

**REPORT TO:** Health Policy & Performance Board  
**DATE:** 28<sup>th</sup> June 2022  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, People  
**PORTFOLIO:** Health and Wellbeing  
**SUBJECT:** Widnes Urgent Treatment Centre Update  
**WARD(S)** Borough-wide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an update in relation to Widnes Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC) and the current service offer delivered.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION:**

**i) The Health Policy & Performance Board note the contents of this report.**

**3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

**General**

3.1 The Widnes Urgent Treatment Centre is open 365 days a year from 8am to 9pm and is located in the multi-service Health Care Resource Centre (HCRC) in Widnes and patients can walk in or book appointments via NHS 111 and GPCconnect.

3.2 Patients can attend the service with several different conditions such as minor cuts or wounds, sore throats, bites or stings, rashes, and allergic reactions, for prescribed medication requests, minor burns or scalds, coughs and colds, muscle or joint injuries, earache, eye injuries and infections and emergency contraception.

3.3 The service meets all the requirements of the 2017 UTC National Standards and is one of the only UTCs in Cheshire and Merseyside to do so.

3.4 There is a GP on site at the UTC 7 days a week. Widnes is one of two UTCs in Cheshire and Merseyside to have this level of cover.

3.5 On each shift there is a blend of medical, nursing, and administrative staff to provide a high-quality urgent treatment service.

3.6 There is a strong paediatric workforce and there is always one trained paediatric nurse on duty at each shift who is clinically

supported by an Advanced Paediatric Clinical Nurse Practitioner.

3.7 Diagnostics are available onsite in the form of near patient testing /point of care tests for deep vein thrombosis (DVT), x-ray, and ultrasound facilities.

3.8 The service is currently expanding the diagnostic capability to increase the ability to manage more patients in the community by undertaking point of care testing for COVID and other infectious diseases. As further opportunities arise to increase the diagnostic capacity these will be implemented.

3.9 Electrocardiograms (ECGs) to assess chest pain can be taken onsite and can be reported by the Advanced Nurse Practitioner or GP onsite and support is available when required from the Emergency Duty Registrar in the Emergency Department (ED) at Whiston and Warrington Hospitals.

3.10 Widnes is the only UTC 'red site' and can see patients who may be COVID positive.

3.11 Appendix 1 shows a comparison of Widnes UTC alongside other UTCs in Cheshire and Merseyside.

### **Bridgewater and the UTC**

3.12 The Trust has delivered the service at Widnes since it was initially first commissioned and has undertaken several periods of service transformation to respond to the needs of the people who use the service.

3.13 The UTC is at the heart of care delivery in Halton, and it is a key service to support the delivery of community services. The Trust has been able to co-locate several other core community services which it delivers into the HCRC such as:

- Halton Frailty Crisis Response Service
- Community nursing
- 0-19s Children's services
- District Nursing Treatment rooms
- Community Dental Services

3.14 The co-location of services promotes joint working between staff teams and enables more patients to be successfully managed in the community without the need to refer to other providers.

3.15 The Trust has developed a strategy for urgent care delivery which describes the mission as providing 'person focussed' care and 'improving the health and wellbeing of every patient we treat' (See Appendix 2).

3.16 The Trust is currently reviewing health inequalities data of the patients who access the service with the aim of understanding what support could be offered to them as well as looking at the data to understand why certain patient groups access EDs and not the UTC.

### **Access**

3.17 The service is fully accessible for walk in appointments and has been throughout the pandemic.

3.18 Appointments can also be booked via NHS111 and GPCConnect.

3.19 GPCConnect enables the patients GP practice to directly book into appointment slots for the UTC. This is currently being piloted with a small number of practices in Widnes and will be rolled out over the coming months across the rest of Widnes and then into Runcorn.

3.20 GPCConnect was put in place to support the delivery of 'on the day' activity from primary care and acts as additional capacity so that primary care can focus their appointment capacity on more long-term monitoring of patients with chronic conditions and direct 'on the day' acute appointments to the UTC.

3.21 Widnes UTC is the only UTC in Cheshire and Merseyside to have GPCConnect in place.

3.22 Patients can also call NHS 111 and they have access to appointment slots.

### **Workforce**

3.23 The service has a highly trained workforce who are supported to develop and have the skills necessary to treat the complexity of patients who present at the UTC.

3.24 The Trust supports staff to attend and complete service-specific continuing professional development programmes for all e.g., Masters' programmes for staff for clinical diagnostics and examination and V300 Independent Prescribing courses.

3.25 The Trust has also at its own cost funded additional roles in the service of a Nurse Clinical Lead and three additional Band 7 Advanced Practitioners.

3.26 The service and Trust have an excellent ethos in relation to research and development which is led by the Trusts Medical Director. Most recently clinical innovation has been embedded into the service through delivering a walking boot which enables patients to mobilise

(reducing their risk of DVT) so they do not have to go to ED for immediate treatment of long bone/distal fractures.

- 3.27 The Trust is in discussions with Widnes Primary Care Network (PCN) and the GP Federation in relation to the provision of GP cover and it is expected that the Widnes PCN GPs will in future provide the GPs and Clinical Leadership of the service via a service level agreement.

### **Performance**

- 3.28 The UTC has consistently over performed versus the indicative levels of activity in Halton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Contract Specification which profiled attends of circa 150 patients a day.

- 3.29 There has been a 52.2% increase on year-on-year activity delivered between 2020/21 and 2021/22 with daily attendance reaching 245 in April 2022.

- 3.30 The service has maintained the delivery of the 4-hour waiting time standard throughout the pandemic and continues to do so.

- 3.31 More detailed performance information can be seen in Appendix 3.

- 3.32 The referral rates to ED are low and where possible patients are managed solely at the UTC. There are occasions where patients who present with conditions which cannot be treated at the UTC or who require more complex investigations and diagnostics and may require onward referral to ED.

- 3.33 The figures for the percentage of patients transferred to Emergency Department can be seen in Appendix 4. As can be seen from the data the percentage of patients transferred to emergency departments is slightly lower than a comparable local UTC and is variable as this is dependent on the presenting medical condition and their level of acuity.

- 3.34 The Widnes UTC will continue to strive to increase the service offer available so that it can further reduce the numbers of patients transferred to Emergency Departments.

### **Partnerships and Collaboration**

- 3.35 The Trust is committed to developing the UTC further with partners in both place and across Cheshire and Merseyside and in particular St Helens and Knowsley Hospital Trust (StHK) who serve most of the Widnes residents from an acute trust perspective.

- 3.36 The service works closely with StHK in urgent care, paediatrics, burns and plastics and orthopaedics and can manage patients via

shared clinical pathways and directly refer patients into clinical specialties.

3.37 Clinicians from the UTC have supported onsite at StHK facilitating discharge and streaming patients from ED to the UTC during periods of significant pressure for StHK.

3.38 Discussions are progressing in relation to developing a virtual ED ward round to divert activity from StHK's ED to the UTC.

3.39 The Trust is part of the Mental Health, Learning Difficulties and Community Provider Collaborative and it is looking to develop best practice and demonstrate the way it has led the transformation of urgent care centres into urgent treatment centres.

3.40 Mersey Care are working with the Trust to support patients presenting at the UTC with an acute presentation of a mental illness and developing a referral process for patients who have less acute presentations.

3.41 The Trust is also considering how we develop relationships with the service and third/voluntary sector and how we offer additional support to patients who access the facility such as health education/support.

3.42 Appendix 4 describes our connections with our urgent care delivery partners.

### **Communication**

3.43 As we slowly learn to live with Covid-19 and following the recent relaxation of guidance around Covid-19 infection prevention and control measures from the NHS, plans are being implemented to promote to the public an update in how the UTC is accessed. The local authority is helping with this.

3.44 The Trust is working with rich quantitative data that looks at key factors such as demographic, post code and UTC presentation, as well as qualitative data from patient feedback and surveys, a fresh communications campaign has been developed, and this will be overtly joint with other place partners, including the Runcorn UTC.

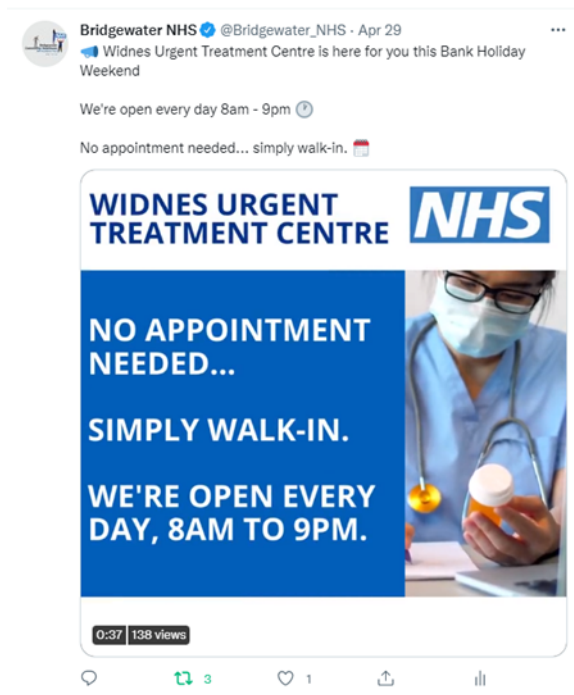
3.45 A digital and non-digital communications plan is currently being developed which will ensure the socioeconomic makeup of the Widnes area is reflected and fairly represented.

3.46 The Trust has begun use of Halton Community Radio (HCR) to promote the Widnes UTC to its' listeners tuning in and to the people they see in face-to-face situations such as events. The Trust will

bring a specific radio show about the UTC to its audience, but also the wider services provided by the Trust and place partners.

**Recent communication examples to promote the UTC:**

- 3.47
- News Release - <https://bridgewater.nhs.uk/latest-news/widnes-urgent-treatment-centre-here-for-you-this-bank-holiday-weekend/>
  - Runcorn and Widnes World - <https://www.runcornandwidnesworld.co.uk/news/20104119.n-need-appointment-widnes-urgent-treatment-centre/>
  - High level (animated) social media campaign on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram for the Easter BH: -



**Conclusion**

3.48 The Widnes UTC is a key service for Widnes and to the Borough of Halton.

3.49 The Trust is committed to driving the quality of service provided and the achievement of the service specific key performance indicators so that the best possible service can be experienced by the citizens that utilise it.

3.50 The Trust recognises the need to work in conjunction with partners to deliver this key service and is committed to progressing this focus and maximising the capacity and capability of the service.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Not applicable

## 5.0 **OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Not applicable

## 6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

### 6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

The Widnes UTC has specialist paediatric practitioners onsite and can meet the needs of children and young people in the Borough. The service also works closely with the safeguarding team to manage any potential safeguarding concerns.

### 6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

The Trust offers a specialised development package for training for staff delivering urgent care and supports the employment of staff who live in the Borough.

### 6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

The service provides lifestyle advice to patients and is also linking in with other third sector providers who may be able to support us to deliver key public health messages.

### 6.4 **A Safer Halton**

Not applicable

### 6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

Not applicable

## 7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 The UTC continues to grow and develop and see increasing numbers of patients. This is at a time where partner healthcare providers are also experiencing unprecedented levels of demand and there is the risk that the capacity from a staffing and an estates perspective will permit the number of patients that can be seen on site.

7.2 There is an opportunity if there was more space accessible at the HCRC then the size of the service could be increased, and more patients could be seen at the facility. This however would require additional income both for staff and for additional estates costs.

## 8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 As patients do not have to be registered with a GP to access the

UTC this supports equality of access to urgent care services.

9.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF  
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

Not applicable



**Appendix 1** – Comparison with other UTC providers

**Appendix 2** – Trust Strategy for the delivery of Urgent Care

**Appendix 3** – Performance Data

**Appendix 4** – Emergency Department Transfer

**Appendix 5** - Connections with our urgent care delivery partners