

**Newark Urgent Treatment Centre Opening Hours**  
**Briefing for Nottinghamshire Health Scrutiny Committee**  
**September 2023**

## 1 Introduction

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) has periodically briefed the Nottinghamshire Health Scrutiny Committee on the services provided at Newark Hospital, particularly the Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC). At the meeting which took place on 20 June 2023, the Committee reiterated the importance of arriving at a sustainable solution at the earliest opportunity. The purpose of this briefing is therefore twofold:

1. To enable a discussion with the Nottinghamshire Health Scrutiny Committee on:
  - The opening hours of Newark UTC.
  - The provision of out of hours urgent care services.
2. To provide an update to the Nottinghamshire Health Scrutiny Committee on the engagement activity that has commenced with citizens and stakeholders on the topics described above.

## 2 Context

Newark Hospital is an important and vital part of the health and care landscape in the Newark area. We know that local residents really value being able to get access to the care they need close to where they live.

The ICB is committed to providing high quality sustainable services to the Newark population and supporting Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust's (SFH) vision that *Newark Hospital is a valued and vibrant community asset for Newark.*

Over recent years, Newark Hospital has continued to expand the range of services and procedures available to residents. Under the "Ask for Newark" initiative, many more people are already able to access diagnostics, operations, treatments and planned care at Newark Hospital.

Services will continue to be extended as a result of a recent £5.6 million investment. This investment will provide an extra 2,600 operations and procedures locally each year with the creation of a new theatre and recovery area, as well as the development of two minor operations suites.

The investment and expansion of Newark Hospital has already included:

- Introduction of a Breast Cancer Pathway One Stop Service.
- Additional car parking with works underway for 80 extra parking spaces for patients, visitors and staff.
- Implementation of an additional operating theatre and upgrades to existing minor operations facilities.
- Introduction of gynaecology procedures.

- A new state-of-the-art soundproof hearing booth to help conduct more accurate hearing tests including for those who are referred to the hospital for support with their hearing aids.
- A refurbished endoscopy unit and a CT scanning unit to identify illnesses such as cancer in the bowel, bladder, stomach, oesophagus, brain and bones.
- Site upgrades to improve experience for patients and staff including changing rooms, further storage to support theatres and a rolling painting and decorating schedule.
- Development of a wider Health and Wellbeing offer working within the Mid Nottinghamshire area. This involves working with partners within the education sector, the District Council, the YMCA and volunteers to build the hospital site as a valuable community asset.

Over the next five years, the development of Newark Hospital will continue with a wider range of procedures and operations being available. This will include using technology which will improve the availability of blood tests on site, and working with partners to deliver a wide range of health and wellbeing offers for the local community. The hospital's range of therapeutic support and interventions will also be extended in response to the National Discharge Policy and a 'Home First' approach.

### 3 Urgent care provision in Newark

Urgent care involves any non-life-threatening illness or injury needing urgent attention. These are usually dealt with by phone or online consultation to NHS 111, pharmacy advice, out-of-hours or 'same day' GP appointments, or care at an Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC).

It is important to reiterate that *urgent care* is distinct and different to *emergency care*.

Emergency care involves life-threatening illnesses or accidents which require immediate treatment from the ambulance service (via 999) and must be co-located with appropriate life-sustaining support infrastructure e.g. high dependency and critical care and specialist diagnostics. In Nottinghamshire our Emergency Care (Accident & Emergency or A & E) Departments are based at Kings Mill Hospital and Queen's Medical Centre.

Over the last few years, a lot has been done to improve services and provide more care closer to home for the local population in and around Newark. This work is in line with our ambition for people to live longer, healthier lives. These improvements can be seen across all parts of the urgent care system from pharmacy, GP practices and NHS 111.

Many pharmacies across Nottinghamshire are now offering clinical advice and treatment directly from community pharmacists instead of their GP. Already, seven pharmacies in and around Newark have signed up to offer this extended service<sup>1</sup>, which covers a variety of minor illnesses including urinary tract infections (UTIs or water infections) and some skin infections.

Pharmacists can supply medicines to treat the conditions, or recommend the purchase of over the counter medicines. If people are exempt from paying for prescriptions, they won't have to pay for medicines that would normally be prescribed by the GP.

Additional services will also be available from pharmacies in the coming months and years as part of a wider national scheme.

The number of GP appointments has increased and is continuing to do so in Newark. The total monthly appointments in general practice for Newark and Sherwood have increased by 3.8% since 2019. On the day appointments have increased by 7%, which is 1,620 per month, and pre-booked appointments by 2%. We are now working with practices to improve appointment systems and phone lines as necessary. Newark residents also have access to out-of-hours GP care where needed.

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<sup>1</sup> [NHS England — Midlands » Pharmacies offering Extended Care Services](#)

We have also seen a considerable increase in the use of NHS 111, both online and over the phone, enabling people to access urgent care appointments and advice. NHS 111 has expanded in recent years and can provide clinical advice in some circumstances. The NHS 111 service may arrange a call back from a nurse or doctor, refer you to other urgent care services with an appointment slot or give advice about which local services you need.

Using NHS 111 has become a common way for local people to access urgent care advice and treatment. In Newark, monthly calls have risen by more than 52% on average from 2019 levels. This increase is in line with the wider Nottingham and Nottinghamshire area, where call numbers have also risen by just over 50%. Now, an average of 2,219 calls are made to NHS 111 each month from the Newark area.

#### **4 Newark UTC**

The Newark UTC is and will continue to be a key element of urgent and emergency care available to local people – alongside NHS 111, community pharmacies, out of hours and ‘same day’ GP appointments, 999 and A&E. It delivers everything that the national NHS specification for UTCs requires.

The Urgent Treatment Centre within Newark Hospital is currently open between 9.00am-10.00pm. These opening hours have been in place on a temporary basis since March 2020, when the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic made issues with safely and sustainably staffing the Centre worse than they had previously been. We recognise that continued temporary arrangements do not provide the certainty that Newark residents expect and we are now considering what the future permanent arrangements should be.

Even before the pandemic, it was very difficult to recruit staff to work overnight at the Centre and retain these staff on a sustainable basis. There were nights when the service had to be closed at very short notice due to a lack of staff. The pandemic intensified these issues but the underlying challenges remain. We believe that recruiting the staff needed to safely and sustainably run the UTC overnight would continue to be very difficult and would not make the best use of our highly skilled practitioners.

Based on our experience of the current 13 hour opening times since March 2020, along with the wide range of alternatives for urgent care that are now available and the way that local people are now accessing these services, we believe that continuing to offer at least 13 hour opening times would provide a safe, sustainable and effective service, whilst making the best use of our staffing and financial resources that have been allocated to the NHS locally.

Evidence suggests that no-one has come to any harm due to the UTC being closed overnight for the past three and a half years. Our expert doctors and nurses believe that the current hours are safe and sustainable. We will be taking further independent clinical advice of the best model for Urgent Care provision to the population of Newark from the East Midlands Clinical Senate, and this will further inform our thinking.

The national specification from NHS England for Urgent Treatment Centres is for them to be open for at least 12 hours a day, which the Newark UTC currently exceeds.

For the above reasons, we do not propose to re-open the UTC overnight.

However, before making a decision on permanent arrangements, we want to hear from local residents about their experience of using the UTC – in particular whether the current opening hours are suitable or if there could be a different way to spread the opening hours over the day.

## **5 Engagement plan**

This section describes our approach to engagement, and how we will be listening to our citizens and stakeholders to inform the future opening hours of Newark UTC.

### **5.1 Overview**

A period of engagement commenced on 4 September and will end on 17 October. The overarching aim of the engagement is to gather the perspectives of both citizens and stakeholders in relation to urgent care services. This can be broken down into the following objectives:

- To understand whether the current opening hours of Newark UTC are suitable, or if there could be a different way to spread the opening hours over the day.
- To check that the other ways to access urgent care overnight are working as we expect them to so that we can best serve the local population's need.

### **5.2 Our approach**

To ensure meaningful engagement with patients and the public, we are:

- Tailoring our methods and approaches to specific audiences as required and make all public information accessible (Appendix 1), in line with the Accessible Information Standard.
- Providing accessible documentation suitable for the needs of our audiences.
- Offering accessible formats, including translated versions relevant to the audiences we wanted to engage with.
- Using the best ways of reaching the largest amount of people and provide opportunities for underserved groups to participate.
- Undertaking equality monitoring of participants to review the representativeness of participants and adapt activity as required.
- Using different virtual/digital methods or direct and 1-1 telephone activity to reach certain communities where we become aware of any under representation.
- Arranging our engagement activities so that they cover the area of Newark and surrounding areas.
- Considering the best ways to reach underserved communities and smaller communities, identified through extensive stakeholder and audience mapping.
- Attending relevant public events and groups where and when necessary.
- Ensuring that any public meetings that are held have meeting notes recorded including a record of comments and questions.
- Providing language interpreters (including BSL) at public meetings and common language translations where necessary and on request.
- Including equality monitoring data on surveys and feedback forms.
- Informing our partners of our activity and sharing our plans.

### **5.3 Methods**

A range of different methods are being used to engage with citizens and stakeholders to understand their views:

#### **Public events**

Two virtual and three face to face public engagement events are scheduled for different times and days, including at least one weekend session. These will be run as information sessions with the

opportunity for questions. These events will be led by Nottingham and Nottinghamshire ICB, SFH and clinicians.

### **Targeted engagement**

Groups and communities who the ICB are targeting have been identified through an extensive stakeholder mapping database. The ICB Engagement team have sent an invitation to these stakeholders, offering a member of the Engagement team to attend relevant community/groups to provide presentations and obtain feedback from citizens.

### **Elected member briefings**

ICB representatives have met with elected members (MP for Newark, Chair and Vice-Chair of Nottinghamshire Health Scrutiny Committee and Nottinghamshire County Councillors and Newark and Sherwood District Councillors, as well as offering a briefing to elected members from neighbouring areas of Lincolnshire) to provide information on the programme, methods of engagement and to request support in dissemination of constituents. This is in addition to our formal process of involvement and consultation with Health Scrutiny Committee.

### **Survey**

A survey (see Appendix 2) has been cascaded to gather feedback from stakeholders, citizens and patients.

## **5.4 Data analysis and reporting**

All written notes taken during the public events, meetings and briefings, along with qualitative responses from the survey will be thematically analysed. Quantitative data will be analysed to produce descriptive statistic. The report produced will be based on these analyses, including a summary of the key findings and a set of conclusions.

## **6 Next steps**

There is concurrent work underway to review a range of evidence, including discussions with clinicians locally as well as the gathering of independent clinical input and working with NHS England. We will also continue our discussions with other ICBs to ensure that our planning of services is consistent across geographical boundaries. The insights gathered from this engagement will be considered alongside other sources of evidence to inform the best permanent opening hours for the UTC at Newark Hospital.

## **7 Recommendations to the Nottinghamshire Health Scrutiny Committee**

It is recommended that the Nottinghamshire Health Scrutiny Committee:

1. Note the contents of this briefing.
2. Contribute to a discussion on:
  - The opening hours of Newark UTC.
  - The provision of out of hours urgent care services.
3. Distribute details of this engagement to their constituents.

## **8 Appendices**

Appendix 1: Public Briefing Document

Appendix 2: Newark Hospital Urgent Treatment Centre Opening Times Survey