

HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
7 FEBRUARY 2017**WINTER PLANS – REVIEW OF URGENT CARE**

Summary

1. The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) is to receive an update on Urgent Care in Worcestershire, which has been under significant pressure over the Winter period 2016/17 so far.
2. Commissioners and Providers of Urgent Care services have been invited to the meeting.

Worcestershire Urgent Care

3. Urgent Care includes a range of health and well-being services, including specialist hospital care, A&E attendance and admissions, Minor Injuries Units (MIUs), primary care, community care, care homes, self-care and prevention.
4. Nationally and locally there is a requirement for local health economies to develop comprehensive urgent care strategies, and during 2014, the HOSC was updated on the agreement of Worcestershire's current Urgent Care Strategy, and also looked at Winter Pressures.

Winter 2016/17

5. HOSC members will be well aware of escalated pressures on Urgent Care in Worcestershire, over the recent Christmas / New Year period, which have been reported in the local and national media.
6. Circumstances over this period led to clinicians and local NHS leaders taking a strategic decision to temporarily close some of the county's Minor Injuries Units at Bromsgrove, Evesham, Malvern and Tenbury, and transfer the staff to A&E Departments at The Alexandra Hospital in Redditch and Worcestershire Royal Hospital, which were extremely busy. Kidderminster MIU, which is run by Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust, remained open as usual.
7. An earlier briefing note to the HOSC provided further information about the circumstances which prompted the recent temporary closure of Minor Injuries Units.
8. The normal position is that MIUs are a key element in admission avoidance schemes and their service offers a critical alternative to A&E attendance for some groups of patients.
9. However, it is understood that the situation that weekend was very unusual. There was a significant increase in ambulance attendances at A&E and an associated pressure on A&E to respond quickly to this group of patients who were very acutely ill. In contrast there were very few patients attending the MIUs, having

chosen to present at A&E and we had experienced emergency nurse practitioners with few patients to treat.

10. The aim was for the MIU staff to provide extra cover and support those requiring minor injuries care and treatment.

Scrutiny

11. HOSC members have maintained regular oversight of the growing pressures on A&E and Urgent Care, and how they are being managed. This has included regular updates on the review of the Future of Acute Hospital Services in Worcestershire, now nearing completion and on the quality of acute hospital services. Pressures include an older demographic in Worcestershire, capacity, the impact of the staff uncertainty and recruitment from the delayed review and financial pressures.

12. Previously the HOSC has also looked at patient flow, as part of looking at the Well Connected Programme (a programme aiming to transform Worcestershire's health and social care, bringing together the NHS, Worcestershire County Council, Healthwatch and other health economy partners). In 2015, HOSC members visited the integrated patient flow centre 'Hub' at Wildwood (Worcester), which monitors the numbers of patients ready to be discharged from acute hospital settings.

Purpose of the Meeting

13. Following the information and discussion to review Winter pressures and Urgent Care Services, HOSC members are asked to agree whether any further information or scrutiny work is required at this stage.

Supporting Information

Further information will be provided at the meeting, through a presentation.

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

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Specific Contact Points for this report

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the Proper Officer (in this case the Head of Legal and Democratic Services) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

- Agendas and Minutes of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26 February, 30 April and 15 July 2014, 3 March, 15 July, 16 September 2015, 27 April, 19 July, 26 September and 16 November 2016 – available on the County Council website [here](#)

- BBC news report: Worcestershire Royal Hospital A&E Corridor Deaths Inquiry Call
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-hereford-worcester-38528194>
- BBC news report: Worcestershire nurse warns of 'A&E chaos' as unit shuts
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-hereford-worcester-38489636>