

## **Healthwatch Portsmouth Report on St Mary's Urgent Treatment Centre surveys undertaken in October and November '22 with the assistance of HWP volunteers.**

### **Introduction**

Feedback from residents in Portsmouth is often centred around difficulties experienced regarding inaccessibility to primary health care and there is an expectation that they will be able to see their GP. At the same time, residents report the experience of being redirected by staff at the front door of the Emergency Department of QA Hospital (ED) to St Mary's Urgent Treatment Centre (StMUTC) and vice versa and being caught in a loop. Patients who call the 111 and 999 services are directed to see their GP or appropriate emergency service and then also sometimes experience being redirected to ED or StMUTC/ Moreover, a high volume of residents frequently self-refers to these services inappropriately. This exacerbates the pressure experienced by the ED and StMUTC.

In conjunction with StMUTC, who are keen to resolve issues and mitigate accompanying pressures experienced, Healthwatch Portsmouth developed a survey to find answers to key information about access to the service.

The aim is to identify gaps in the accessibility process and access routes to StMUTC so that recommendations may be made to improve outcomes for patients and reduce pressures on the services. The method and outcomes are presented next.

### **Method**

In person surveys were held at StMUTC on three occasions. Undertaken by HWP staff and supported by volunteers on Mon 24.10.22 (half-term) 10am-2pm; Wed 16.11.22 5-8pm; Mon 28.11.22 10am-2pm.

The survey asks 5 key questions and offers an opportunity to provide additional information:

Q1: How did you come to SM UTC today?

Q2: What was it that prompted your visit?

Q3: How long have you been here?

Q4: Do you feel that you have had the right care at the right time from the right person?

Q5: Please rate your experience here today.

Q6: Is there anything else you would like to add?

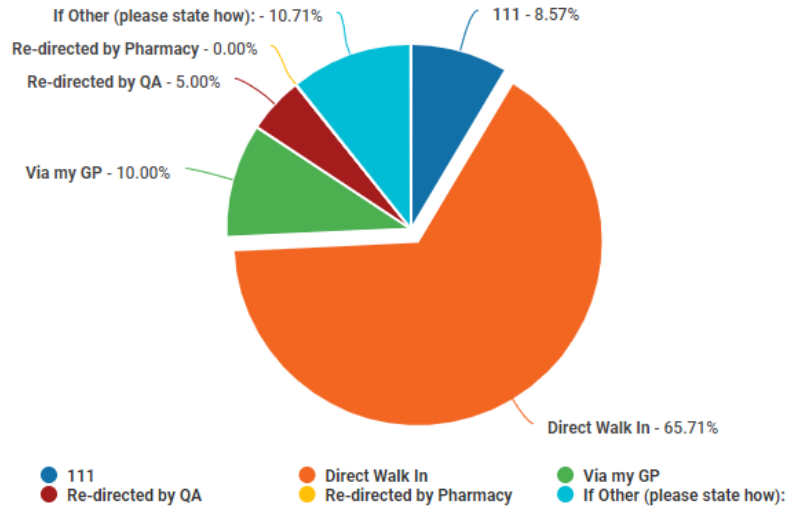
Responses were submitted directly using virtual tablets or completed manually using paper copies that were captured onto the digital survey after the events.

Of 174 total responses, 33 were partially completed and 140 were completed.

**Results**

**Q1: How did you come to SM UTC today? Q1: How did you come to SM UTC today?**

92 (65.71%) direct walk-ins  
**7 (5%) re-directed by QA**  
**12 (8.57%) via 111**  
 15 (10.71%)  
 Other  
**14 (10%) via GP**  
 0 (0%)  
 redirected by pharmacy



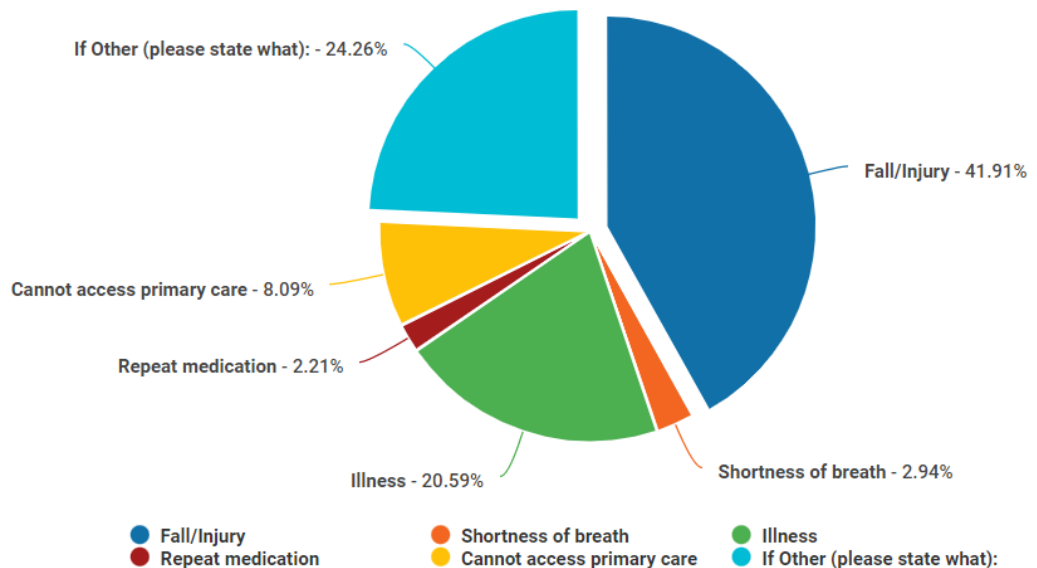
Analysis of the 15 'Other' category explanations, shows that 6 patients were direct walk ins. In addition, one was referred by their pharmacy; one by their optician. Taking the six additional walk ins into account, this means that **adjusted figures** reflect:

**98 (70%) direct walk-ins**  
**9 (6.42%) other**

**Q2: What was it that prompted your visit?**

**Q2: What was it that prompted your visit? Results chart by Smart Survey**

57 (41.91%) Fall/Injury  
 4 (2.94%) Shortness of breath  
 28 (20.59%) Illness  
 3 (2.21%) Repeat medication  
 11 (8.09%) Cannot access primary care  
 33 (24.26%) Other  
 [136 completed Q2]



Analysis of the 33 (24.26%) 'Other' category explanations, shows that 9 are due to a fall/injury, 4 are due to illness, 2 cannot access their GP for primary care.

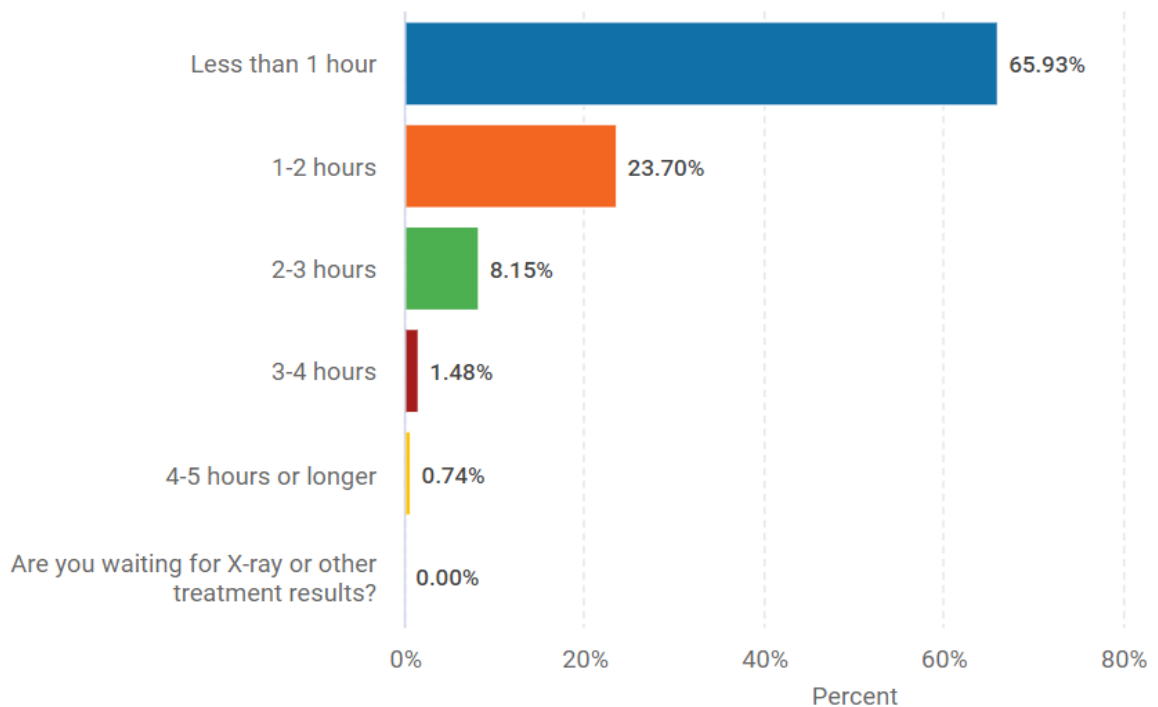
Taking the above into account, this means that **adjusted figures** reflect that what prompted the UTC access is attributed to:

- 18 (13.23%) Other**
- 66 (48.52%) Fall/injury**
- 32 (23.52%) Illness**
- 12 (8.82%) Cannot access primary care**

**Q3: How long have you been here? Results chart by Smart Survey**

- 89 (65.93%) Less than 1 hr
  - 32 (23.7%) 1-2 hours
  - 11 (8.15%) 2-3 hours
  - 2 (1.48%) 3-4 hours
  - 1 (0.74%) 4-5 hours or longer
- [135 completed Q3]

**Q4: Do you feel that you have had the right care at the right time from the right person? Results chart by Smart Survey**



- 123 (90.44%) Yes**
- 13 (9.56%) No**

[136 responses]

**Analysis of 62 comments provided explaining the choice of Y/N response:**

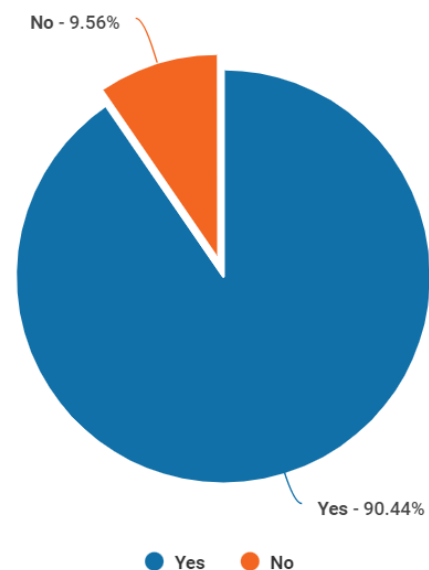
Explanations are mainly very positive about the quality of care received at St Mary's Urgent Treatment Centre. For example, saying that the care was: 'very thorough'; 'very professional'; access was 'quick and easy' and that 'no appointment is needed, unlike at the GP'.

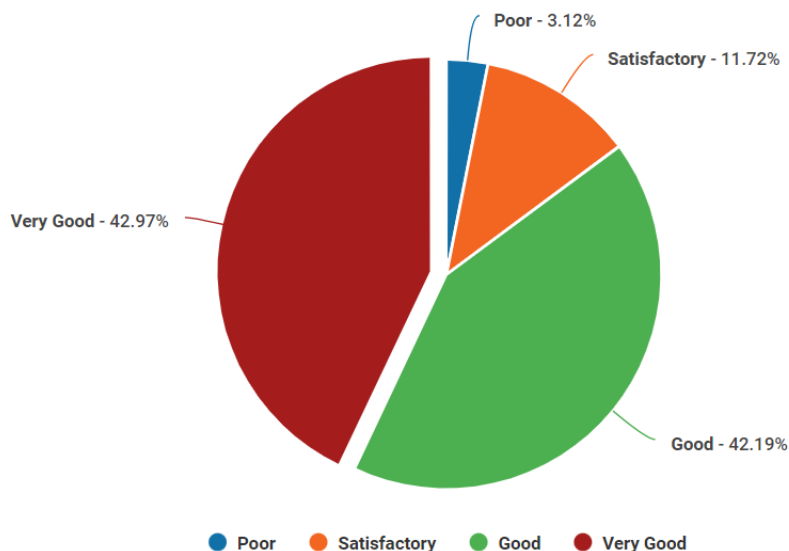
In addition, patients said they were seen 'by a nurse in less than 30 minutes'; 'doctors are friendly and helpful'; 'Actually reviewed by a GP rather than a nurse/paramedic practitioner'.

However, numerous responses reflect poor GP accessibility in Portsmouth.

1. 'Portsmouth are shocking, never book appointments and very unhelpful.'
2. 'Should have been able to contact my GP.....couldn't even get a telephone tone'
3. 'Wanted to be seen for condition by GP but not available so came to UTC for treatment, rec'd it.'
4. 'Contacted GP but no doctors appt available'
5. 'Did an online request for e-consult with GP but got no reply so self-referred'
6. 'It's just not worth trying to contact the GP'
7. 'Had to come in as not able to get GP appointment'
8. 'Should have been my GP'.
9. 'I feel I should have been able to access a GP'
10. 'Would have preferred to be able to see local GP rather than waiting a long time at the walk in'
11. 'Would have preferred to have been seen at local GP surgery''

**Q5: Please rate your experience here today.**





4 (3.12%) Poor  
 15 (11.72%) Satisfactory  
**54 (42.19%) Good**  
**55 (42.97%) Very Good**  
 [128 answered]

The majority of respondents, 85.16%, selected Good or Very Good.

**Q6: Is there anything else you would like to add?**

This question generated 39 responses. Similar to responses to Q4, an analysis of text responses to this question shows mostly high satisfaction experienced but difficulty experienced in accessing a GP. In addition, there are a few negative responses with concerns raised and suggestions made.

**Compliments**

- 'thank you for providing the medical care needed for those who have had gp's.'
- 'Comfortable waiting room if I have a seat, friendly and helpful staff,'
- 'Good because of wait otherwise v good,'
- 'Nurse was Very nice. V thorough.'
- 'Great staff but not enough staff'
- 'Connie is very nice'
- 'Doctor was lovely'
- 'Excellent service'
- 'Seen promptly. Staff were kind'
- 'Efficient'

**Comments about GP access:**

- 'Good service but would rather see GP'
- 'No appt needed, but did try GP first but nothing available'
- 'Drop-in service was good but would prefer to see GP'
- 'Didn't think it was urgent enough to warrant the hassle of trying to see a GP'

**Negative responses**

- 'Long wait gone home'

'This unit is seriously overwhelmed'

'Great staff but not enough staff, not enough car parking and wait times too long, especially for children. Also, people packed into waiting room with some coughing and passing on bugs to those with injuries.'

'Need more staff needed to see people more quickly. Because it's v crowded its possible, I might catch other people's bugs because there is no circulation of air'.

'Here we need to wait long time to see the doctor, it's very difficult for the patient .pls make it as soon as possible.'

Told to now go and have ears syringed at pharmacy or opticians

### **Suggestions Made**

'More seating more staff reduce waiting times'

'Would be useful to know how long the wait time is and how many patients are waiting to be seen today'

'More toys for kids to play with in waiting room inc. screen with cartoons'

'It would have been useful to know where test results were being sent - I have an MSU sample sent to QAH Microbiology for analysis. Unsure where results will be sent to be informed.'

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

So, overall, the patient experience at StUTC was a positive one from patients the vast majority of whom arrived without an appointment, the purpose for them attending being mostly due to a fall or injury, most people were waiting less than one hour, the vast majority feeling that they had had the right care at the right time from the right person. Some observations made by patients could be taken forward to improve the patient experience of the Urgent Treatment Centre, such as:

'Would be useful to know how long the wait time is and how many patients are waiting to be seen today'. **HWP recommend introducing digital wait times screen, linked to the new 'Waitless' NHS app informing patients of wait time at nearest UTC.**

'Great staff but not enough staff, not enough car parking and wait times too long, especially for children. Also, people packed into waiting room with some coughing and passing on bugs to those with injuries.' **HWP recommend having surge capacity staffing plan to cope with higher demand and achieve speedier flow through UTC .**

'It would have been useful to know where test results were being sent - I have an MSU sample sent to QAH Microbiology for analysis. Unsure where results will be sent to be informed.' **HWP recommend that patients are told routinely where their results will be sent or with an option to receive them via phone text or emailed to them.**

Previously, HWP conducted community-based research with patients who had used NHS 111First service to access care at QA Hospital Emergency Department: see Appendix

Ends

Healthwatch Portsmouth

March 2023

Appendix:

Previous Healthwatch Portsmouth community-based research.

Healthwatch Portsmouth found out patients' experience of using 111First in August-September 2021 and produced a report (dated September 21. Some of the recommendations made in that report can be linked to what is going on still with patients being re-directed to ST Mary's Urgent Treatment Centre. So we have included it as an appendix to our findings regarding patient experience of SMUTC.

- [Patients accessing NHS 111First: Survey responses Sept '21](#)
- [Narrative summary of patients experience of 111First](#)

We found the information included in the document (see link below) displayed at St Mary's UTC to be very helpful and hope that greater use is made of it.

- [What St Mary's UTC Can and Cannot treat](#)