

Healthwatch Worcestershire

Board Meeting in Public – 26th November 2014

Urgent Care Study Update

Contents

Background

Who We Spoke to

Key Findings

Why A&E/MIU

GP Options

Urgent Care Strategy Consultation

Transport & Location

Awareness of Primary Care Options

Waiting Room Experience

Appendix 1 - Demographics

Appendix 2 - Structure of Service/Glossary

Background:

In February 2014 the three Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in Worcestershire published an Urgent Care Consultation to be completed in March 2014. The Draft Urgent Care Strategy was also published in February 2014 and is being implemented from June 2014.

Across the media at this time there was a great deal of discussion about patients misusing A&E and much publicity trying to discourage people from using A&E departments.

Healthwatch Worcestershire were concerned that not enough account was being taken of why people went to A&E/MIUs, whether they were referred there by the NHS, and whether they had the information available to make informed decisions.

The purpose of the Urgent Care Survey was to increase the understanding of why patients attend Accident and Emergency Departments (A&E) and Minor Injury Units (MIUs) in Worcestershire. This would enable us to provide feedback to the Urgent Care Strategy which is currently being implemented

We notified the CCGs, Worcestershire Acute Hospital NHS Trust (WAHT) and the Worcestershire Health & Care NHS Trust (WHCT) of our intention to carry out the survey and discussed the logistics of the visits with WHAT & WCAHT.

A questionnaire was designed to enable us to understand why patients had chosen to attend A&E and or the MIUs across the county and also to gain an insight into their transport arrangements. This was reviewed by Professor Eleanor Bradley at Worcester University.

Part 1: Patient Information: such as postcode, GP Surgery and transport arrangements.

Part 2: Reasons for choosing A&E/MIU & awareness of alternative Primary Care Options.

Part 3: Demographics:

This document is a summary of our preliminary analysis of the survey results. More analysis needs to be done across venues and times/days of the week.

Who We Spoke to:

- We spoke to 339 patients across the A&E departments and MIUs during the months of September and October. Forty three people declined to take part usually due to the nature of their injury or illness or had to abandon the questionnaire without completing it as they were called in for treatment.
- We spoke to patients who had made their own way to A&E Departments and Minor Injury Units. HWW took the view that where patients had been brought in by ambulance the decision had been taken by the NHS or West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS) and therefore further questions were irrelevant.
- The intention was to speak to about 1000 patients, however it became apparent that this would prove beyond the HWW resources. Whilst the A&E departments were busy, the majority of throughput seemed to come via ambulance and the numbers of patients to interview in the waiting rooms of A&E and MIUs was limited. The numbers of patients using MIUs were low overall.

Table 1 – Table of visits (TBA)

Key Findings:

1. 37% of the patients that we spoke to had been referred to A&E/MIU with 63% self referring and the majority of these believed that it was an emergency.
2. MIUs are not well used. Whilst local people are aware of them there is a level of confusion about opening hours especially re Xray departments.
3. GP OOH: 66% of patients were aware of GP OOH but not everyone knew how to access it. Only 27% of patients had tried to contact their GP prior to attending A&E/MIU.
4. NHS 111: 71% of respondents were aware of NHS 111 but there was some confusion about what it was for.

5. On the whole patients access their most local service with 70% of patients taking less than 15 minutes to reach the A&E/MIU, eg if you live in Redditch you are unlikely to access Bromsgrove MIU instead of RAH.

6. Urgent Care Strategy: only 10% of people had heard of the Urgent Care Strategy Consultation and the majority of these had some connection with the NHS. Only 4 of the people surveyed had submitted a response.

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Why A&E/MIU:

1. Self Referrals: of the 296 patients who completed the question in the survey: 187 people self referred which is 63% of those who responded. Of those the over half believed it to be an emergency.

Reason for Attending A&E/MIU	Number	Percentage Of Total Survey	Percentage Of Self Referrals
Thought it was an Emergency	102	34.5	54.5
Wanted to be Seen Early	37	12.5	19.8
Wanted a Second Opinion	11	3.7	5.9
Had an Outpatients Appt but wanted to be seen earlier	3	1.0	1.6
Nearest Option	19	6.4	10.2
Didn't know where Else to Go	4	1.4	2.1
Recently discharged from Hospital	8	2.7	4.3
Visiting the Area – not local	3	1.0	1.6
Referred	109	36.8	
Total	296		

Table 2

2. Referrals: from the sample there were 109 patients who considered that they had been referred. This represented 37% of the total number of respondents to the question.

Referral Source	Number	Percentage
GP/Nurse Practitioner	34	31.2
GP Receptionist	6	5.5
NHS111	26	23.9
GP Out of Hours	3	2.8
Optician	1	0.9
Dentist	0	0
School	26	23.9
Other	13	11.9
Total	109	

Table 3

The Other category included: 5 MIU referrals to A&E; 3 physiotherapist referrals; 3 workplace referrals, and 2 sundry referrals.

Referrals varied greatly between time of day and venue eg over 50% of patients surveyed at Redditch on a Saturday morning had been sent there by NHS111.

There was a high level of referrals by schools which probably reflects the schools procedures in cases of accidents.

GP Options:

Only 27% of respondents had tried to contact their GPs before going to A&E/MIU.

38 people had been unable to get a GP appointment which was about 13% of the total sample size.

13 people had a GP appointment and wanted to be seen earlier this was about 4% of the total number of respondents.

32 patients had been told by their GP to go to A&E if they experienced further difficulties/trouble. This represented 11% of the total respondents.

The question was asked 'If you had a GP appointment today or tomorrow would you still have come to A&E/MIU?'

- 64% - would still have attended A&E/MIU
- 26% would not have attended A&E/MIU

When asked why they would still attend A&E not one respondent said that it was due to poor past experience.

- 41% - thought that it was an emergency
- 47% - thought that the GP would refer them to A&E
- 11% - thought that they would have to wait too long for a GP appointment.

Urgent Care Strategy & Consultation:

Only 10% of the respondents to this question were aware of the consultation and only 4 people had actually submitted a response.

Transport & Location:

89% of patients drove or were given a lift with 6% using taxis and only 3% arriving by public transport. This does highlight why parking at the hospital sites is such an issue.

The majority of patients were local with 70% taking less than 15 minutes to reach the A&E/MIU and only 1% exceeding 1 hour journey time. 32% of people lived within 2 miles of the venue with a further 33% living within 5 miles and only 3% travelling more than 20 miles.

This varied considerably with venue with patients being prepared to travel further to the A&E in Worcester but only travelling short distances to MIUs and the Royal Alexandra (though there was a small but noticeable number of patients from Evesham seen at the A&E Department at Redditch.

Awareness of Primary Care Options:

Overall 98.6% of patients interviewed were registered with a GP with only 4 patients in total not being registered.

71% of respondents were aware of NHS 111. However several people commented that they did not know how to use it or had had a previous poor experience.

66% of respondents were aware of the GP Out of Hours Service. However, there was some confusion about how to access it. There were comments that GP out of hours referred callers straight to NHS 111. Some patients had tried to access Kidderminster OOH but where the appointments were full they were then referred to A&E at WRH.

58% of respondents were aware of the MIUs. However there was confusion as to the opening hours, availability of xrays and in general what level of injury an MIU could deal with. There was one instance

when a parent had taken a child to Malvern MIU deliberately as they had a previous good experience, only to be referred back to Worcester A&E as the x ray department was closed.

Waiting Room Experience:

We were asked by WHAT & WHCT to include a question as to whether patients felt that they received sufficient information during their time in the waiting room.

Sufficient Information: - 76%

Insufficient Information: – 24%

However it was noticeable that the longer people waited the more that they felt that they had insufficient information. This was particularly true where the waiting room was comparatively quiet but the waiting time was significant ie where the treatment rooms were full but people in the waiting rooms were not necessarily aware of this.

Appendix 1

Demographics:

1. Gender: Of the patients attending A&E & MIUs 51.2% were male and 48.8% were female.

2. Age Range: The patients attending A&E & MIUs were fairly evenly spread across the age range as follows:

Age Range Years	Number	Percentage
< 2	5	1.71
2 to 4	4	1.37
5 to 13	39	13.36
14 to 17	33	11.30
18 to 25	32	10.96
26 to 35	41	14.04
36 to 50	39	13.36
51 to 65	40	13.70
66 to 79	41	14.04
>80	18	6.16
Did Not Disclose	4	

Table 4

Of the total patients interviewed 27.5% were aged 17 and under; 38.2% were between the ages of 18 and 50 years old and 34.3% were 51 years old and above.

3. Ethnicity:

Ethnicity	Number	Percentage
White British	269	92.12
White Irish	1	0.34
White Other	9	3.08
Mixed White /Black Caribbean	4	1.37
Mixed White/ Black African	-	
Mixed White/ Asian	-	
Any Other Mixed Heritage	-	
Asian or Asian British Indian	1	0.34
Asian or Asian British Pakistani	3	1.03
Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	1	0.34
Any Other Asian	1	0.34
Black/ Black British Caribbean	-	

Black /Black British African	-	
Chinese	-	
Any Other	3	1.03
Did Not Disclose	4	

Table 5

Appendix 2

Structure of Services:

A. Worcestershire as a county is served by three Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs):

- Bromsgrove & Redditch
- South Worcestershire
- Wyre Forest

B. There are two NHS Trusts providing Urgent Care Services within the County:

1) Worcestershire Acute Hospital NHS Trust (WHAT) provides:

a) Accident & Emergency Services (A&E) at

- Worcester Royal Hospital Site (WRH)
- Alexandra Hospital Redditch (AHR).

b) Minor Injury Unit at

- Kidderminster Hospital

2) Worcestershire Health & Care NHS Trust (WHCT) which provides Minor Injury Units at:

- Evesham Community Hospital
- Malvern Community Hospital
- Princess of Wales Community Hospital –Bromsgrove
- Tenbury Community Hospital.

Patients have a right to choose and those living near the county borders often access services in neighbouring areas such as Birmingham with the converse being true eg Patients from the area west of Stratford will

often travel to Redditch. There were at least three examples where patients had been referred to Russell Hall in Dudley by NHS 111 but had chosen to access Worcestershire services.

C. GP Out of Hours Services: (OOH)

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