

HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11 SEPTEMBER 2023

INTEGRATED OUT-OF-HOURS URGENT CARE

Summary

1. The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) has requested an overview of integrated out-of-hours urgent care in order to understand the purpose of services, provision across the county and how it is accessed.
2. Representatives from Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board (HWICB) have been invited to the meeting to respond to any questions the HOSC may have.

Out-of-Hours Urgent Care Services

3. There are several out-of-hours urgent care services across Worcestershire as listed below. All of these services are detailed in the Directory of Service (DoS) and are accessed through NHS 111.
 - NHS 111
 - GP out-of-hours
 - Minor Injury Units (located in Bromsgrove, Evesham, Kidderminster, Malvern, and Tenbury)
 - Urgent Community Response Service

Directory of Service (DoS)

4. The Directory of Service (DoS) is a platform for services such as West Midlands Ambulance Service University NHS Foundation Trust (WMAS) and NHS 111 to access, to determine the most appropriate service and acceptance criteria for patients.
5. Different services are profiled (or ranked) according to their appropriateness for a specific condition or presenting complaint. This means the services for each individual complaint are ranked for their general accessibility, such as whether they are open at the time of the episode and whether or not they have capacity to accept the patient.
6. Work is currently being carried out ahead of the forthcoming Winter to review all services listed on the DoS and to ensure that it includes relevant voluntary and community services.

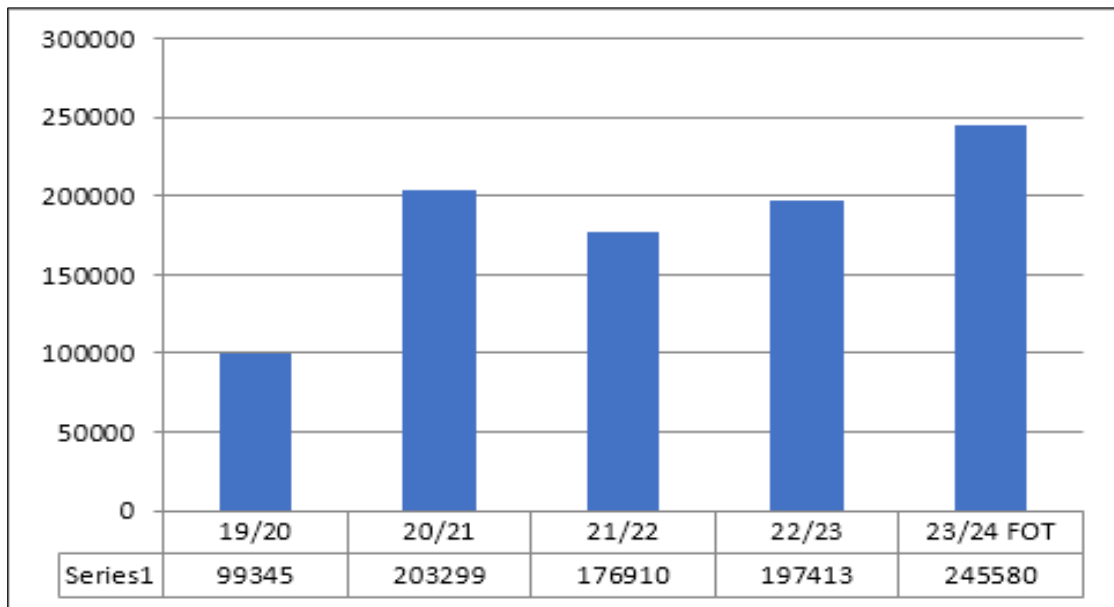
NHS111

7. NHS 111 is a core service supporting people with urgent care needs to get the right advice in the right place, first time.
8. The service provides clinical assessment for patients contacting NHS 111 by telephone or online.
9. Patients are referred to the appropriate service following an assessment carried out using NHS Pathways (a clinical tool used for assessing, triaging and directing) and additional clinical input where necessary. All patients will have their clinical need resolved through either self-care advice or be referred to an appropriate service including primary care, urgent care, community urgent dental services, pharmacies, and general community services.
10. NHS 111 is accessible 24 hours a day, 365 days a year (366 days in a leap year).
11. The Midlands-wide service (covering East Midlands and West Midlands) is provided by DHU healthcare. For the West Midlands this is a step-in arrangement following a decision by West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS) (the previous provider) to serve notice on the contract. As DHU Healthcare was already the current provider for East Midlands, the Midlands NHS 111 service is now the largest in the country.
12. The West Midlands NHS 111 service is currently being reprocured with a new contract due to start on 1st April 2024.
13. The NHS Black Country Integrated Care Board (BCICB) is the lead commissioner for the local NHS 111 service. Contract monitoring and quality assurance processes are undertaken and led by BCICB in the similar way as described below for GP out-of-hours. However, all associate commissioners (the other Integrated Care Boards across the West Midlands, including HWICB) are also involved in this. This includes attending regular meetings, receiving performance data and reporting and supporting decision making.

NHS111 Activity and Performance Summary

14. Table 1 below shows overall NHS 111 activity (annual activity for each contract from April to March) since 2019/20.

Table 1 NHS 111 activity



**23/24 is a forecast based on Quarter 1 data*

15. The data shows that annual activity more than doubled during COVID-19 and currently remains higher than before the pandemic.
16. National Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are set for the NHS 111 service. These were updated in April 2023, with all providers working to new measures. DHU Healthcare performs well overall and is ranked 1st for some key national measures including Call Abandonment Rate (1.73% compared to 8% nationally) and Average Speed to Answer (23 seconds compared to 140 seconds nationally).

Worcestershire GP Out-of-Hours (OOH) Service Overview

17. The Worcestershire GP OOH service is provided by Practice Plus Group (PPG) (formerly known as Care UK).
18. This service is available to all patients who are registered with a Worcestershire GP practice and / or who are residents within Worcestershire (but not registered with a GP Practice).
19. The service provides urgent primary care out-of-hours for those patients who cannot reasonably wait until the in-hours primary care service is available again.
20. The service is led by GPs and supported by Advance Nurse Practitioners (ANPs) and Paramedics. It operates between Monday to Friday from 18.30 to 08.00 and 24 hours-a-day on weekends and bank holidays.
21. Patients can only access the service by contacting NHS 111.
22. Each patient will receive a disposition (outcome) following their assessment by NHS 111. All primary care dispositions are sent to GP OOH when in-hours primary care services are closed.
23. Depending on the outcome of the assessment, the patient will receive either telephone advice and assessment, a virtual consultation (by telephone or video), a

face-to-face consultation in a primary care centre or a home visit in the patient's place of residence (home or care home).

24. Health Care Professionals (HCPs) only can also contact the service directly through a dedicated telephone line to receive enhanced levels of clinical advice. This allows HCPs such as district nurses, community pharmacists, nursing home staff and paramedics to access primary care support when providing care for patients out-of-hours.
25. PPG currently operates from three primary centres across Worcestershire. These centres are located at the Worcestershire Royal Hospital, the Alexandra Hospital and Kidderminster Hospital.
26. PPG shares clinical data for all patient contacts to the patient's own GP practice by 08.00 the next working day. This is a called Post Event Messaging (PEM). Information that is urgent is highlighted in such a way that it is easy for the GP practice to identify the urgency and key points. Verbal handovers take place from PPG to the patient's own GP practice for patients who have not had their episode of care completed by the close of the out-of-hours period.
27. PPG also provides the following:
 - Urgent access to facilities providing community in-patient services requesting medical input out-of-hours
 - Ensures that patients admitted to the community hospital units at weekends are reviewed and clerked.
 - Annual leave cover for St Richards Hospice
 - Face-to-face consultation during out-of-hours to HMP Hewell Grange and HMP Long Lartin
 - Certification of the death of a patient at home, a care home or a nursing home in exceptional circumstances where an appropriately qualified nurse is not available to confirm a death.
28. PPG operates as a member of the West Midlands Integrated Urgent Care Alliance to drive improvement in urgent care. The Alliance is made up of all West Midlands Integrated Care Boards (including HWICB), GP OOH providers, NHS111 and WMAS.

GP OOH contract monitoring and quality assurance

29. A thorough contract management process is in place to ensure safe and efficient service delivery. PPG is monitored against agreed national, regional, and local KPIs and quality measures.
30. PPG provides a full suite of monthly activity, performance, and quality reporting, which is reviewed and discussed at the monthly GP OOH Contract Management Board Meeting. This is attended by clinical, operational and contractual representatives from HWICB and PPG, as well as a patient representative and a member of the Local Medical Council (LMC)
31. A quarterly Clinical Governance Report is also shared by PPG, which includes themes, lessons learnt, and improvements that have been made. The report

covers the following areas: incident reporting, complaints and compliments, patient feedback, infection prevention, safeguarding, medicines assurance and clinical audits.

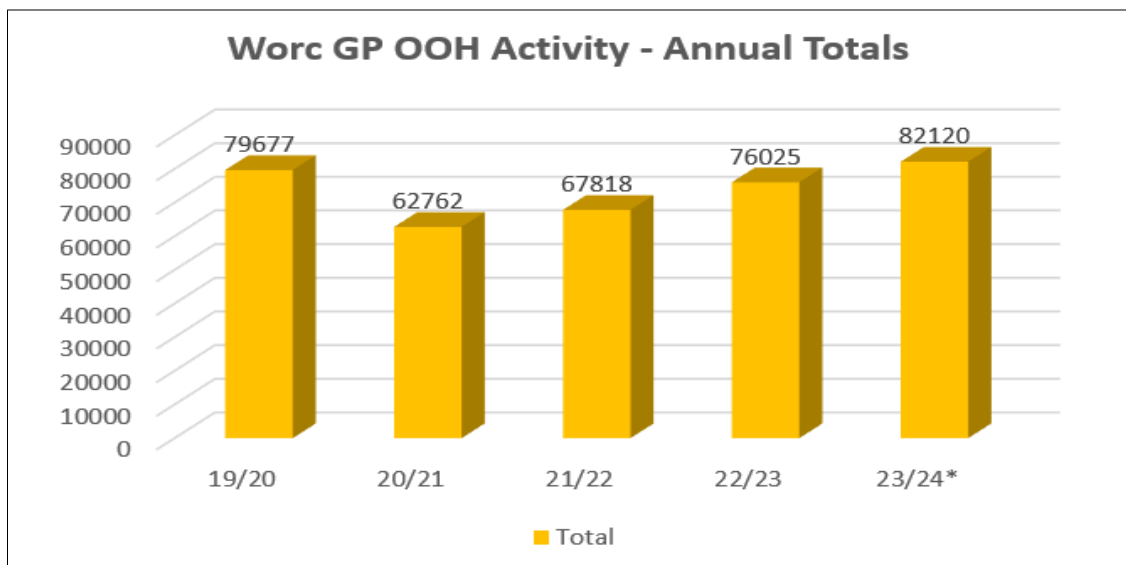
32. Quality site visits are undertaken by the HWICB Quality Team as required.

GP OOH activity and performance summary

33. The Worcestershire GP OOH service is performing well and currently achieving 12 out of 16 KPIs. Workforce constraints, unforeseen spikes in demand and frequent callers are having an adverse impact on performance. Improvement measures have been agreed and a recruitment plan is in place to support delivery. These have resulted in increased headcount and improved KPI performance over the last two months.

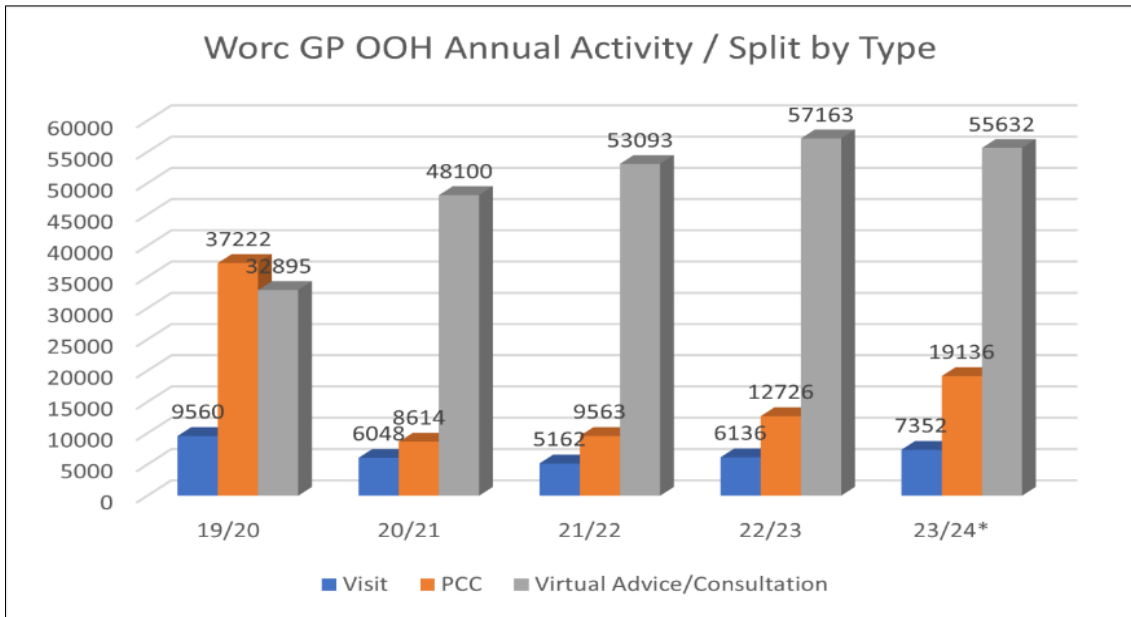
34. The tables below show the overall total activity (annual activity from April to March) and change in activity since 2020/21.

Table 2 Total annual activity by year



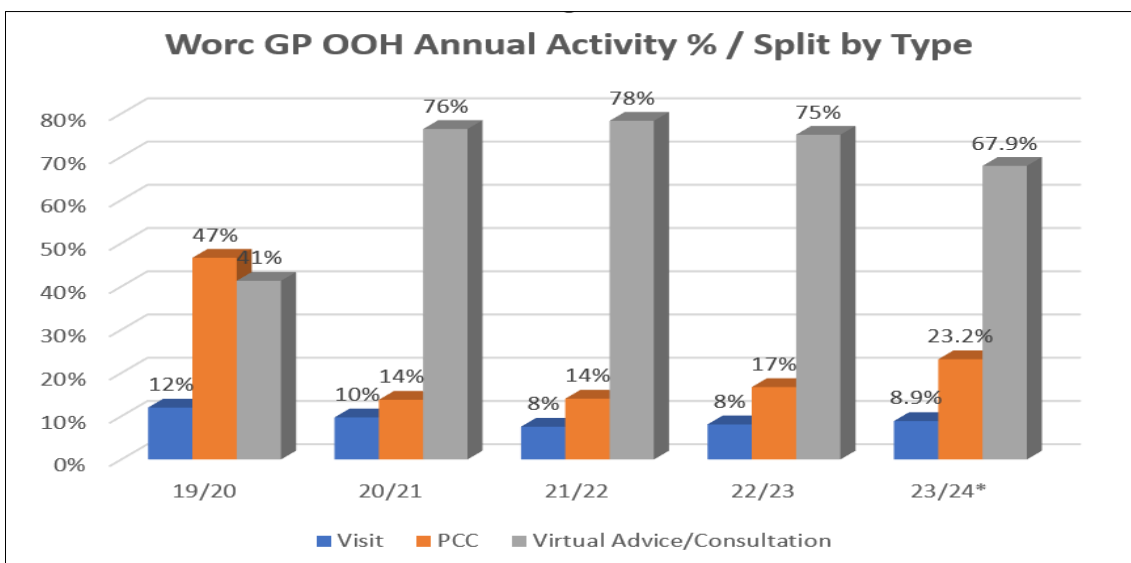
*23/24 is a forecast based on Quarter 1 data

Table 3 Annual activity split by type (home visit, primary care centre (PCC) face-to-face appointment or virtual advice / consultation



*23/24 is a forecast based on Quarter 1 data

Table 4 Annual activity % split by type (for categories detailed in Table 3)



*23/24 is a forecast based on Quarter 1 data

35. In summary, annual activity levels reduced during COVID-19 but these are now rising to pre-pandemic levels. GP OOH face-to-face appointments reduced in line with national guidance during COVID-19 but these are on the rise again as shown in the above graphs. It is not anticipated that the percentage of OOH face-to-face appointments will return to pre-pandemic levels due to improved technologies introduced over the past few years. However, face to face appointments continue to be available to anyone that requires these.

Purpose of the Meeting

36. The HOSC is asked to:

- Consider and comment on the information provided; and
- Determine whether any further information or scrutiny on a particular topic is required.

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 Assistant Director Legal and Governance) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

[Agenda and Minutes for Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 18 October 2021](#)

All agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website here.