

A case for change Transforming Urgent and Emergency Care in Bedfordshire

Who are we?

Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG) is the NHS organisation that works locally to plan and buy all NHS-funded healthcare for the 450,000 people who live in Bedfordshire. This includes everything from primary care to hospital services, community health services and mental health services.

BCCG is an organisation run by clinicians including local GPs, nurses and hospital doctors. Bedfordshire's 50 GP practices are members of the CCG and together, we agree how to spend the £570m budget that we're allocated, on healthcare services for the communities we serve in Bedfordshire.

What is this document about?

Following a new policy from NHS England, we are reviewing the way that urgent care services are delivered in Bedfordshire. Urgent care is when you need medical assistance in a hurry and cannot wait for a routine appointment, but it is not an emergency.

This document is designed to inform residents about proposed changes to urgent and emergency care in Bedfordshire and encourage discussion. This will form part of a period of consultation, which will inform decisions on the future of urgent and emergency care in Bedfordshire.

Currently in Bedfordshire there are several different options for patients if they need an urgent appointment.

Existing model of care



We are developing a new model of care, in line with national guidance, which aims to remove confusion and streamline the experience for patients when they are accessing urgent care.

What we are proposing to do?

National guidance shows that patients access the best care when they can be seen by a clinician who has access to simple tests. As a result, we have been mandated by NHS England to open an Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC) in Bedfordshire.

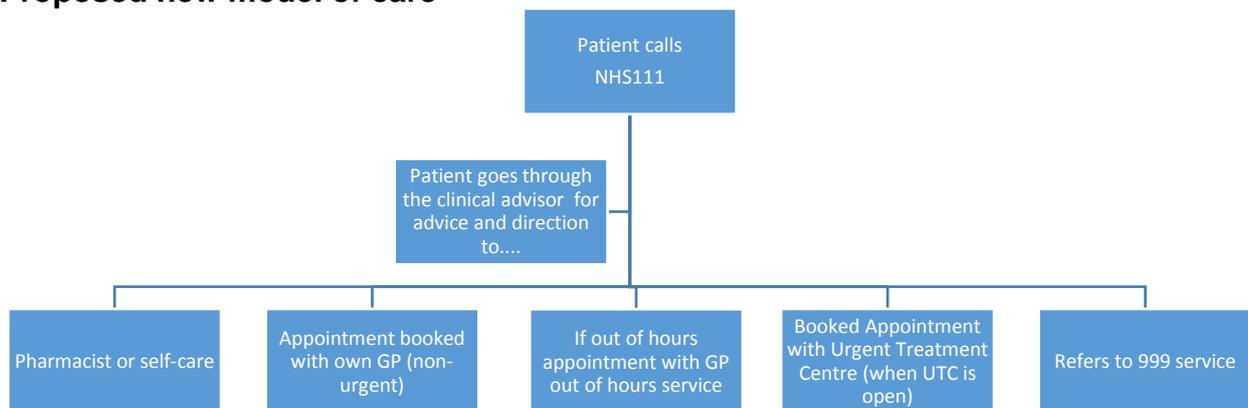
As part of the process, our commissioners worked to identify a potential location for an UTC in Bedfordshire, which had the potential to deliver against the national specification, outlined by NHS England.

After some searching, it was agreed that the only suitable location was to co-locate the UTC on the Bedford Hospital South Wing site, alongside A&E. This will provide access to the diagnostics required and allow the urgent and emergency system to work closely together.

Delivered by clinicians from Bedford Hospital, the UTC will open on the South Wing site of Bedford Hospital on 1 October 2018.

In order to meet the request for the nationally mandated Urgent Treatment Centre in Bedfordshire, we propose to move the walk-in service at Putnoe Medical Centre to the new Urgent Treatment Centre, where residents will be able to access both bookable and walk-in appointments.

Proposed new model of care



Why are we doing this?

On 31 March 2017, NHS England published the “Next Steps on the NHS Five Year Forward View (FYFV)”, which sets out how the changes will be implemented over the next two years.

Urgent and Emergency Care (UEC) is one of the main national service improvement priorities, focussing on improving national A&E performance while making access to services clearer for patients.

It asks Clinical Commissioning Groups to:

- Roll-out standardised new Urgent Treatment Centres, which will open 12 hours a day, seven days a week and integrate with local urgent care services.
- Provide a centre which offers patients who do not need hospital accident and emergency care, treatment by clinicians with access to diagnostic facilities that will usually include an X-ray machine.

Why is change needed in Bedfordshire?

In Bedfordshire, we currently have one Walk-in Centre based in Putnoe, in the town of Bedford. This is north of the river and away from the main hospital site. It shares the same building as Putnoe GP Practice, but is a separate service with a separate contract.

This service is available to all those living in and visiting Bedfordshire, but the majority of people who attend the Walk-in Centre live in Bedford Borough. Some people who live in Central Bedfordshire may access urgent care services outside of the Bedfordshire border.

For some time, we have recognised that the walk-in service at Putnoe has not eased pressure on A&E at Bedford Hospital, which was its original purpose. Figures show that a third of patients attending the Walk-in Centre are Putnoe residents, who access the service as an extension to GP appointments.

Evidence shows that a significant number of patients who visited the surgery did not need a walk-in appointment, and would have received more appropriate care in a different healthcare setting such as a pharmacist, or by self-caring at home.

Many Walk-in Centres around the country have either closed or have been re-established as an Urgent Treatment Centre, providing a more seamless service for patients.

Our ambition is to create a system that is easier to navigate and ensures that patients access the correct level of care, at the right place and the right time, depending on their health need.

How will the Urgent Treatment Centre work?

The national guidance for Urgent Treatment Centres sets out that patients will:

- Be able to access UTCs that are open at least 12 hours a day, staffed by GPs, nurses and other clinicians with access to simple diagnostics, e.g. urinalysis, ECG and in some cases X-ray.
- Have a consistent route to access urgent appointments offered within 4 hours and booked through NHS111, ambulance services and general practice.
- Know that the UTC is part of a locally integrated urgent and emergency care service that works in conjunction with the ambulance service, NHS111, local GPs, hospital A&E and other local providers.

What are the benefits of a UTC?

We want patients in Bedfordshire to access the best possible care. The benefits of an Urgent Treatment Centre include:

- **Increased access.** The new Urgent Treatment Centre will be open 12 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year. The current walk-in service runs from 08:00 – 18:00hrs Monday – Fridays and 08:00 – 17:00hrs at weekends.
- **Faster diagnosis.** The UTC will have access to simple diagnostics such as urinalysis, ECG, blood tests and x-rays, which removes the need for referrals. This is currently not available at the walk-in centre.
- **Flexible appointments.** Currently, patients can access walk-in services, but the UTC will allow patients to access either walk-in or book an appointment within four hours.
- **Same day appointments.** Patients with minor illness and injury will be able to visit the UTC instead of visiting A&E. This means that patients can be streamed on site and it will relieve pressure on A&E, reducing waiting times for patients – especially at peak times.
- **Faster referrals.** If a patient attends the UTC and their condition worsens, the proximity of the UTC means that they can be referred into the hospital with a clear clinical handover in a timeframe appropriate to their clinical need.
- **Clinical excellence.** The UTC will be staffed with GPs, an A&E consultant, nurses and other clinicians to ensure quality of care.

How does this compare?

There are many benefits to updating our current model of care and moving the walk-in service to the Urgent Treatment Centre.

The table below provides an outline of the services that will be provided, compared to the services available under our current model of care.

UTC	Walk-in Centre
Open 12 hours a day, 7 days a week	from 08:00 – 18:00 Monday – Friday and 08:00 – 17:00 at weekends
Access to simple diagnostics, e.g. urinalysis, ECG, bloods, x-rays	No access to diagnostics
Bookable urgent same day appointments via NHS111.	Walk-in service, sit and wait only
Patients self-presenting at A&E can be streamed to UTC if clinically appropriate	Not possible with walk-in centre location
Clinical referral to A&E with simple transfer of care	Patient has to attend A&E (either by ambulance or own transport depending on condition) with a letter of referral from clinician
Joint clinical leadership with GPs and A&E consultant, staffed by GPs, nurses and other clinicians, ensuring quality of	GP/Nurse led

care within the urgent and emergency system	
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What do clinicians think?

GP's and Hospital Consultants have been involved in the development of the UTC, and have clinically assessed the best way for patients to access services and the right care for their needs.

Teams of clinicians have developed patient scenarios to test the way the UTC will integrate into the current urgent and emergency care system, to ensure patient experience is enhanced and patient safety ensured.

Clinicians believe that the UTC will offer a more equitable and improved service for the whole population of Bedford. In addition, the clinical view is that Bedford Hospital has a range of specialties and therefore, referral to the specialties will be quicker and easier, thus improving patient safety.

The advantage for the hospital, and in particular the Emergency Department, will be that minor injuries / illnesses will be streamed to the UTC, reducing workload in A&E and allowing more time for emergencies.

Supporting the wider system

The introduction of an Urgent Treatment Centre has been designed alongside plans to provide additional capacity to support primary care.

GP Extended Access is one of the additional plans that will be put into place, to boost the number of appointments that are available each week, and support people in being able to see a clinician closer to home at a time when they need it most.

The new service will begin in September 2018, and offer pre-bookable appointments outside of normal working hours, either in the evening or at weekends.

By working together practices in Bedfordshire aim to provide an additional 1,000 routine primary care appointments a week.

How much will this cost?

In 2018/19, £1.4m will be invested in the new nationally mandated Urgent Treatment Centre and £1.7m will be invested for the GP Extended Access service.

While we are confident that these services will provide the right care for our residents, we recognise that a change in location of walk-in services could affect our communities to the north of the river in Bedford Borough, who have benefitted from the walk-in service at Putnoe Medical Centre since 2009.

How will we involve the public?

Having listened to the concerns of local people and following a recommendation from Bedford Borough Council's Adult Services Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, we agreed to undertake a public consultation with residents.

We extended the contract for Putnoe Walk-in Centre to the end of September 2018 so that we could provide like-for-like services while we engaged with residents on the future of urgent care in Bedfordshire. More recently we agreed an additional extension with Putnoe Medical Centre to continue offering walk-in services from 1 October 2018 until 24 May 2019*subject to contract variation. The hours will be Monday to Friday 8:00am until 2:00pm and Saturday and Sunday 8:00am to 5:00pm. However, as this is not a like for like solution we are undertaking an extensive short consultation before the changes occur, to speak to those patients who will be most affected by the change and to explore how we might support them.

We would like to hear your views

We would like to hear from residents about their views on the plans for the urgent care system in Bedfordshire.

Proposal:

In order to meet the nationally mandated requirement of an Urgent Treatment Centre in Bedfordshire, we propose to close the Walk-in Centre at Putnoe Medical Centre and move walk-in services to the new Urgent Treatment Centre on the South Wing site at Bedford Hospital.

The new Urgent Treatment Centre will open on 1 October 2018. In order to offer patients a continuity of service while the UTC embeds into the Bedfordshire urgent care system Putnoe Medical Centre will continue to operate a walk-in service with reduced hours from 1 October 2018 to 24 May 2019*subject to contract variation. After May 2019, the walk-in service at Putnoe Medical Centre will formally close.

What do you think about our plans?

- We would like to hear from patients about how they access and use the current walk-in service.
- We recognise that the cost of parking and travel to Bedford Hospital South Wing is a concern for some residents. Is there anything we could consider to address these concerns?
- With the opening of the Urgent Treatment Centre how can we support patients to understand the services available and how best to access them?

Please complete the attached questionnaire to share your views.

Timescale

We will publically consult on our proposal from 10 July through until 19 August 2018, to ensure that all residents in Bedfordshire have the opportunity to share their views.

An independent review of the results will take place once the consultation has concluded ready for feedback in September 2018.