



Talk before you walk

**NHS**  
North Tees and Hartlepool  
NHS Foundation Trust

**H&SH**  
Hartlepool & Stockton Health  
(G.P. Federation)

**NHS**  
North East  
Ambulance Service  
NHS Foundation Trust

Feedback on the Integrated Urgent  
Care Service at University Hospital of  
North Tees  
July 2017



## Introduction

Local Healthwatches have been set up across England to create a strong, independent consumer champion with the aim to:

- Strengthen the collective voice of citizens and communities in influencing local health and social care services to better meet their needs.
- Support people to find the right health and social care services for them by providing appropriate information, advice and signposting.

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees works with local people, patients, service users, carers, community groups, organisations, service providers and commissioners to get the best out of local health and social care services. This doesn't just mean improving services today but influencing and shaping services to meet the needs of the local communities tomorrow.

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees is steered by a Board of volunteers, commissioned by the Local Authority and accountable to the public. Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees are the only non-statutory body whose sole purpose is to understand the needs, experiences and concerns of people who use health and social care services and to speak-out on their behalf.

Healthwatch has:

- The statutory right to be listened to; Providers and Commissioners must respond to Healthwatch within 20 days of submission of requests for information or reports.
- The statutory power to Enter & View publicly funded health and social care services.
- A statutory seat on the Health and Wellbeing Board.

## Rationale

The new Integrated Urgent Care Service was launched on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 with Centre's located at the University Hospital of North Tees and the University Hospital of Hartlepool. As an NHS service it is funded by the Clinical Commissioning Group.

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees visited the University Hospital of North Tees Integrated Urgent Care facility to gather feedback on how service users found their experience.

## Objectives

- To research and gain an understanding of the views and experiences of Teesside residents, particularly those in the Stockton-on-Tees Borough, regarding the new Integrated Urgent Care Centre. (the Centre)

### Methodology

1. Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees visited the Centre to make observations.
2. A questionnaire was distributed to service users whilst Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees were at the Centre.<sup>1</sup>
3. Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees published the questionnaire on Facebook, Twitter and on their website to gather intelligence from those who had experienced the service but were not present during the visits.

This engagement work has been the primary source for gathering service user feedback.

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees received a total of 32 responses to the survey.

(Quotes in pink are taken directly from those service users who were surveyed. Quotes in green are taken directly from staff members who spoke with Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees.)

### What is the New Urgent Care Centre?

The new Centre is for people who are unwell or have minor injuries. The Centre has replaced the walk in service which was located at Tithebarn House. Normally prior to visiting the Centre; the service user is advised to call 111 and book an appointment. However, if the service user has a minor injury they can simply walk in and be seen by GP or an Urgent Care Practitioner. The Urgent Care Centre operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees visited the Centre on three separate occasions- morning, afternoon and early evening. This was so to make sure a fair picture of the centre was captured. Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees also publicised the survey on Facebook and Twitter.

The staff informed us there has been a quick turnaround from receiving the contract in November 2016 to opening in April 2017. They noted that the transition had not been without its challenges but overall it had been a successful transition.

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees were given a tour of the Centre and provided with material such as the draft clinical streaming document.<sup>2</sup> Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees were also given a 'walk through' of the service from the perspective of a service user which was very informative.

### Appointment booking system

The service operates by using a 111 service which is manned by local ambulance service call handlers who can give the caller advice on where best to go for

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix one.

<sup>2</sup> See appendix two.

treatment or they will book the caller an appointment at the Urgent Care Centre. Service users made the following comments:

“Referred by 111 and had an appointment booked with a Doctor, the process was smooth enough.”

“The experience was excellent - the referral from 111 was appropriate and I was seen slightly before the appointment time.”

### Access to the Centre and the Centre itself

Upon arrival at the Urgent Care Centre Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees noted that there appears to be adequate disabled access and a ramp to the reception area with automatic doors. The reception area is bright and welcoming; the reception desk is low enough to accommodate wheelchair and younger service users.

The reception staff were also welcoming and friendly; the staff were well informed and happy to answer any questions posed to them. The most predominant observation fed back to Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees from the staff was that there had been little in the way of abuse from the service users. They believe this was mainly due to “the welcoming and open nature of the reception area as they are not hidden behind a glass front.” Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees did not notice any abuse whilst they were there. “I was pleasantly surprised at the calm environment.”

The waiting area was clean, spacious with 49 seats, and with access to a water cooler. There is a large screen situated above the reception desk where the service users name would appear when it is time for their appointment.

There is a waiting area for children which is calming and completely separate from the adult waiting area. The Trust wanted to provide a calming environment for the children with child friendly information about the Centre available.

### Waiting Times for Appointments and the streaming service

As aforementioned the centre has a streaming process via 111; if the service user has been directed to the centre via 111 they should expect to be seen within 30 minutes of entering the building. As a walk in patient they should be seen within two hours. Staff informed Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees that the busiest periods were weekends and bank holidays. The staff stated that the quietest times are from 00:00-07:00 during the week. The subjective nature of waiting times is reflected in one service user’s comments “one day I was in there 90 minutes and the next day I was only in there 45 minutes.” The staff noted that the national ‘talk before you walk’ campaign has made a real difference in promoting the message of what each service should and should not be used for.

The Intelligence collated by Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees highlights that on the whole the Centre’s timeframe target is being met. Below are comments from service users:

“Straight in as it was quite.”

“I think the appointment time was 4:10pm and I saw the Doctor at approx. 4:40pm- this was on a Sunday.”

“45 minutes- excellent service.”

“2 hours - I was delighted with the service.”

“50 minutes which I considered greatly improved from my earlier experiences at A & E. Especially as it was a bank holiday Monday.”

“I was in and out quickly. Efficient service.”

## Staff attitude

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees found the staff to be friendly and engaging. With one Doctor commenting “The Urgent Care Centre is the nicest place I have worked at in my career.” The staff acknowledged that any complaints they had dealt with were rectified and improvements were made. Comments from service users are as follows:

“The staff were all helpful and I am very pleased with the service they provided.”

“Based on the circumstances I felt the staff done their best and were very understanding.”<sup>3</sup>

“Helpful staff.”

## Information for patients

There was ample information available to service users in the waiting room. The staff openly welcomed comments from service users; they had also introduced a friends and family test as a way of evaluating the service. Child friendly information was available, on the service, in the children’s waiting room. See overleaf for example of the information available to service users whilst in the waiting area.



<sup>3</sup> Note this service user accessed the service on Sunday evening, a time the staff did inform Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees was one of their busiest periods of the week.

### Conclusion: quality of the overall service

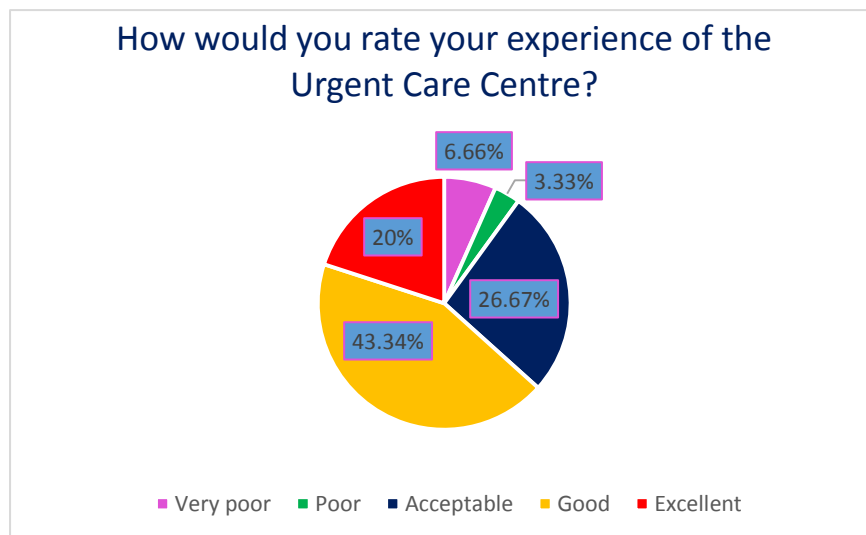
Overall Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees were impressed with the new Urgent Care Centre. The Service appears to be working effectively to meet the needs of the service users with 43.34% of those surveyed rating the system as good and 26.67% rating it as excellent. Below are comments taken from services users which reflect this overarching positive view.

“I feel that the service is much more proficient and efficient since the change. Service users are signposted more effectively and efficiently meaning waiting times are vastly reduced.”

“Fantastic service, very efficient.”

“Sorted my problem out to my complete satisfaction.”

“The experience was excellent.”



### Acknowledgements<sup>4</sup>

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees would like to thank all of the staff at the Urgent Care centre for their support and cooperation.

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees would like to thank the service users, along with their friends & family, who took the time to complete the survey.

<sup>4</sup> Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees usually provide recommendations at the end of a report. However, as this was an observational report there will be no recommendations.



## Appendix one

### NEW INTEGRATED URGENT CARE SURVEY - UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL OF NORTH TEES

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees would like your views and experiences of the new Integrated Urgent Care

1. If you have accessed the Integrated Urgent Care Service, how were you referred there? For example, did you ring 111? Please give details below:

2. How long did you wait for an appointment for an initial assessment in the streaming room?

3. Once returned from the streaming room, how long did you wait for your appointment?

4. From entering the Urgent Care building to leaving, how long was the process?

5. How would you rate your experience of the Urgent Care Service? (Please circle below)

Very Poor

Poor

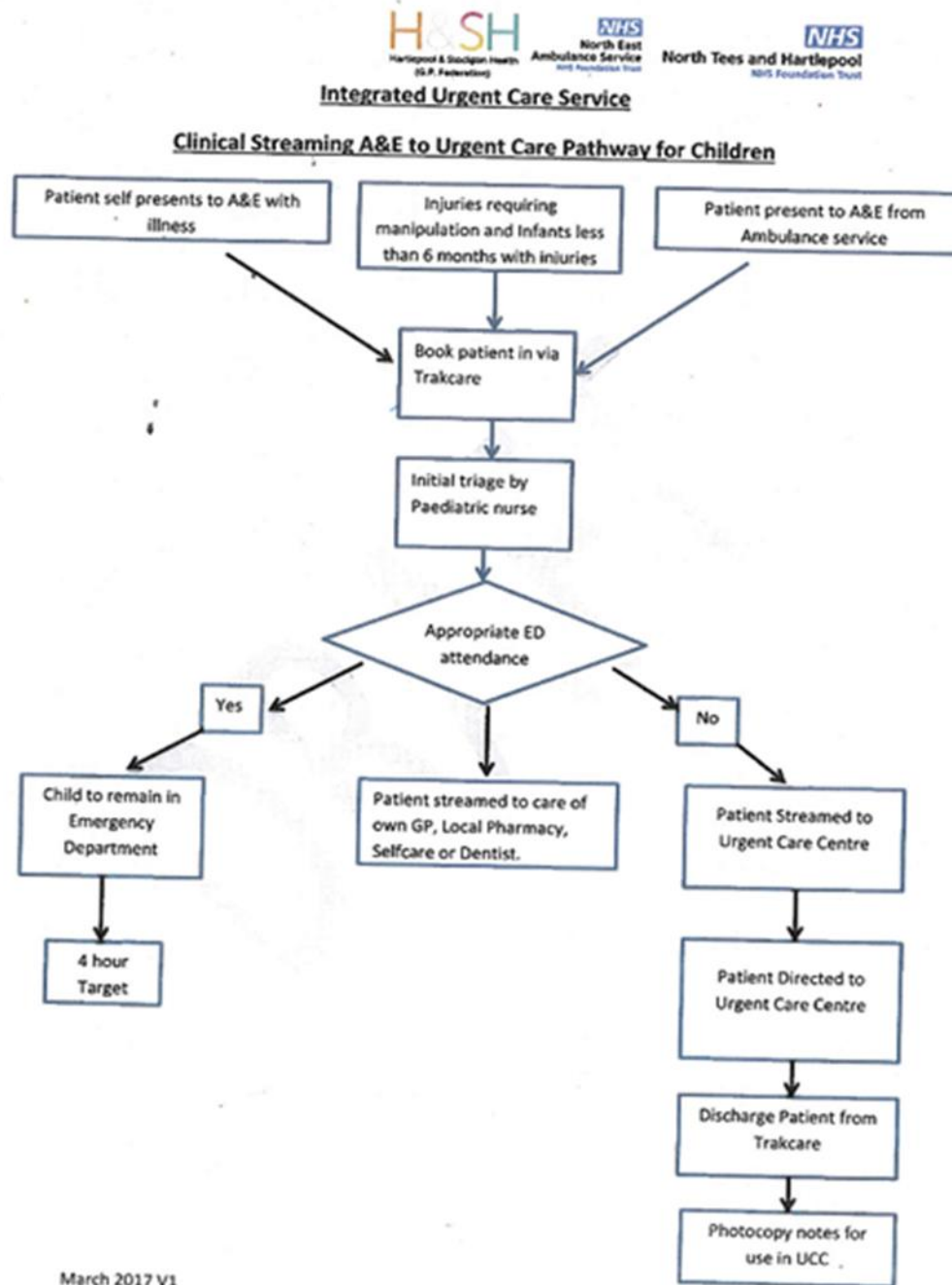
Acceptable

Good

Excellent

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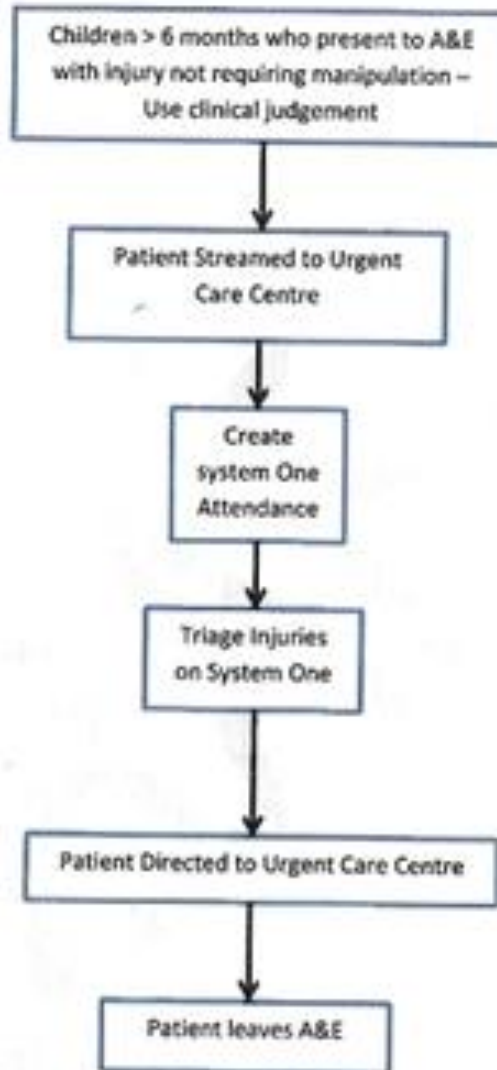
## Appendix two





## Integrated Urgent Care Service

### Clinical Streaming A&E to Urgent Care Pathway for Children with Injuries



## Integrated Urgent Care Service

### Clinical Streaming A&E to Urgent Care Pathway for Adults

