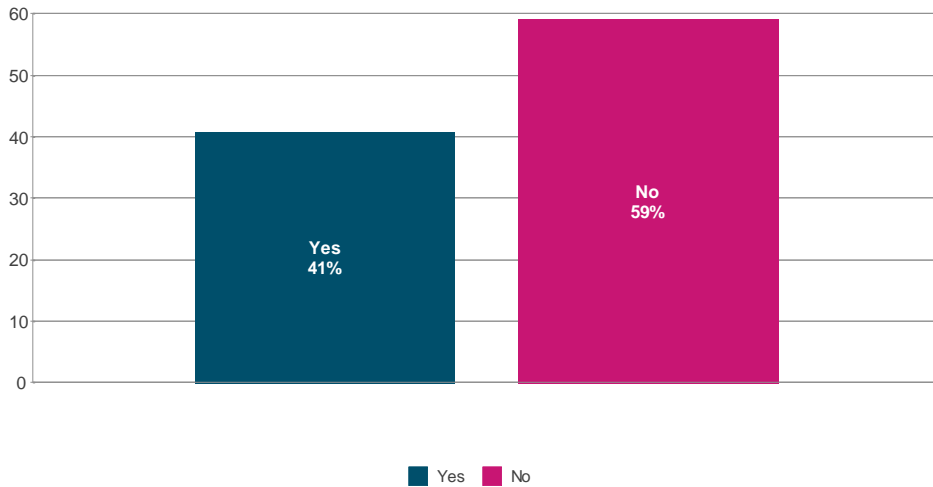


Q2. Is this your first visit to the UCC in the past 12 months?



For **51%** of the people it was their first visit to the new UCC. The other **49%** had averaged **2.3 visits** to the UCC in the previous 12 months. *(This also covers a period when it was the Minor Injury Unit at the Hospital).*

Q3. Did you seek help elsewhere before coming to the UCC?

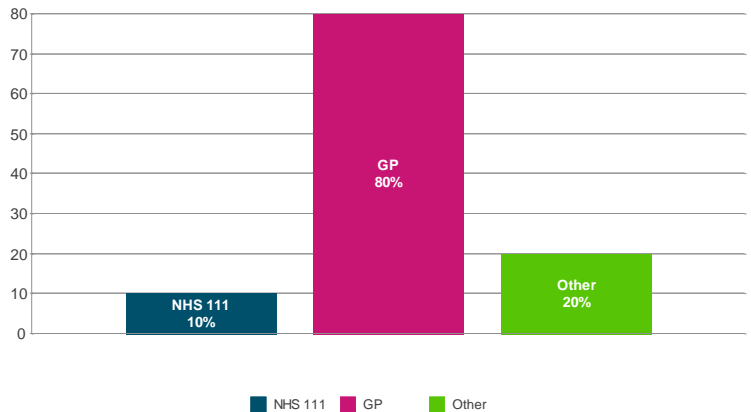


59% of patients said they had come straight to the UCC without seeking help anywhere else.

Of the 41% (20 people) who'd sought help elsewhere, 16 people had contacted their GP Practice first. Of which:

- **3 people** had appointments with their GP's and were then referred to the UCC.
- **1 person** had been phone triaged by their GP practice and advised to attend the UCC.
- **12 people** said they were unable to book an appointment with their GP for that day.

Q4. If you answered 'Yes' to Q3a, please tell us where you sought help.

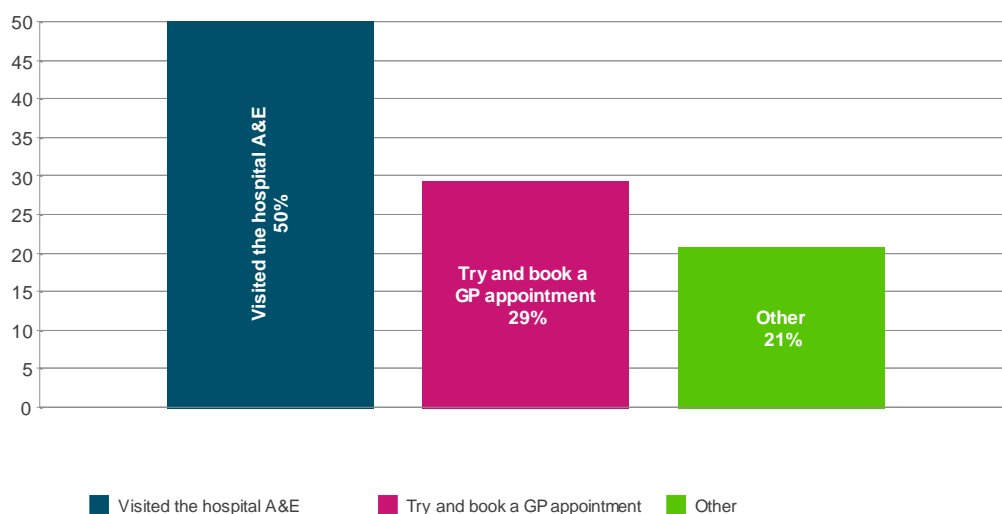


1 person had attended the Widnes UCC the previous evening and been triaged, but not treated, and had been advised to attend a hospital the next morning.

1 person had attended a Walk-in-Centre in Liverpool and had been advised to go to their local hospital.

2 people had spoken to NHS 111 and used NHS Choices before coming to the UCC..

Q5. What would you have done today if there wasn't an Urgent Care Centre



According to NHS Halton CCG, one of the main targets for the Urgent Care Centre is to help reduce A&E attendances locally by 15% over the next 5 years¹. We posed Question 5 to see what alternatives patients would have chosen if there hadn't have been a UCC to visit.

50% of respondents said they would have visited A&E.

While our results are only a snapshot of one day, as with our visit to NHS Widnes UCC, they do highlight the potential benefits that a fully utilised UCC may offer to the local health economy.

“Son had a bang on the head, we came straight to the UCC, otherwise we would have gone to A&E.”

29% of respondents replied that they would have attempted to book an appointment with their GP for another day. Of the 21% 'other options', the most popular option, surprisingly, would have been to visit the Widnes UCC. When we carried out our visit to the Widnes UCC not one person mentioned the Runcorn UCC as a possible alternative.

2 people stated they would have done nothing if they hadn't had the option of visiting the UCC.

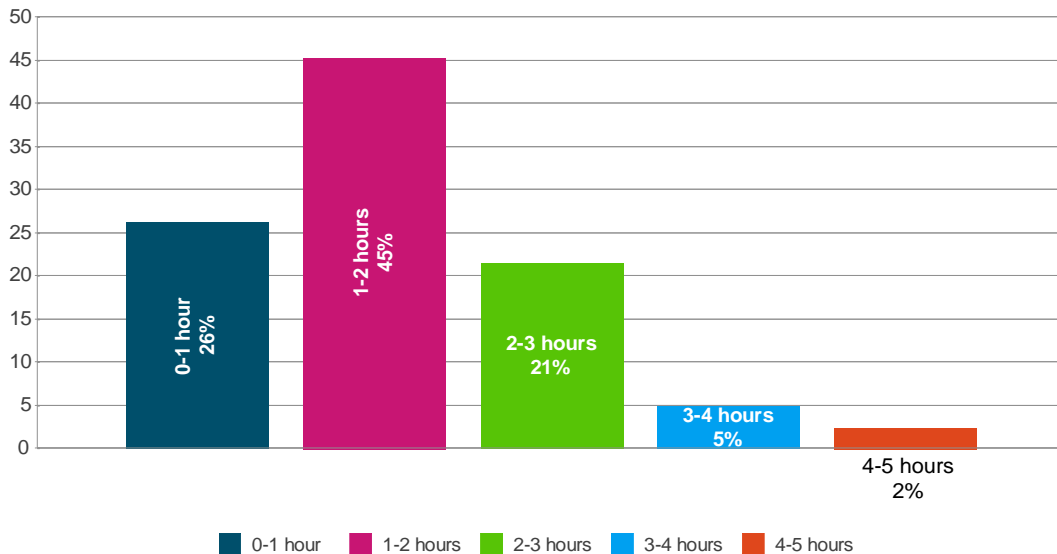
¹ *Bringing urgent care closer to patients' homes and unlocking potential system savings in Widnes'* - <http://www.fabnhsstuff.net/2015/09/23/bringing-urgent-care-closer-to-patients-homes-and-unlocking-potential-system-savings-in-widnes/>

Service & satisfaction

42 people completed and returned Part 2 of the survey.

Of these, 26% of people were triaged and treated within one hour of attending the UCC, most of these were at the quieter parts of the day.

Q12. How long has it taken from your arrival at the Urgent Care to be treated and discharged?

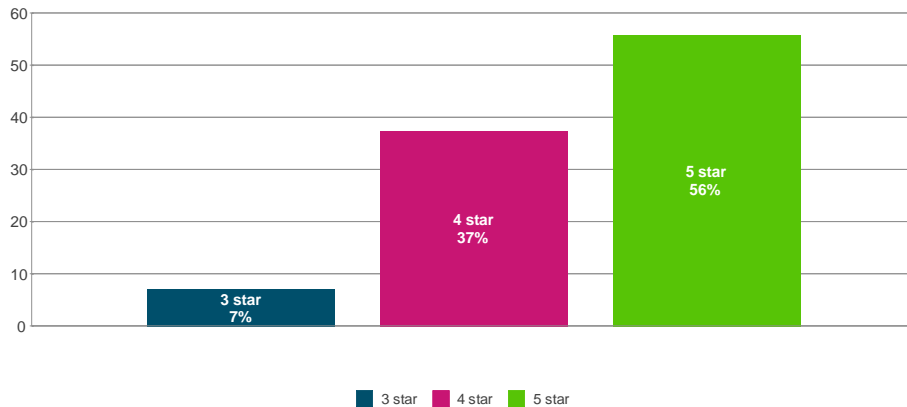


The earlier part of the day, from 7.00am to 10.00am, appeared quite quiet with only a handful of patients attending the centre. The waiting times rose as the day progressed reaching between 2 and 3 hours by early evening.

“Three hours wait is too long. Should have been told when checked in.”

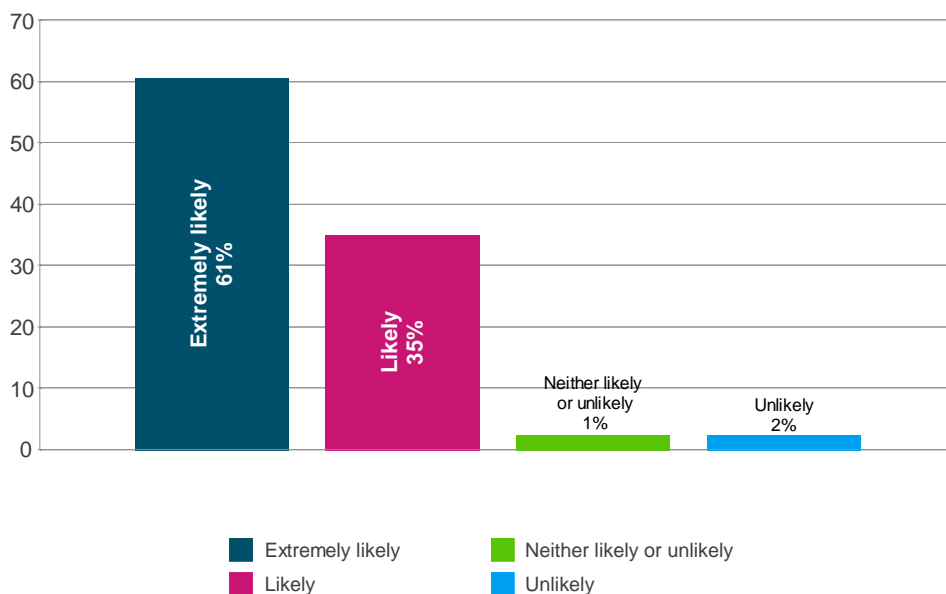
We found that the overwhelming majority of people attending the UCC had a very good experience on the day with **93% rating it as 4 or 5 star** giving an average score of **4.48 out of 5**.

Q13. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being poor and 5 being excellent), please rate your experience today.



When asked how likely they would be to recommend this service to a friend or family member, if they needed similar care or treatment, **96% of people** replied they would be **'Extremely Likely' or 'Likely'**, to recommend the service.

Q14. How likely would you be to recommend this service to a friend or family member

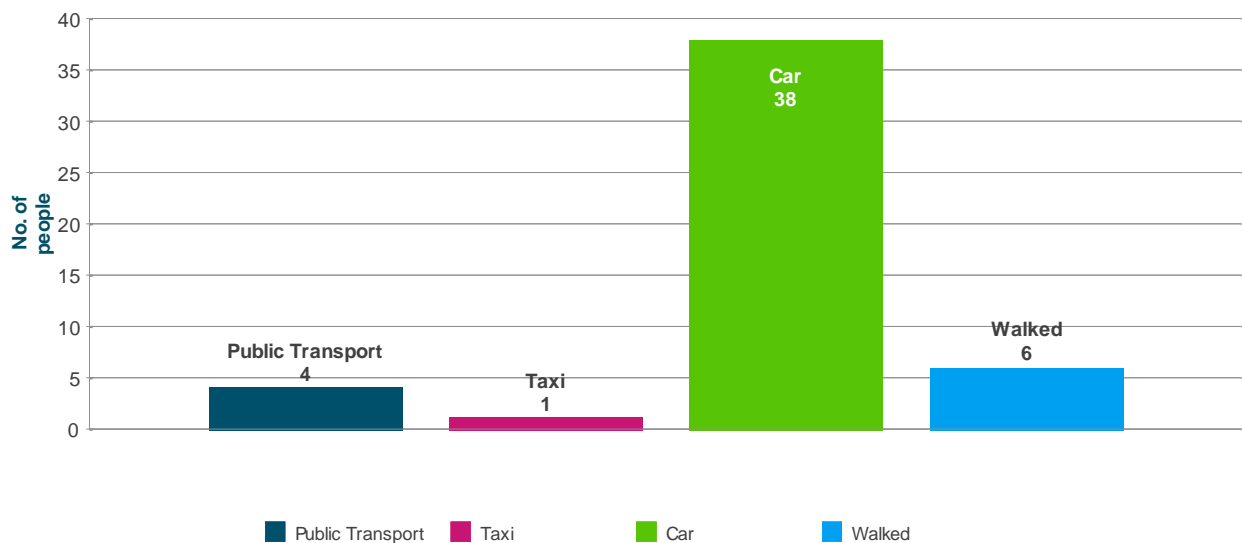


“This service is a great thing for Runcorn...”

Sundry questions & comments

- 80% of people arrived by car, including one person by Taxi.
- 12% of people walked to the UCC from the surrounding housing estates.
- 8% of people used public transport.

Q6. How did you arrive here today?



As a supplementary question, we asked if there were any difficulties in parking at the Urgent Care Centre. The feedback we received was very positive regarding the ease of parking once on the hospital site, although a few people raised concerns over the lack of signage for the UCC on the surrounding roads.

“I was not aware of the free parking until I arrived here. It was a nice surprise.”

There was though confusion over the free parking for people visiting the UCC. Currently, visitors to Halton Hospital have to pay for parking at the Hospital while visitors to the UCC can give details of their registration in at the UCC reception to exempt them from paying for parking. We found that some people attending the UCC, particularly first time visitors, were unaware of this process and paid the parking charge upon arriving at the Centre.

“I'd already paid for my car parking when I arrived. I didn't know about the free parking.”

Demographics

The 49 people surveyed gave the following post code areas :

- 42 Runcorn
- 2 Widnes
- 2 Frodsham
- 2 Warrington
- 1 Liverpool

People gave their registered GP Practice as:



14 Castlefields

6 Weavervale

2 Brookvale

5 Grove House

3 Tower House

2 Murdishaw

2 Heath Road

2 Hallwood

2 Appleton Village

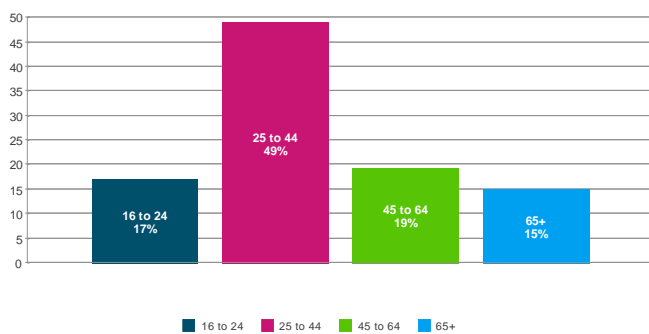
1 Tower House

1 Peelhouse Plaza

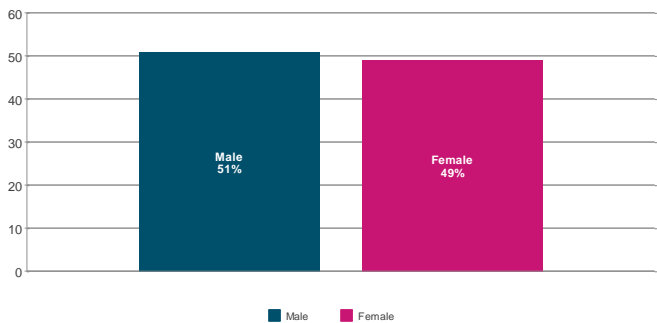
1 Newtown

8 Outside Halton

Q9 Age of respondent



Q10 Respondent gender



Recommendations and observations

1. Waiting times

- We heard from patients during our visit that they really valued being kept informed on the waiting times for treatment. We'd recommend that approximate waiting times are displayed clearly on the Information Screen in the waiting area.

2. Promotion

- The Runcorn NHS Urgent Care Centre provides a great service and a real alternative to attending A&E for many illnesses and minor injuries. It seems though to be a bit of a 'hidden gem'. We'd suggest that more widespread promotion of the service take place, to include a range of information posters displayed in local A&E departments; GP practices and pharmacies etc.

3. Booking-in

- From our observations on the day, we noted that the area around the reception can get quite crowded as people are waiting to book-in. As well as causing queues, this may also lead to a lack of privacy for people giving their personal details to the reception staff. A possible solution would be to look at operating a ticketing system for booking in at reception.

4. Signage and parking

- From the main roads, as far as we noted, only the Hospital is signposted. We would suggest that signs to Runcorn NHS Urgent Care Centre are added. Once on the hospital site the signage to the UCC is clear, although the signage to designated car parking area for the UCC could be more prominent. Clearer information on the 'Free parking' for users of the UCC would also be of benefit to patients attending the centre for the first time.

5. Toys for children

- We understand that the target is to triage 95% of patients with 15 minutes. Our observations, and anecdotal evidence, shows that some people do wait quite a lot longer. When waiting with young children even a 15 minute wait can seem a long time if they aren't kept entertained. We are aware the children's waiting room within the triage area has toys to entertain young children, we would suggest also having some toys available for parents with children in the main waiting area. As one family, with 3 young children, commented, *'Some toys for small children in reception would be a help to distract them.'*

Comments

Listed below are the comments we received through the survey. We've broken them down into the common themes raised on the day.

Did you seek help elsewhere?

- No appointments at the GP. They triaged me over the phone and told me to come to the UCC.
- My GP advised me to come to the Urgent Care Centre.
- Advised by my GP to attend.
- Advised by my GP to come to UCC, they couldn't help with my problem.
- No appointments available at the GP, they advised I go to the UCC.
- There were no GP appointments available (x5).
- Advised by the receptionist at GP to come to UCC as they had no appointments.
- Checked NHS Choices.
- I didn't try my GP as I struggle to get an appointment.
- NHS Choices - I checked online and saw this was the closest to me.
- I have been de-registered by my GP as I'd moved home and hadn't informed them, I'd only moved 10 minutes away and am still in the catchment area.
- I'd gone to a walk-in-centre in Liverpool but I wasn't totally happy with what they'd done and said.

Staff, service and waiting times

- All staff were very friendly & extremely helpful.
- Receptionists are really kind and friendly.
- Very good, I was in and out within 1 hour.
- Son had a bang on the head, we came straight to the UCC, otherwise we would have gone to A&E.
- I visited the Widnes UCC last night after 8.00pm and they triaged me but they told me they couldn't treat me and to come to the hospital.
- Staff are very nice. I think my wait will be long though as it's currently 2-3 hours.
- Son injured his ankle at school. Think it may be broken. The staff have been very helpful.
- Very good - my daughter was seen and treated within 1 hour.

- Three hours wait is too long. Should have been told when checked in. Staff were nice.
- Well treated - the staff were really nice.
- Very helpful.
- I was really well treated. The staff were superb.

Other comments about your experience?

- Some toys for small children in reception would be a help to distract them.
- Fantastic.
- They could do with better signposts, as we got lost, and better signs on the hospital car park to explain about the free parking for the UCC.
- The treatment I received was both professional and civil and is most appreciated as I was treated urgently and at extremely short notice.
- My problem is unresolved. I still had to make an appointment with the GP for a physio referral. It's difficult getting a GP appointment for weeks - so no further forward with treatment required.
- I wasn't aware it opened at 7.00am or I would have come earlier.
- Good that there's free parking and a TV to watch while waiting to be seen. I don't think the GP's are very educated as I have been told the same thing every time and my problem is still the same.
- Seats in the waiting room are a bit uncomfortable when you've been sat on them for a couple of hours!

Car parking

- This service is a great thing for Runcorn. Also free parking is good.
- I was not aware of the free parking for patients at the UCC so I parked outside the hospital grounds to avoid any charges.
- Car Parking - I wasn't aware about the free parking for patients at the UCC.
- We're new to the area so we weren't aware of the system for car parking.
- I was not aware of the free parking system for the UCC.
- Fantastic that they have free parking.
- I was not aware of the free parking until I arrived here. It was a nice surprise.
- I didn't know about the free parking for patients at the UCC and I paid.
- I'd already paid for my car parking when I arrived. I didn't know about the free parking.
- Parking - I wasn't aware before I arrived that parking was free - Very good!

Urgent Care Survey - Questionnaire

Ref No:

Urgent Care Centre Survey - Part 1

healthwatch
Halton

Healthwatch Halton is the independent consumer champion created to gather and represent the views of the public and people who use the services are taken into account.

We would like to ask you some questions today about your visit to this UCC arrived.
We would also like you to complete a short form after you have received your treatment, to let us know about your experience while at the UCC.

We are not asking you to divulge any medical or confidential information about your visit. The information you provide in this survey will be anonymised and will help us to provide a local picture of people's experiences of accessing urgent care.

Q1 Please tell us if it you who is seeking help today?

- Yes No

Q1a If you answered 'No' to Q1, are you:

- Parent / family member Friend / Work colleague
 Partner/Spouse Prefer not to say

Q2 Is this your first visit to the UCC in the last 12 months?

- Yes No

Q2a If 'No', how many times have you visited in the past 12 months?

- 2 3 4 5 6 7+

Q3 Did you seek help elsewhere before coming to the UCC?

- Yes No

Q4 If you answered 'Yes' to Q3a, please tell us where:

- NHS 111 GP
 Pharmacy Family member
 Other

Other - please state

Q5 What would you have done today if there wasn't an Urgent Care Centre locally?

- Visited the hospital A&E Try and book a GP appointment Visit a pharmacy Other

Other - Please state

Q6 How did you arrive here today?

Public Transport

Taxi

Car

Walked

Other please state?

Other

Q7 Approximately, what time did you arrive at the UCC?

Q8 To help us analyse these results and ensure the answers you have given help improve access to services, please could you tell us the following:

Your Postcode

Q8a Your Registered GP Practice

Q9 What age group are you?

16 to 24

45 to 64

25 to 44

65+

Q10 Are you male or female?

Male

Female

Transgender

Prefer not to say

Q11 Any comments?

Thank you for taking part in this survey.

Ref No:

Urgent Care Centre Survey - Part 2

healthwatch
Halton

Thank you for taking part in the first part of our survey. We would appreciate it if you could now answer the three questions below and return the survey in the attached FREEPOST envelope.

1. How long has it taken from your arrival at the Urgent Care Centre to being treated and discharged?

- 0-1 hour
- 1-2 hours
- 2-3 hours
- 3-4 hours
- 4-5 hours
- more than 5 hours

2. On a scale of 1 to 5, (1 being poor and 5 being excellent), please rate your experience today.

- ★
- ★ ★
- ★ ★ ★
- ★ ★ ★ ★
- ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

3. How likely would you be to recommend this service to a friend or family member if they needed similar care or treatment?

- Extremely likely
- Likely
- neither likely or unlikely
- Unlikely
- Extremely unlikely

Any other comments about your experience today?

Your postcode (1st 4 digits)

Name (optional)

Telephone or Email (optional)

- Please enter me into the next FREE Healthwatch Halton quarterly prize draw for a chance to win one of three £25 gift vouchers. (Please supply contact details above)

Return this slip using the attached FREEPOST envelope to:

FREEPOST - RTKC-YEJX-UEXR, Healthwatch Halton, St Marie's, Lugsdale Road, Widnes WA8 6DB

Thank you for taking part in this survey

your **voice** counts

We want to hear about the treatment and care you receive from our local health and care services

Hospitals, GP's, Dentists
Opticians, Social Care Services
Non-emergency services

Whether you've had a positive experience or there is room for improvement, have your say on the Healthwatch Halton website today.

You can even leave feedback anonymously!



Leave feedback now:

www.healthwatchhalton.co.uk

Telephone: 0300 777 6543 Email: enquiries@healthwatchhalton.co.uk
Healthwatch Halton, St Maries, Lugsdale Road, Widnes, WA8 6DB

