

Meeting of the Health Select Committee – 23 November 2023

Report of the Dudley managing Director – Black Country Integrated Care Board (ICB)

Dudley Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC) – Operational Changes

Purpose of report

1. To advise the Committee of changes made to the operation of the Dudley Urgent Treatment Centre with effect from 1 October 2023.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that the Committee note the current position in relation to the changes made to the Dudley Urgent Treatment Centre

Background

3. Urgent Treatment Centres (UTCs) and GP Out of Hours (GP OOH) services are a core part of the Urgent and Emergency Care offer. Malling Health provides the UTC provision in Dudley. In the Spring of 2023 Malling Health informed the Integrated Care Board (ICB) it was no longer able to continue to deliver the service within the contractual financial envelope. The ICB agreed that due to its financial position, increasing the value of the contract was not possible. Following a series of discussions, a model of delivery was proposed and subsequently approved, that would retain core services within the financial envelope.
4. Malling Health provides front door streaming and triaging where patients are clinically assessed and directed into the appropriate pathway, either through the UTC to see a primary care clinician, to other community locations, or to the Emergency Department. The streaming service assesses an average of 300 patients per day, who present either as walk-ins or directed there from NHS111.
5. The GP Out of Hours Service (GP OOH) for patients registered with Dudley GPs operates between the hours of 18:30 and 08:00 on weekdays

and 24 hours on weekends and public holidays. The GP OOH service accepts referrals from NHS111 and 999 and offers telephone advice and support, together with home visits and on-site appointments at Dudley UTC, where this is considered necessary.

6. At times of reduced workforce, the services work collaboratively to ensure adequate cover in each service.
7. The new model delivered within Dudley UTC reduces staffing levels between 24:00 and 06:00 hours 7 days per week across the combined function of the GP OOH service and the UTC. Staffing levels outside of these hours are not affected. All functions delivered by Malling are retained.
8. The staffing arrangements change as follows:-
Previous model between the hours of 24:00 and 06:00:
 - 2 reception staff
 - 1 Streamer/Initial Assessment Clinician
 - 1 Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP)
 - 1 GP
9. Revised model between the hours of 24:00 and 06:00:
 - 1 reception staff
 - 1 Streamer/Initial Assessment Clinician
 - 1 GP
10. To maintain resilience, the home visiting capacity for Dudley, Walsall, and Sandwell has been brought together and is managed as a single team.
11. It should be noted that historically the staffing of the service through locum GPs has created difficulties if locums withdraw at short notice. Malling has now been successful in recruiting GPs on a permanently employed basis which provides further assurance as to the resilience of the service.
12. The proposal developed by Malling was reviewed by the ICB and considered to represent a minor service change. Any potential impact will only arise if there is a late notification of staff absence which cannot be mitigated. The change is considered minor because:
 - Access points and the pathway remain unchanged,
 - The number of people impacted is small.
 - The Emergency Department remains open 24/7 to meet urgent need.

13. The revised service model retains 24/7 access to UTC and GP OOH services for Dudley patients and is fully compliant with the NHSE's published standards and guidance on the provision of both services.
14. The revised service model has been considered by local partners through the Dudley Accident and Emergency Delivery Board. A commitment has been made to monitor and report back on user experience and to monitor waiting times following implementation of the new model to ensure any variation can be identified early and mitigated.
15. The model went live on 1 October 2023. At the time of preparing this report, early indications show no impact on streaming or delivery of the UTC functions. There will be close monitoring of the service over the winter months and the latest position will be reported at the meeting.

Finance

16. The proposal set out above is deliverable within the existing cost envelope for the service.

Risk Management

17. As an output of stakeholder engagement, the following risks have been identified:

Risk	Rating	Proposed Mitigation	Residual Rating
The resilience of the service may be reduced because of reduced staffing levels	6	<p>Malling to review Business Continuity Plans to ensure robust arrangements for staff cover in place in the event of absence.</p> <p>Enhanced joint working between Malling Health and DGFT during the hours of reduced staffing to promote staff safety and resilience for all</p> <p>Malling have appointed permanent clinicians meaning that there is less</p>	2

		reliance on locum staff, and as a consequence creates a more resilient workforce.	
A reduction in service capacity during the early hours could result in increased waiting times for patients	6	Increase number of non-urgent, low acuity patients streamed back into core primary care services at the point of initial assessment and triage. Monitor through winter period	2
Increase in presentations to ED	6	Streaming and triaging service maintained. Monitor through winter period	3

Equality Impact

18. An Equality and Quality Impact Assessment has been conducted. UTC provision is in place in each of our 4 places. Patients in Dudley will still be able to access the same services as patients in Walsall, Sandwell, and Wolverhampton. There are no changes to patient facing services.

Human Resources/Organisational Development

19. None identified.

Commercial/Procurement

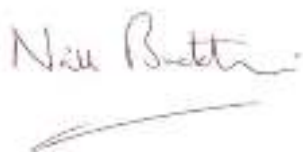
20. None identified.

Environment/Climate Change

21. None identified.

Council Priorities and Projects

22. The revised service model ensures we continue to deliver services to our most vulnerable working with our partners, aligning to our Borough Vision 2030 - 'Forging a Future – healthy, safe, resilient communities. This also contributes to towards our council plan priorities, whereby everyone, including our most vulnerable, have the choice, support and control of the services they need to live independently and have access to high quality, integrated health and social.



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