

Walsall Overview Scrutiny Committee
Urgent Treatment Centre at Manor Hospital - Update
September 2022

1.0 Introduction

The Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC) at the Manor Hospital has been provided by Malling Healthcare since December 2018, and is an integral part of the Emergency Department (ED) with positive clinical working relationships between the Walsall Healthcare Trust A&E clinical team and the Malling Healthcare clinical team.

The service is a critical component of the Urgent and Emergency Care System in Walsall contributing to the favourable performance of Walsall's system in minimising ambulance turnaround times, and also 4 hour breaches in A&E, when compared to other nearby centres and regionally and nationally.

2.0 Attendance (See appendix 1)

Levels of attendance to the UTC have reverted to pre COVID Pandemic levels and currently average circa 5,000 per month (circa 60,000 per annum) with daily attendance commonly ranging between 140 to 190. Improved on-site signage has led to an increase in the percentage of direct walk-ins to the UTC. Around 40% of walk-in ED attendance is streamed away from A&E to the UTC at the front door of the ED.

Constructive working relationships between the respective clinical teams ensures that very few patients are referred the other way (from the UTC to A&E) and where this does happen it is down to genuine clinical safety of the patient e.g. a patient becoming more acutely unwell and showing signs of sepsis.

There are occasions when the waiting area within the UTC does reach its capacity of 56 places. The current location of the UTC means this could not be increased. Malling Healthcare have demonstrated their capability to manage this in partnership with A&E, by prioritisation of clinical need and ensuring that patients are informed of longer waiting times. This situation will improve in the new ED. The small number of patients who decide to walk out without being seen are subsequently followed up by Malling Healthcare.

The national waiting times standard is for 95% of being treated within 4 hours, with delivery consistently around 97%.

There is a pattern of higher percentage attendance of patients from nearby GP practices. This is common to most A&E's across the country. This has been brought to the attention of the GPs in the respective practices and in one practice the GPs wrote directly to the patients who had attended the UTC most often to query why they were attending the UTC and to remind them of the services available in the practice. There is also a scheme (High Intensity Users) where a nurse practitioner

with specialist skills in complex behaviour is making contact with repeated high intensity users of the UTC to support them to reduce their attendance.

3.0 Opening Times

Opening times are from 7.00am to midnight seven days a week, with a continuation of appointments for those still waiting at midnight through to 2.00am. There have been trials of opening up to 3.00am, but each time there has been a problem with clinical rota fill in the early morning hours because of a reluctance to work these hours amongst the primary care workforce. As the numbers are so small it has also not been a cost effective arrangement. This does mean that a small number of patients who could be seen in the UTC are receiving their treatment in A&E during the early morning hours up until 6.00am by which time UTC patients are asked to wait until the opening of the UTC at 7.00am. This has caused some frustration on the part of the A&E Clinical Team and alternative solutions are currently being explored

4.0 Quality Monitoring

There are bi-monthly Clinical Quality Review Meetings with the Place Based ICB Quality and Commissioning Teams. Mallings Healthcare routinely report on the extent of rota fill and staff sickness, together with any Safeguarding referrals and the outcome of the Family/Friends Test which shows a majority of people who have completed the form would recommend the service to others. The number and content of complaints is also reported each month, together with how the complaints have been followed up by the Mallings Healthcare clinical team.

There is also an account of the most common prescriptions issued by the UTC which is discussed with the place based ICB Medicines Management Team. All of the UTCs in the Black Country were recently visited by the ICB Quality Teams and the feedback from the visiting team at the Manor Hospital was very positive.

5.0 UTC as part of the new Emergency Department

Continuation of the UTC service has been included as part of the new ED which is due to open from mid-November 2022. There is an opportunity for a higher level of integration between the UTC Streaming Service and A&E Assessment and Triage due to the improved building design and layout compared to the legacy environment where the location of the UTC constrained a degree of integration that will now become more feasible. This, together with improved connectivity between IT systems allowing for greater sharing of patient records between the UTC and WHT, means there can be a higher level of integration of the streaming, assessment and triage process at the front door of the new ED.

The level of integration between the UTC and A&E within the new ED environment will be closely monitored and reviewed, and it is expected that there will be further improvement in the way that Mallings Healthcare and WHT A&E clinical teams are working together. It is proposed that there should be a further report to Overview Scrutiny Committee on patient experience of attending the new ED 6 months after opening.

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