

## Newark Hospital's Urgent Treatment Centre Opening Hours

### Briefing for Nottinghamshire Health Scrutiny Committee

February 2025

#### 1 Introduction

Starting in March 2020, the Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC) within Newark Hospital had been operating between 9am to 10pm (last patient admitted at 9.30pm). These hours had been in place on a temporary basis when the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic made issues with safety and sustainably staffing the UTC worse than they had previously been.

NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (SFH) oversaw a comprehensive programme of work throughout 2023 and early 2024 to develop a sustainable solution for the opening hours of the UTC at Newark Hospital. Regular updates were provided to the Committee throughout that process, most recently in April 2024.

At the conclusion of this programme of work, on 14 March 2024, the ICB Board made a decision to extend the opening hours at Newark Hospital's UTC to become 8am – 10.30pm (last patient admitted 9.30pm) seven days a week. This means that the UTC will be open for 14.5 hours, exceeding the 12-hour minimum national standard for UTCs set by NHS England and the previous temporary arrangements.

The work to support this decision included an extensive listening exercise over six weeks which heard from 1,932 people. This input was secured across a variety of routes, including

- Briefings with elected members
- Community group visits
- Six public events (four face to face and two virtual)
- Survey (online/paper)
- Social media

The purpose of this paper is to report back on the implementation of those extended hours and the communications plan to support them.

#### 2 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 an emergency department (A&E). This 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. These services offer comprehensive access to hospital based emergency care across our ICB footprint.

Newark UTC is and will continue to be a key element of urgent care available to Newark residents – 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<sup>1</sup> requires.

### **3 Implementation of New Opening Hours of Newark UTC**

On Monday 11 November 2024 the new, extended opening hours at Newark Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC) commenced with the opening times of 8am – 10.30pm (last patient admitted at 9.30pm) seven days a week.

The extended opening hours were originally intended to go live in the summer, but this was delayed until November to allow for proper consultation to take place with Trust colleagues involved in the running of the UTC. SFH consulted with staff through group and one to one meetings to identify and address any impact the working/shift times may cause them and look at how this can be supported taking into account service need. Staff were actively engaged as part of the conversations about the proposed new hours and their implementation. They have welcomed the clarity and certainty that the decision on the Centre’s permanent opening hours has brought. By taking on their views, and fully exploring their suggestions allowed the new opening hours to have the best possible chance of being implemented successfully.

The extended hours were introduced in time to help meet the expected increase in demand over the winter months of 2024/5.

### **4 Communication About New Opening Hours**

A range of communications activity has been carried out to inform the public and other stakeholders about the change in UTC opening hours. In line with previous discussions with the Committee, this has included a mix of online (digital advertising) and offline (door-drop flyers and out-of-home advertising in supermarkets):

- Media release which received coverage in Newark Advertiser, East Midlands Today, Radio Nottingham and West Bridgford Wire.
- Column in Newark Advertiser about alternative services on 12 August 2024.
- Two half page adverts in Newark Advertiser on 14 and 21 November 2024.
- Digital alert advert via Newark Advertiser for two weeks from 14 – 27 November 2024 which was shown 40,000 times and generated 441 clicks for more information.
- Digital billboard at Asda in Newark for two weeks 21 November – 4 December 2024.
- A5 double-sided leaflet distributed to over 44,000 addresses with new opening hours and information about a range of NHS services from 25 November 2024 onwards.
- Social media campaign 11 – 23 November 2024.
- Targeted Facebook advert 12 – 19 November 2024 which reached almost 4000 people and generated 139 engagements and 78 clicks for more information.
- News articles on ICB and SFH websites
- Updated service information on ICB and SFH websites.

This is alongside other activity to promote the routine availability of NHS services over the winter period, which includes:

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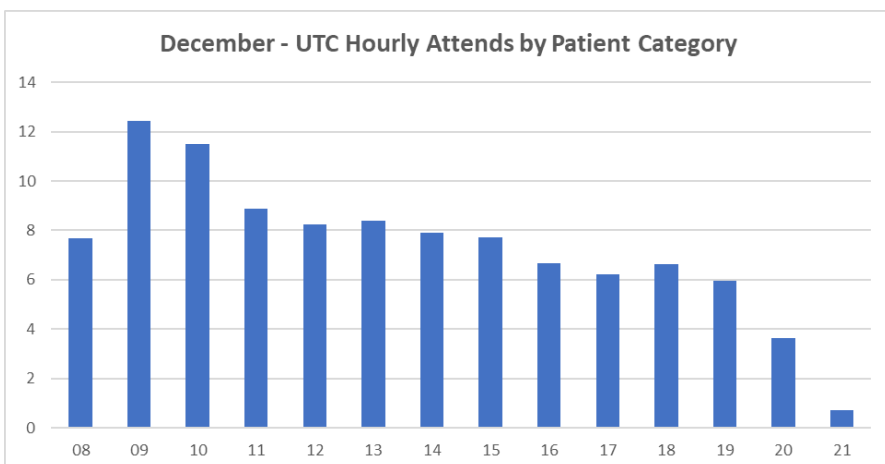
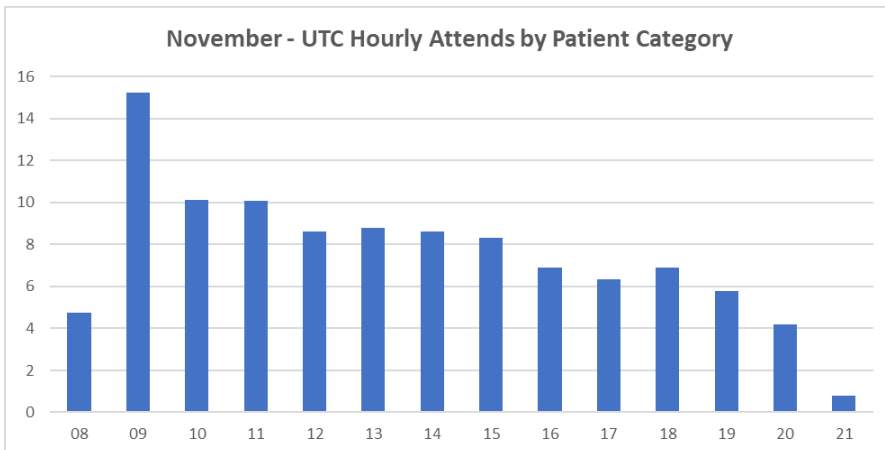
<sup>1</sup> [NHS England » Urgent treatment centres – principles and standards](#)

- Media releases about flu self-care, Bank Holiday pharmacy opening hours, NHS service round-up, NHS111 and mental health services
- Facebook advertising campaign about how Pharmacy First can support with seven common conditions
- ‘Choose the right service’ Facebook advert
- Social media campaign promoting NHS111, pharmacy, self-care, children’s health and wellbeing website and the NHSApp
- GP video outlining the range of services available
- Launch of ICB WhatsApp channel to promote services available, pharmacy opening hours, flu self-care advice and GP appointment information.

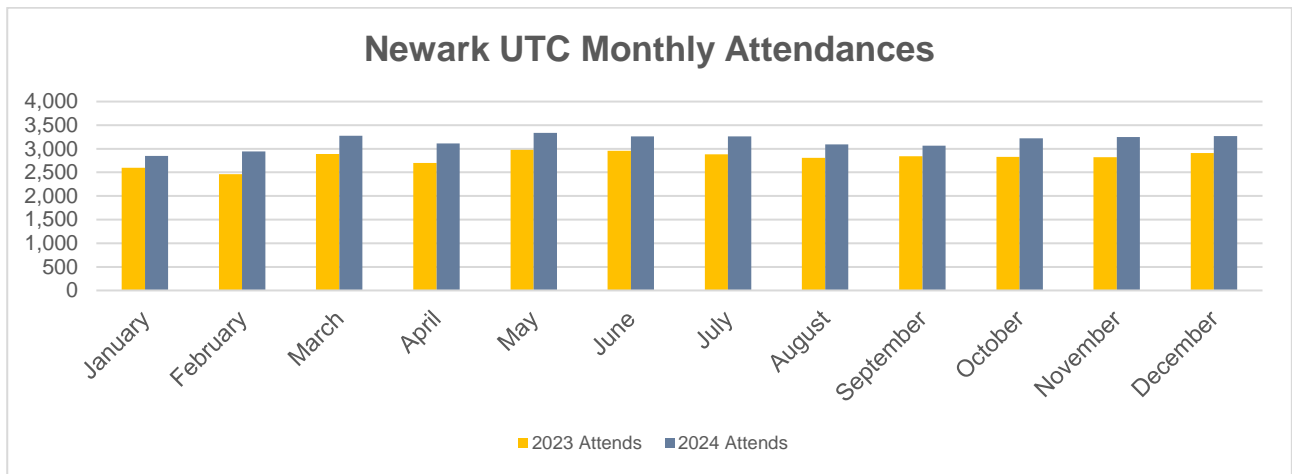
## 5 Operational Performance of the extended hours

The implementation of the new opening hours has been achieved smoothly, thanks to the positive and mature way that Newark UTC colleagues have embraced the decision and discussed the best way to implement it with leaders in the UTC. The ICB and SFH would like to place on record their ongoing thanks to Newark UTC colleagues for their hard work in delivering urgent care to residents and for the way they have approached this change.

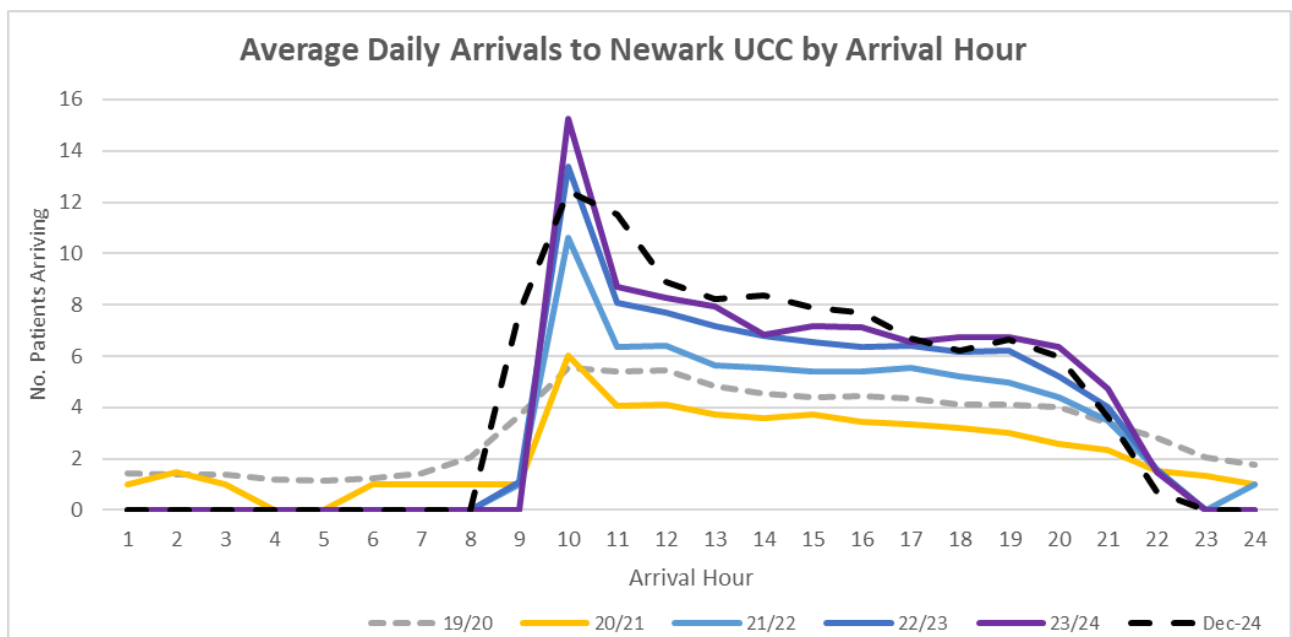
Part of the ambition of the new opening hours was to meet the demand seen before 9am under the old temporary arrangements. The success of this can be seen in the below charts setting out the attendance patterns for November and December 2024 – demand has shifted earlier in the day, allowing for a manageable operational flow for Newark UTC colleagues and shorter waits for patients.



Overall attendance at the UTC has remained broadly static following the increased hours, with around 100 patients seen per day across October, November and December 2024, albeit in the context of increased demand for the UTC in 2024 vs 2023.



	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
2023 Attends	2,596	2,460	2,890	2,697	2,980	2,958	2,886	2,811	2,843	2,827	2,824	2,913
2024 Attends	2,851	2,946	3,279	3,112	3,335	3,265	3,265	3,092	3,068	3,223	3,248	3,269



The UTC continues to receive very positive feedback via the national NHS 'Friends and Family' test with scores consistently above 95% positive in the last 30 days to late January and increasing to 97% positive for the most recent week for which data is available. This would suggest that people who use the service under the new arrangements remain highly satisfied.

## 6 Recommendations to the Nottinghamshire Health Scrutiny Committee

It is recommended that the Nottinghamshire Health Scrutiny Committee:

1. Note the contents of this briefing.