

**REPORT TO:** Health Policy & Performance Board

**DATE:** 14<sup>th</sup> February 2023

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Executive Director, Adults

**PORTFOLIO:** Adult Social Care

**SUBJECT:** Runcorn Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC) :  
Update

**WARD(S):** Borough-wide

## 1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an update in relation to Runcorn UTC and the current service offer delivered.

## 2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: that the Board**

i) **note the contents of this report and associated appendices.**

## 3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### 3.1 **General**

3.1.2 The Runcorn UTC is open 365 days a year from 8am to 9pm and is located at Halton Hospital. Patients can walk in or book appointments via NHS 111.

3.1.3 Patients can attend the service with several different conditions such as minor cuts or wounds, sore throats, bites or stings, rashes, and allergic reactions, for prescribed medication requests, minor burns or scalds, coughs and colds, muscle or joint injuries, earache, eye injuries and infections and emergency contraception.

3.1.4 The service meets all the requirements of the 2017 UTC National Standards and is one of the only UTCs in Cheshire and Merseyside to do so.

3.1.5 There is a GP on site at Runcorn UTC 7 days a week for 6hrs per day as per the agreed contract. During 2022 the Trust has support additional GPs hours due to demand and acuity at a financial cost pressure.

3.1.6 On each shift there is of medical, nursing, and administrative staff to provide a high-quality urgent treatment service.

- 3.1.7 There is a skilled paediatric workforce which ensures that a trained paediatric nurse on duty at each shift who is clinically supported by an Advanced Paediatric Clinical Nurse Practitioner.
- 3.1.8 Diagnostics are available onsite in the form of x-ray and Phlebotomy.
- 3.1.9 The service is currently expanding the diagnostic capability to increase the ability to manage more patients in the community by undertaking point of care testing for COVID and other infectious diseases. As further opportunities arise to increase the diagnostic capacity these will be implemented.
- 3.1.10 Electrocardiograms (ECGs) to assess chest pain can be taken onsite and can be reported by the Advanced Nurse Practitioner or GP onsite and support is available when required from the Emergency Duty Registrar in the Emergency Department (ED) at Warrington Hospitals.

### 3.2 **Warrington & Halton Hospital and the UTC**

- 3.2.1 The Trust has delivered the service at Runcorn since it was initially first commissioned and has undertaken several periods of service transformation to respond to the needs of the people who use the service.
- 3.2.2 The Trust has developed a strategy for urgent care delivery which describes the mission as providing 'person focussed' care and 'improving the health and wellbeing of every patient'.
- 3.2.3 The Trust is currently reviewing health inequalities data of the patients who access the service with the aim of understanding what support could be offered to them as well as looking at the data to understand why certain patient groups access EDs and not the UTC.

### 3.3 **Access**

- 3.3.1 The service is fully accessible for walk in appointments and has been throughout the pandemic. Appointments can also be booked via NHS111, also NWS can stream directly to Runcorn UTC based upon current DOS.

### 3.3 **Workforce**

- 3.3.1 The service has a highly trained workforce who are supported to develop and have the skills necessary to treat the complexity of patients who present at the UTC.
- 3.3.2 The Trust supports staff to attend and complete service-specific

continuing professional development programmes for all e.g., Masters' programmes for staff for clinical diagnostics and examination and V300 Independent Prescribing courses.

### 3.4 **Performance**

3.4.1 The UTC has consistently over performed versus the indicative levels of activity in the Contract Specification which profiled attends of circa 65 patients a day.

3.4.2 There has been a 32.13% increase on year-on-year activity delivered between 2020/21 and 2021/22 with daily attendance reaching 148 in December 2022.

3.4.3 The service has maintained the delivery of the 4-hour waiting time standard throughout the pandemic and continues to do so. More detailed performance information can be seen in **Appendix 1**

3.4.4 The referral rates to ED are low and where possible patients are managed solely at the UTC. There are occasions where patients who present with conditions which cannot be treated at the UTC or who require more complex investigations and diagnostics and may require onward referral to ED. The figures for the percentage of patients transferred to Emergency Department can be seen in **Appendix 1**.

3.4.5 The Runcorn UTC will continue to strive to increase the service offer available so that it can further reduce the numbers of patients transferred to Emergency Departments.

3.4.6 Between November 2002 and December 2022 Healthwatch undertook a review of the Runcorn UTC. Information to support this review was gathered by visits to the centre and via surveys undertaken with patients accessing the service. This work illustrated most respondents giving positive feedback on their experience of the UTC, with 93% of those surveyed 'likely' or 'very likely' to recommend the service. A copy of the full Healthwatch review report can be seen in **Appendix 2**.

### 3.5 **Partnerships and Collaboration**

3.5.1 The Trust is committed to developing the UTC further with partners in across Cheshire and Merseyside and are part of the Provider Collaborative UTC Standardisation Group.

3.5.2 The service works closely with Warrington and Halton Hospitals Emergency Department in respect of paediatrics, burns and plastics and orthopaedics and can manage patients via shared clinical pathways and directly refer patients into clinical specialties.

- 3.5.3 Clinicians from the UTC have supported onsite at Warrington Emergency Department facilitating discharge and streaming patients from ED to the UTC during periods of significant pressure.
- 3.5.4 The Trust is part of the Mental Health, Learning Difficulties and Community Provider Collaborative and it is looking to develop best practice and demonstrate the way it has led the transformation of urgent care centres into urgent treatment centres.
- 3.5.5 Mersey Care are working with the Trust to support patients presenting at the UTC with an acute presentation of a mental illness and developing a referral process for patients who have less acute presentations.
- 3.5.6 The Trust is also considering how we develop relationships with the service and third/voluntary sector and how we offer additional support to patients who access the facility such as health education/support.

3.6 **Communication**

- 3.6.1 As we slowly learn to live with Covid-19 and following the recent relaxation of guidance around Covid-19 infection prevention and control measures from the NHS, plans are being implemented to promote to the public an update in how the UTC is accessed.
- 3.6.2 The Trust is working with rich quantitative data that looks at key factors such as demographic, post code and UTC presentation, as well as qualitative data from patient feedback and surveys.

3.7 **Recent communication examples to promote the UTC:**

3.7.1

Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust  
21 Dec 2022 · 🌐

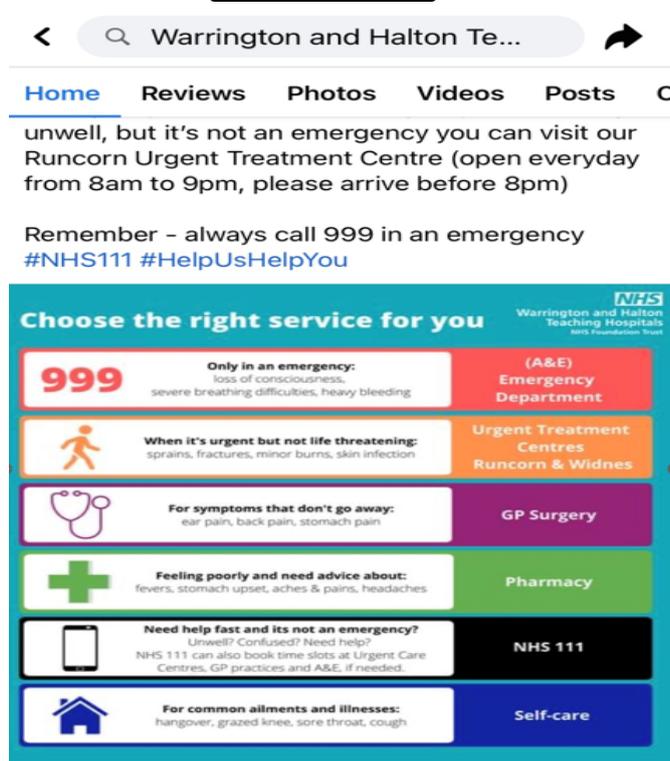
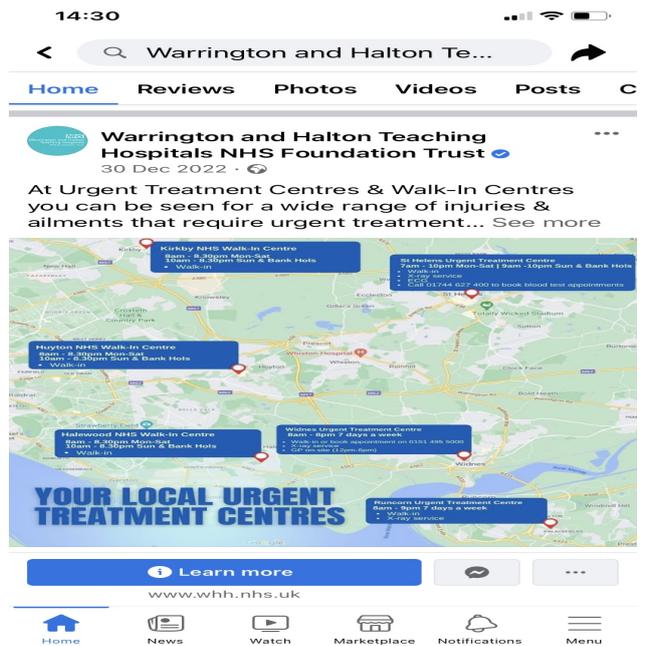
At Urgent Treatment Centres & Walk-In Centres you can be seen for a wide range of injuries & ailments that require urgent treatment... See more

**Do you know where to go?**

A&E	UTC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of consciousness</li> <li>• Acute confused state and fits that are not stopping</li> <li>• Chest pain</li> <li>• Breathing difficulties</li> <li>• Severe bleeding that cannot be stopped</li> <li>• Severe allergic reactions</li> <li>• Severe burns or scalds</li> <li>• Stroke</li> <li>• Major trauma such as a road traffic accident</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minor cuts or wounds</li> <li>• Sore throats</li> <li>• Bites or stings</li> <li>• Rashes and allergic reactions</li> <li>• Prescribed medication (subject to assessment)</li> <li>• Minor burns and scalds</li> <li>• Coughs and colds</li> <li>• Muscle or joint injuries (eg. sprains and strains)</li> <li>• Earache</li> <li>• Eye injuries and infections</li> <li>• Emergency contraception</li> </ul>

Anyone who has a cough, high temperature or any symptoms of COVID-19 should only visit our UTC when they can provide evidence of a recent negative PCR test.

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### 3.8 Conclusion

- 3.8.1 The Runcorn UTC is a key service for patients of Runcorn, Warrington, and Widnes and to the Borough of Halton.
- 3.8.2 The Trust is committed to driving the quality of service provided and the achievement of the service specific key performance indicators so that the best possible service can be experienced by the citizens that utilise it.

3.8.3 The Trust recognises the need to work in conjunction with partners to deliver this key service and is committed to progressing this focus and maximising the capacity and capability of the service.

#### 4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

None identified.

#### 5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

None identified.

#### 6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

##### 6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

The Runcorn UTC has specialist paediatric practitioners onsite and can meet the needs of children and young people in the Borough. The service also works closely with the safeguarding team to manage any potential safeguarding concerns.

##### 6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

The Trust offers a specialised development package for training for staff delivering urgent care and supports the employment of staff who live in the Borough.

##### 6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

The service provides lifestyle advice to patients and is also linking in with other third sector providers who may be able to support us to deliver key public health messages.

##### 6.4 **A Safer Halton**

None identified.

##### 6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None identified.

#### 7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 The Runcorn UTC continues to grow and develop and see increasing numbers of patients. This is at a time where partner healthcare providers are also experiencing unprecedented levels of demand and there is the risk that the capacity from a staffing and an estates perspective will permit the number of patients that can be seen on site.

7.2 There is an opportunity if there was more space accessible at the

Runcorn UTC then the size of the service could be increased, and more patients could be seen at the facility. This however would require additional income both for staff and for additional estates costs.

## 8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 As patients do not have to be registered with a GP to access the UTC this supports equality of access to urgent care services.

## 9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 This report is for information only, therefore there are no environmental or climate implications as a result of this report.

## 10.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

10.1 None under the meaning of the Act.