

Newark Urgent Treatment Centre Opening Hours
Briefing for Nottinghamshire Health Scrutiny Committee
December 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 opening hours of 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 for the future opening hours of the UTC at the earliest opportunity.

The purpose of this briefing is therefore to provide the Nottinghamshire Health Scrutiny Committee with an update on:

- a. The findings of the listening exercise with citizens and stakeholders, which took place in September and October 2023.
- b. The report from an independent clinical review by the East Midlands Clinical Senate on 18 October 2023.
- c. Assurance from NHS England as part of the formal Assurance Framework.
- d. The Options Appraisal process held 29 and 30 November.

The report also confirms the arrangements for the ICB making a formal decision on the next steps.

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 highly 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, Queen's Medical Centre and Bassetlaw Hospital.

Over the last few years, a considerable amount of work has been undertaken 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 are evident across the wider urgent care network comprising pharmacy, GP practice and NHS 111 services.

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, which covers a variety of minor illnesses including urinary tract infections (UTIs or water infections) and some skin infections. It is anticipated that extended pharmacy services such as these will continue to grow locally in line with national policy.

Pharmacists can supply medicines to treat some of the most common conditions or recommend the purchase of over the counter medicines. Increasingly, pharmacists will also

be able to prescribe medications. If people are exempt from paying for prescriptions, they won't have to pay for medicines that would normally be prescribed by the GP.

As well as offering local people more support from local pharmacy services since 2019, the number of GP appointments has also increased across Newark (and is continuing to do so). 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 further improve appointment systems and access via phone. Newark residents also continue to have access to out-of-hours GP care where needed.

There has also been a considerable increase in the public's use of NHS 111 over recent years. Access to 111 can be online and over the phone, enabling people to access urgent non-clinical triage and signposting, as well as clinical advice, and, where appropriate, appointment booking into local health care services.

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 operating between 9.00am-10.00pm. These operating 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.

In October 2023 NHS England published a new service specification for UTC provision¹, which highlights key expectations for modern UTCs. As a priority, UTCs are expected to:

¹ [NHS England » Urgent treatment centres – principles and standards](#)

open 7 days a week, 12 hours a day as a minimum, typically increasing to 24 hours a day when co-located

see both booked and walk-in patients

see both minor injuries and minor ailments

see patients of all ages, including children under 2

have a named senior clinical leader supported by an appropriate multi-disciplinary workforce

have a basic consistent investigative and diagnostic offering on site (with clear protocols if not on site)

accept appropriate ambulance conveyance

have access to patient records and the ability to send a post event message (PEM)

report as a Type 3 daily on Emergency Care Data Set (ECDS)

have an up-to-date directory of services (DoS) profile

clearly communicate to the public what the service is for via consistent urgent treatment centre nomenclature, to ensure the service provision is understandable and accessible to all.

Maintaining adherence to the national specification will be an expectation of any future sustainable model for the UTC. We have reviewed the current service against the most recent principles and standards and will consider them further in any future development of our response to meeting the needs of local people for urgent care across the county.

5 Feedback from the listening exercise

The ICB has undertaken an extensive listening exercise to help shape thinking on the future UTC opening hours. The overarching aim of the listening exercise was to gather the perspectives of both citizens and stakeholders in relation to urgent care services currently provided and accessed in Newark and surrounding areas. Specifically, we wanted to understand whether the current opening hours of the Newark UTC were appropriate to meet local need, or if there could be a different way to spread the opening hours over the day. We also wanted to check that the other ways to access urgent care overnight are working as we expect them to.

Our listening exercise began on 4th September 2023 and concluded on 17th October 2023 (44 days). A range of different methods were used to listen to citizens and stakeholders, to understand their views. This included:

- a. Briefings with elected members
- b. Community group visits
- c. Six public events (four face to face and two virtual)

- d. Survey (online/paper)
- e. Social media

In total, 1,932 individuals participated.

Key findings of the listening exercise were:

- a. 70.5% of survey respondents disagreed that the current opening hours of the service are suitable. A similar view was heard in public meetings and when visiting community groups.
- b. The majority of people we heard from through our various methods told us that they would like Newark UTC to be open 24 hours and/or an Accident and Emergency Department.
- c. If the UTC was to remain open 13 hours a day, there was no consensus as to whether the opening hours should stay as they are, open earlier in the morning and close later in the evening, or open later in the morning and close later in the evening.
- d. Some people suggested extending the opening hours beyond the current 13 hours.

The full report is available in Appendix 1.

6 Feedback from the East Midlands Clinical Senate

An independent review by the East Midlands Clinical Senate has also been undertaken. Clinical Senates are a source of independent and objective clinical advice and guidance to local health and care systems, to assist them to make the best decisions about healthcare for the populations they represent. The review took place on 18 October 2023. The review was based on an evidence pack of relevant data along with a panel discussion with representatives from both the ICB and SFH. The preliminary findings of the listening exercise were also shared as part of the panel discussion. Panel members supplemented their evidence gathering on the day with a site visit to the UTC and met with UTC staff.

The panel members generated a number of recommendations designed to assist with any further engagement with stakeholders and the development of a sustainable UTC model.

The table below summarises the recommendations from this review:

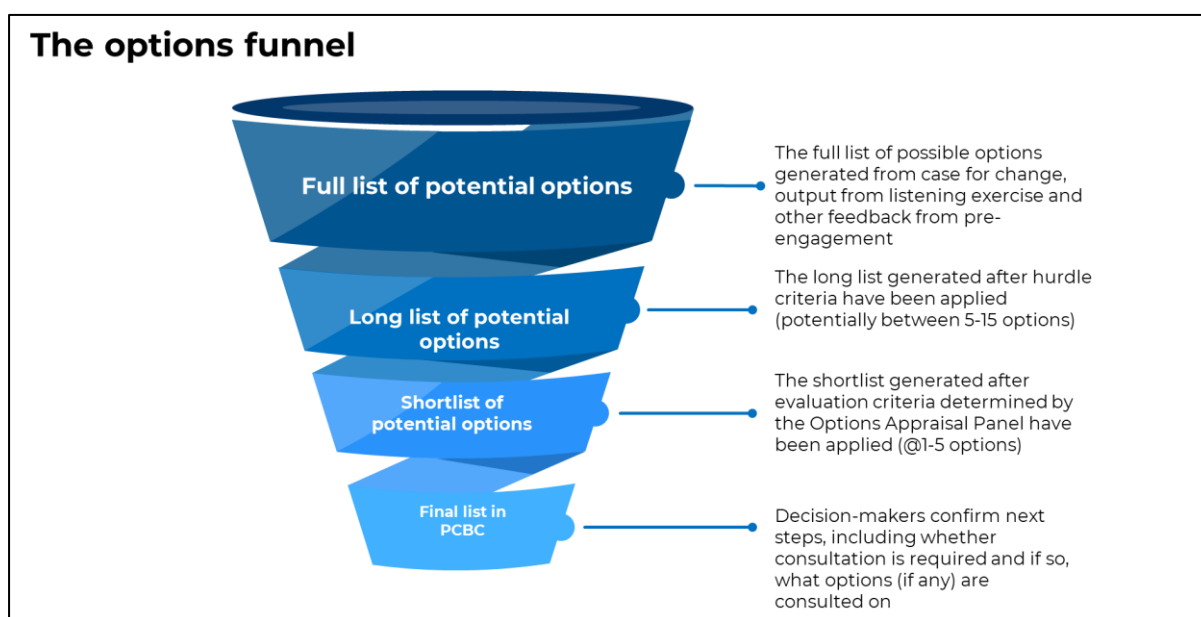
Clinical Senate Response	Action taken
The panel recommends that the Urgent Care Centre at Newark Hospital should not operate 24 hours per day, and that NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire ICB and Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust should decide what times they must be available based on activity levels and available staffing to ensure good use of resources. This should include consideration of an appropriate amount of time for staff at the end of their shift after the UTC has closed. It is suggested that half an hour is not sufficient due to the complexity of patients being managed and 90 minutes is more appropriate.	Recommendation considered as part of the Options Appraisal process.
The panel recommends a review of the use of Standard Operating Procedures at Newark Urgent Treatment Centre to ensure robust and consistent application to reduce any variance that may be occurring.	SFH to complete a review by March 2024.
The panel recommends that the NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire ICB and Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust utilise a collaborative approach with partner organisations, including General Practice, local pharmacy and third sector organisations to enhance the urgent care model within the area and promote Newark Urgent Treatment Centre as a central	Recommendation to inform the development of the system clinical model during 2024.

hub to support this. It is suggested that negotiation with General Practice specifically around the creative use of Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme (ARRS) roles could both support and expand the UTC capacity and skills set whilst alleviating pressures on primary care appointments.	
The panel recommends further engagement and communication work with the local population to both understand their views regarding the wider services they need and also to provide information on the services available to them across the local health system. The local public and patient leaders should ideally be engaged in a co-production exercise for urgent care services for Newark.	Recommendation to inform the development of the system clinical model during 2024.

The full report is available in Appendix 2.

7 Options Appraisal

In line with NHS England guidance², an Options Appraisal process was undertaken on 29 and 30 November. As part of the Options Appraisal, a structured approach to identifying and filtering a broad range of options was completed. The Options Appraisal process initially assesses a comprehensive range of possible configurations for delivering the agreed model of care against a set of evaluation criteria before ultimately identifying a preferred option or options. An illustration of this 'funnel' approach is given below.



These independently facilitated workshops ensure process rigor and avoidance of bias. The format of each workshop was shaped by the guiding principles from the HM Treasury Green Book³. Further information on the Options Appraisal process is provided in Appendix 3.

The approach has been developed meeting HM Treasury Green Book requirements and independent legal advice has been sought on the local process. The process was also discussed with the Nottinghamshire Health Scrutiny Committee Chair and Vice-Chair prior to being finalised.

² NHS England. 2018. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/planning-assuring-delivering-service-change-v6-1.pdf>

³ The Green Book (2022) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

The outcomes of the listening exercise, Clinical Senate review, and Options Appraisal process will be considered in due course through the ICB's established decision-making process.

8 Feedback from NHS England

NHS England oversees how Integrated Care Boards comply with their statutory duties and other responsibilities under the NHS Oversight Framework. It has a role to both support and assure the development of proposals by commissioners for service change. Consequently, NHS England operates a two-stage assurance process prior to any NHS public consultation:

- a. a strategic sense check.
- b. an assurance checkpoint.

Assurance is applied proportionately to the scale of the change being proposed, with the level of assurance tailored to the service change.

An initial strategic sense check for consideration of the sustainable opening time for the Newark UTC was undertaken on 21 June 2023. An assurance checkpoint meeting will be scheduled dependent upon the development of a case for change along with relevant evidence including the outcome of the listening exercise, Clinical Senate Review and Options Appraisal process.

NHS England supports commissioners and local partners to produce evidence-based proposals for service change, and to undertake assurance to ensure they can progress, with due consideration for the governments four tests of service change and its test for any proposed bed closures.⁴

TEST #1: The proposed change can demonstrate strong public and patient engagement.

TEST #2: The proposed change is consistent with current and prospective need for patient choice

TEST #3: The proposed change is underpinned by a clear, clinical evidence base.

TEST #4: The proposed change to service is owned and led by the commissioners.

TEST #5: Proposals including significantly reducing hospital bed numbers will have to meet one of the three conditions

Prior to any possible public consultation, NHS England also considers the proposal in terms of both capital and revenue implications and financial sustainability. This ensures any option submitted for public consultation is:

- a. sustainable in service and revenue and capital affordability terms.

⁴ NHS England, 2018. 'Planning, assuring and delivering services change for patients'. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/planning-assuring-delivering-service-change-v6-1.pdf>

- b. Proportionate in terms of scheme size.
- c. capable of meeting applicable value for money and return on investment criteria.

The NHS England Stage 2 assurance discussion is scheduled to take place during December.

9 Next steps and recommendations to the Nottinghamshire Health Scrutiny Committee

It is currently anticipated that the ICB will meet in the New Year to consider all these findings and determine next steps.

Nottinghamshire Health Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- Note and consider the outcomes of the Clinical Senate and Listening Exercise including the recommendations made.
- Note the Options Appraisal process undertaken on 29 and 30 November.
- Note the next steps and discuss how the Committee would like to receive further updates.

10 Appendices

Appendix 1: Listening exercise report

Appendix 2: Report from the East Midlands Clinical Senate

Appendix 3: Options Appraisal Process