

City of York Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Update on the Urgent Care Centre at York Hospital

Background

In April 2012, York's NHS walk in centre, formerly located on Monkgate, was relocated to form part of the urgent care centre based in York Hospital's emergency department.

This was an outcome of partnership work overseen by a multi-agency board (the Emergency and Urgent Care Board). Representatives of this board attended the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November 2011 to outline the rationale for creating an urgent care centre, how key stakeholders would be fully engaged in developing the proposals, and how the relocation of the walk in centre would be communicated to patients and the public.

The committee approved the plans, and representatives from the emergency and urgent care board agreed to update the committee at a future meeting.

The purpose of this paper is to provide the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the relocation and to outline future involvement and engagement plans.

Communications and engagement: relocating the walk in centre

A comprehensive communications and engagement plan, which was approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, was implemented prior to the relocation of the walk in centre to help ensure that patients and local residents were aware of the proposals. Press releases were issued, gaining local media coverage, and information posters and flyers were distributed to key locations such as libraries and GP surgeries. Clear signage was put in place, both on the York Hospital site and at Monkgate.

Stakeholders were also written to informing them of the move, including other healthcare providers, MPs, and patient representative groups including the Local Involvement Network (LINK).

A project was undertaken to physically redesign the emergency department, particularly the reception and entrance area, in order to better integrate the walk in centre and make it easier to manage the flow of patients.

A full programme of patient and public involvement activity took place prior to the move, including a focus group of recent service users, the capturing of real-time feedback in the waiting room and a 24 hour observation session by Hospital Governors and LINK members.

No formal complaints relating to the move have been received and the majority of informal feedback has been positive. During the relocation some feedback was received regarding third parties whose information had not been updated and this was rectified wherever possible and where the Trust was aware that third parties were publishing information. We have had several pieces of positive feedback about the urgent care centre; the following are just some examples from patients:

“The whole consultation was very professional and conducted by a delightful nurse who is a true credit to her profession and your hospital (...) we were on our way in about one and a half hours from the start of the visit.”

“This morning at the ‘urgent treatment dept’ the treatment and courtesy was wonderful.”

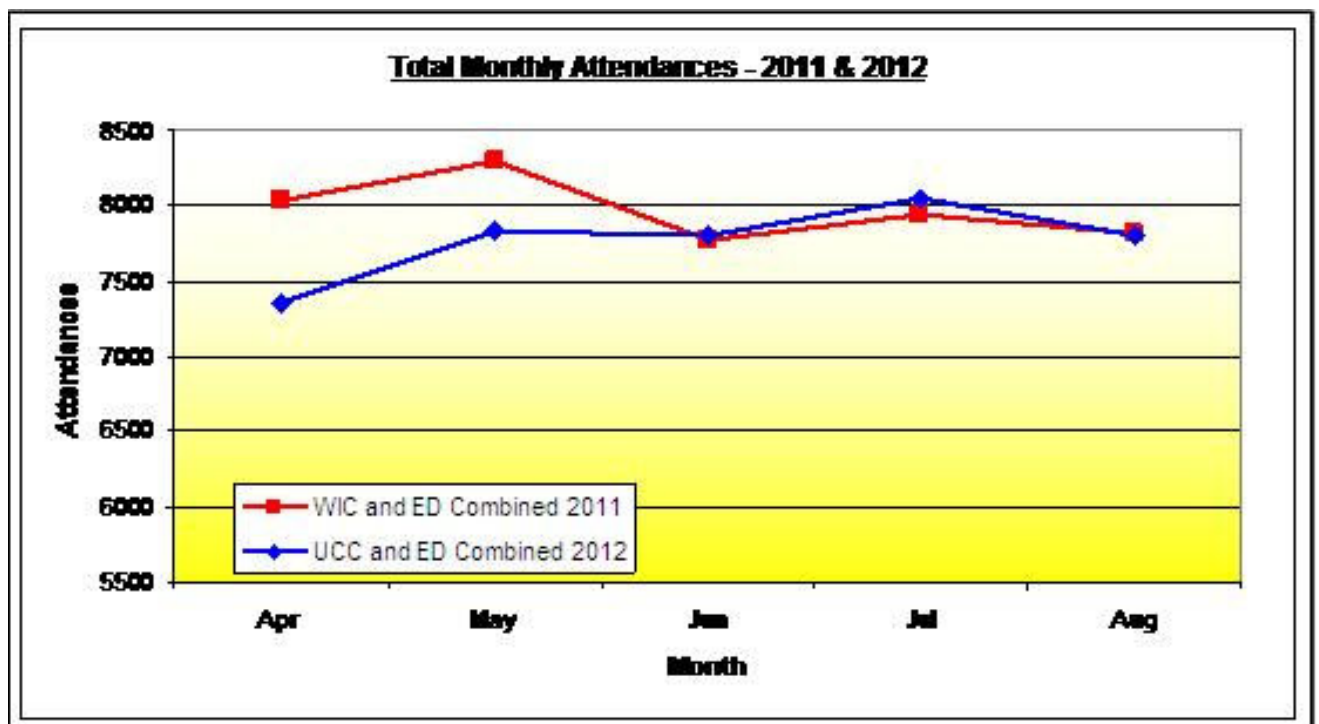
“My son was struggling to walk and his calf was badly swollen (...) I brought him to A&E at York and was seen within 20 minutes by the minor injuries nurse. I want to let you know that our experience in York was excellent!”

Activity in the emergency department and urgent care centre

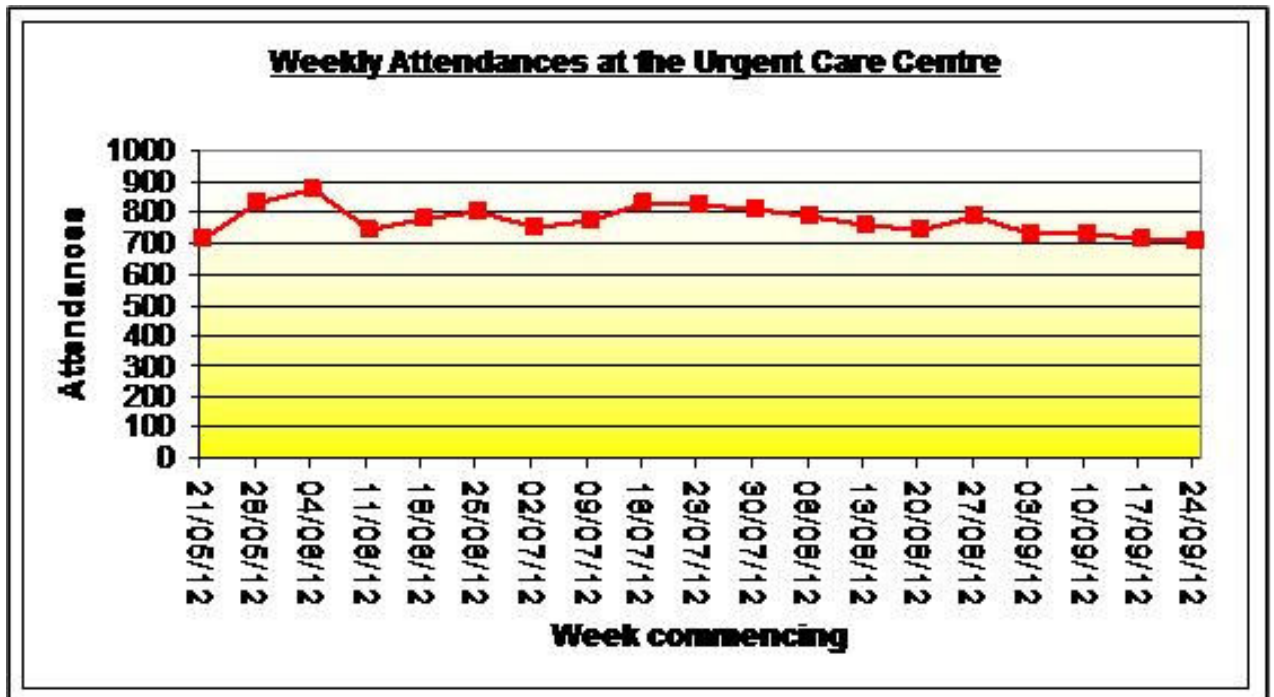
The walk in centre relocated on 18 April 2012.

The urgent care centre opened the same day, seeing both those patients who previously presented to Monkgate and those who were previously seen in the emergency department with minor injuries and illness.

It is possible to see from the chart below that when the total monthly attendances are compared between 2011 and 2012 there was an initial small dip in attendances but that since June these have been very similar. Due to a number of variables however it is not possible to ascertain the proportion of these that would have previously been walk in centre patients and make a reliable judgement on the proportion of activity that transferred.



The chart below shows the weekly attendances through the urgent care centre. Around 780 patients per week attend (around 111 per day) with an average time from arrival to discharge of 1hr 12mins.



Future plans

Partner organisations will continue to work together under the umbrella of the emergency and urgent care board to continue to improve services for patients, and to help ensure that the various parts of the system are working effectively together.

Membership of the communications and engagement subgroup of the Emergency and Urgent Care Board will be refreshed. The group will work together to develop social marketing campaigns to support areas of focus as identified by the Board, for example, educating the public and encouraging behaviour change in relation to how and when they access services, particularly where a primary care attendance, at the patient's GP surgery, is more appropriate.

The Trust will remain focused on engagement and involvement to help make improvements to services and to use patients' views to inform how services are delivered.

Opportunities for engagement have been sought, for example, the Directorate Manager for Emergency Medicine met with the LINK Patient Safety Group and the CVS Mental Health Forum, and will host a presentation for Foundation Trust members and the public about the urgent care centre on 31 October.

Now that the urgent care centre is established, plans to carry out a further observation study by the end of 2012 are being developed. This will again involve Hospital Governors and LINKs members to determine how the urgent care centre feels for patients accessing it.

Another important mechanism for understanding patients' experience of our services is the introduction of the 'Friends and Family' test (FFT). In May 2012, the Prime Minister announced the introduction of the FFT to improve patient care and identify the best performing hospitals in England. The FFT will be implemented in all acute NHS Trusts from 1 April 2013 and will require that all adult inpatients and those attending (but not admitted from) the Emergency Department are given the opportunity to answer the question: "how likely are you to recommend our ward/A&E department to friends and family if they needed similar care or treatment."

This will provide us with valuable insight in to what our patients feel about our services and provides an indicator which shows where things are working well or less well and how they are changing over time.

In summary

The Trust is pleased to report on what it considers to be the successful relocation of the walk in centre from Monkgate into the urgent care centre at York Hospital. Operationally the move went smoothly and user feedback is largely positive. The Trust, through the Emergency and Urgent Care Board and through patient feedback, will continually seek to keep the service model under review and seek to improve as necessary and appropriate.