

Runcorn Urgent Treatment Centre

Patient Feedback report – January 2024



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What is an Urgent Treatment Centre?

Halton has two Urgent Treatment Centres, located at Halton Hospital in Runcorn, and at the Health Care Resource Centre in Widnes.

Urgent treatment centres (UTCs) provide urgent medical help when it's not a life-threatening emergency.

Open at least 12 hours a day, every day, UTCs are equipped to investigate, diagnose, and deal with many of the most common injuries and illnesses people attend Emergency Departments (A&E) for.

People who go to a UTC are typically:

- mobile and able to move around
- in need of same day treatment.

People may also need some investigative tests to be carried out while they are in the UTC.

The UTC Principles and Standards¹ set out the minimum service that UTCs are expected to provide. As a priority, UTCs are expected to:

- open 7 days a week, 12 hours a day as a minimum
- see both booked and walk-in patients
- see both minor injuries and minor illnesses
- see patients of all ages, including children under 2
- have a basic consistent investigative and diagnostic offering on site (with clear pathways if these are not available in the UTC)
- accept appropriate ambulance arrivals
- have access to patient records
- clearly communicate what the service is for via consistent urgent treatment centre signage, to ensure everyone understands the service.

¹ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/urgent-treatment-centres-principles-and-standards/>

Why are we visiting the UTC?

We are visiting both UTC's in Halton as part of our planned public outreach and engagement sessions across the borough. The aim of the visits is to ask patients about their experience at the Urgent Treatment Centre, explore any themes emerging from comments made and feed these back to the hospitals, and service commissioners, to help improve services in the future.

Copies of our UTC reports can be found on our website - <https://bit.ly/hwhUTC2>

What we did

We carried out five visits to the Runcorn UTC between 30 October 2023 and 23 November 2023.

Each visit lasted between two and three hours and in total 113 people took the time to give us their experience. We used a two-part questionnaire to gather the views of patients. Part One covered their experiences prior to triage and treatment. Part Two was to be completed once the patient had been treated and discharged.

The information in this report gives a snapshot of the experiences of people attending the Runcorn Urgent Treatment Centre during our visits.

Due to the number of responses received the report cannot be considered to be fully representative of all patients attending the UTC. It is presented to provide a snapshot of the experiences of those who took part and to highlight areas for consideration by commissioners and providers.

Acknowledgement

We would like to thank all the staff and patients at NHS Runcorn Urgent Treatment Centre for their help and support during our visits.

Summary

Our visits to the Runcorn UTC took place on the following dates:

- 30 October 2023
- 6 November 2023
- 17 November 2023
- 23 November 2023
- 29 November 2023

In total 113 patients took time to give us their views.

During these visits, as with previous visits, we observed staff treating patients with dignity and respect and being helpful and courteous to patients, which is also reflected in the comments we collected.

As is shown in the feedback we've collected the UTC service is generally well valued by the people using it. The service continues to offer an excellent alternative for many patients who may have previously gone to A&E.

It continues to support a steady stream of patients, from Halton and increasingly from neighbouring areas, that are unable to get suitable appointments at their own GP practices and see the UTC as a viable alternative for treatment

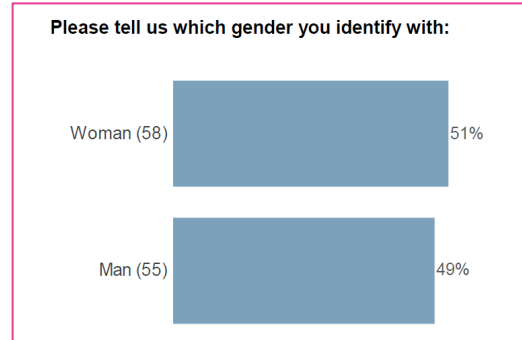
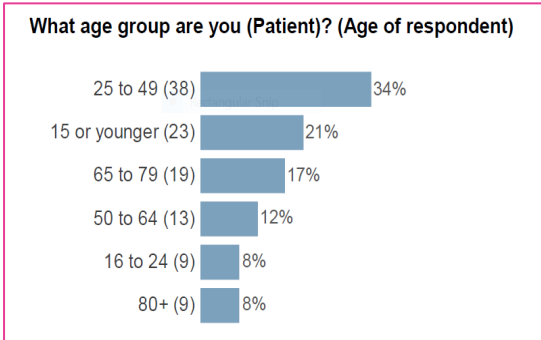
Suggestions and Recommendations

These suggestions and recommendations are made for both the service provider and service commissioners.

- 1.** Ensure that the UTC continues to be promoted as an easily accessible alternative to A&E for all patients with urgent care needs.
- 2.** Encourage the public to make more use of the NHS 111 service (telephone and online) when they have an urgent unexpected healthcare need, as NHS 111 can direct patients to the most appropriate service; this may be an urgent or same day appointment at the UTC, rather than A&E.
- 3.** We ask that the Hospital Trust and service commissioners look at ways to show how this patient feedback has been used to help make decisions about planning and improving services, possibly in the form of regular 'You said, we did' updates.
- 4.** We are aware of the constraints of space on the service, but due to feedback received on these and previous visits, from families with young children, we believe there's a need to review the suitability of the waiting area for families with very young children.

Survey Results

Demographics – Age and Gender



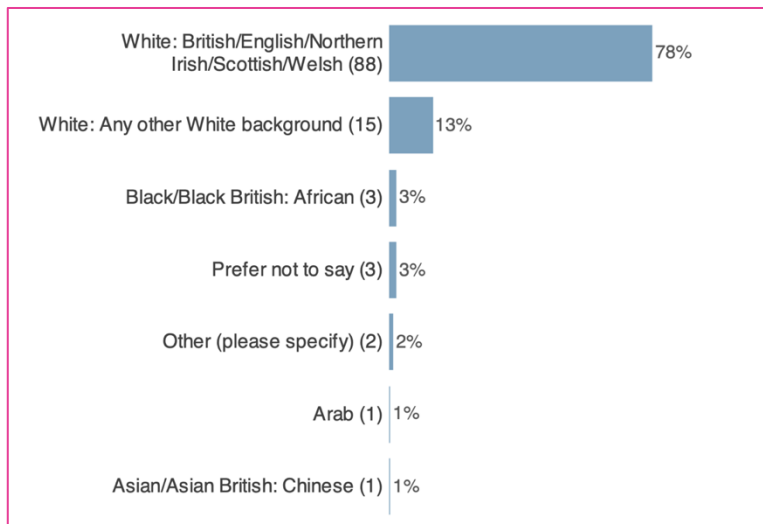
111 patients gave us their age details, 29% of patients were aged under 25. 46% were between the ages of 25 and 64.

17% of patients were aged between 65 and 79 years old.

Two patients preferred not to give their age.

All 113 patients gave us details of their gender. 51% of patients were women, 49% men.

Ethnicity

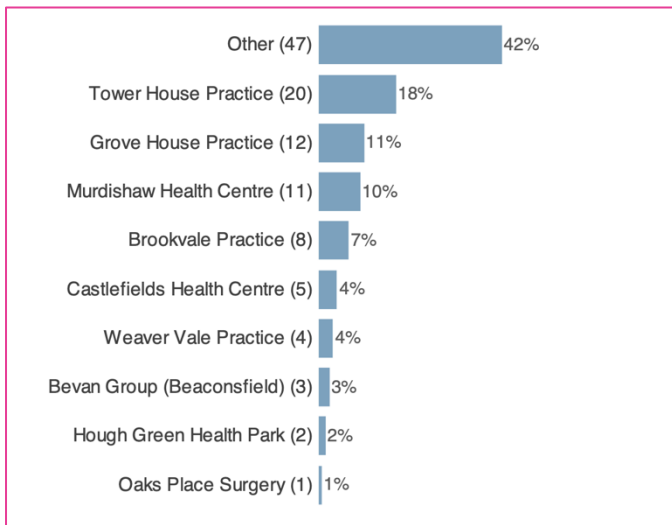


110 patients gave details of their ethnicity, with three people preferring not to answer.

Other ethnicities:

- Kurdish
- Latin American

Which GP practice are you registered with?



Of the 113 people who we spoke to, 66 were registered at GP practices in Halton while 47 (42%), were registered with GP practices outside Halton.

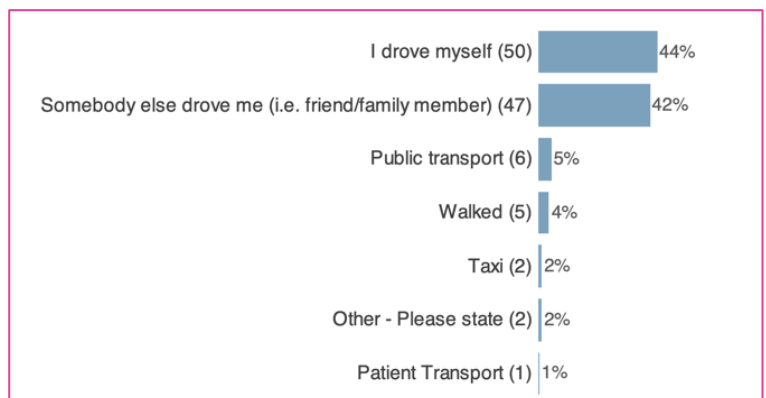
53% of patients were registered with Runcorn GP practices, and the remaining 5% were registered with Widnes GP practices.

How did you travel here today?

Most patients arrived at the UTC by car, with 44% driving themselves and another 42% getting a lift from a friend or family member.

Six people arrived via public transport, while five told us they lived close enough to walk to the

UTC. One person arrived at the UTC by bicycle. Two people person used the hospital shuttle bus from Warrington, while another patient arrived via the patient transport service.

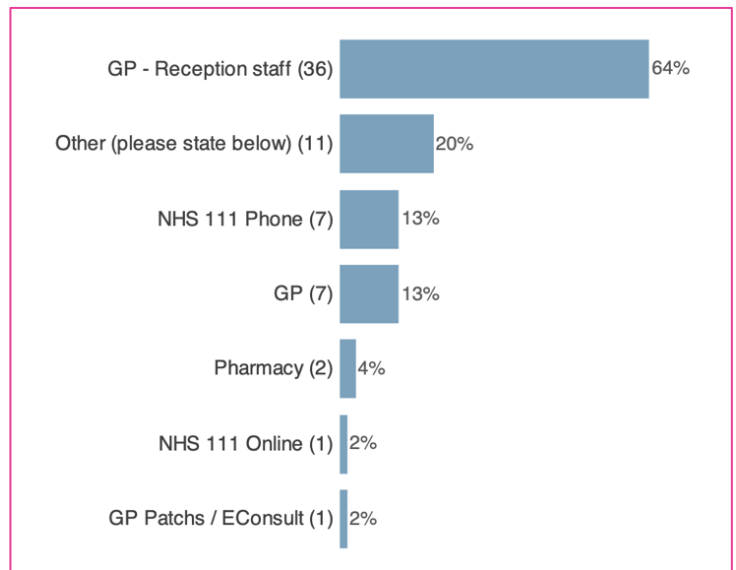


Did you look for help or advice elsewhere before coming to the UTC? (multi-choice)

50.4% (57) of all patients had looked elsewhere for help or advice before attending the UTC. Many patients had tried more than one route before visiting the UTC.

Of these 57 who'd tried for help elsewhere:

- 36 people (64%) had contacted their GP practice.
- Seven had seen a GP prior to attending the UTC.
- One person told us they had rung their GP practice and had been unable to get through.
- One person had been advised it would be over a week to get a GP appointment.
- One person had tried to use the online Patchs system, but it wasn't working.
- Seven had contacted the NHS 111 phone line, with one person also trying the NHS 111 online system.
- Two people said they had visited a pharmacy for help.
- Four people had tried their local A&E departments (Warrington, Oldham and Chester) but these had long waiting times.
- One person visiting family in Halton had tried to get an appointment with a local GP but was turned away.
- One person had been to Widnes UTC.
- A couple of people had attended the UTC previously and were returning for dressing changes.



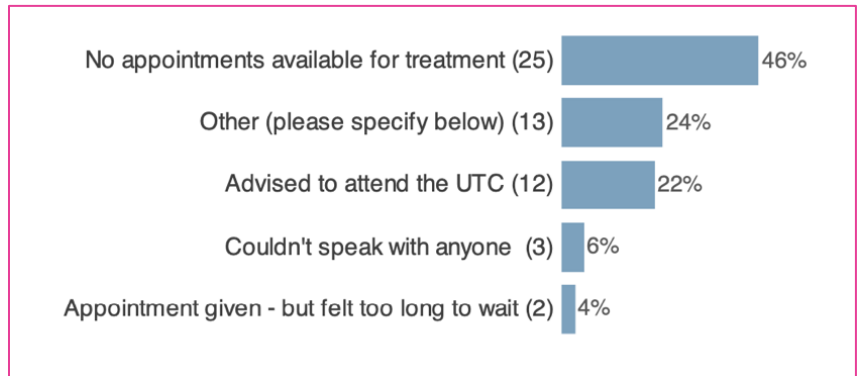
When we break the figures down just for the 66 people who told us they were registered at Halton GP practices, we see very similar statistics, with exactly 50% (33) saying they had sought help elsewhere before attending the UTC.

What was the outcome? (multi-choice)

Twenty-five people said they were unable to get an appointment at their GP practice. Twelve were advised to attend the UTC by their GP practice.

One person who had rung NHS

111 for help told us, **'I couldn't get through to talk to anyone today, I called 111 yesterday was told I would be called back, and I'm still waiting for call back over 24 hours later.'**



Another person who had brought a child to the UTC explained their reason for attending saying, **'I tried NHS111, pharmacy and GP. All I wanted was to be able to have a urine specimen check on dip stick as I think she has a UTI. Reception at GP stated they couldn't do it nor could pharmacy, so we had to come all the way here.'**

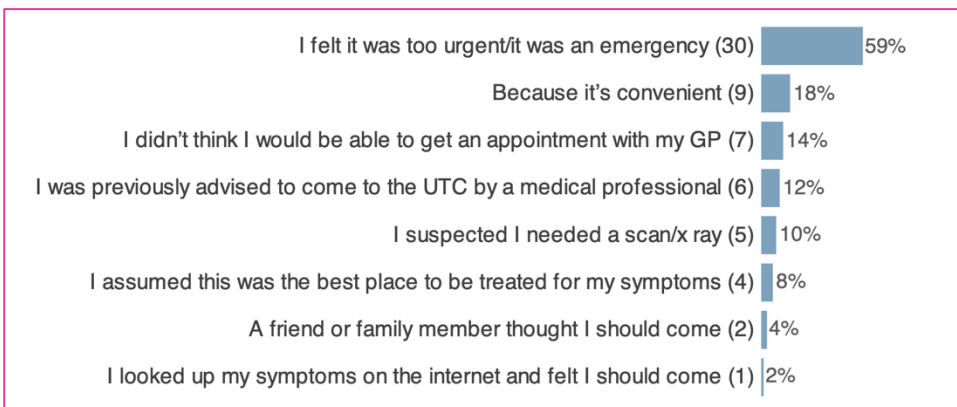
Of the 33 people registered at Halton GP practices, 52% (17), said there were no appointments available for treatment.

If you didn't try going anywhere else instead of the UTC, why not? (multi-choice)

Fifty-six people told us they came straight to the UTC.

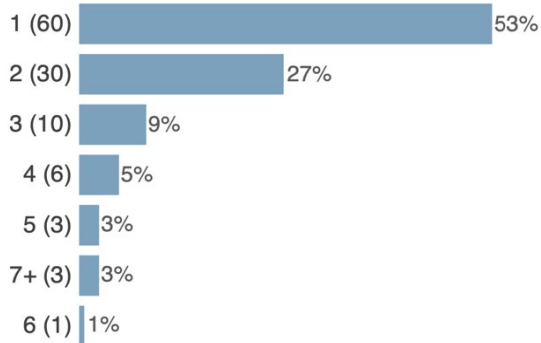
The reasons why they didn't look for help elsewhere first included:

- 30 said they felt it was too urgent to go elsewhere.
- Nine people said UTC was the most convenient option for them.
- Seven people thought they wouldn't be able to get a GP appointment and hadn't tried.
- Four said they assumed it was the best place to be seen with their symptoms / condition.
- One person had looked up their symptoms on the internet and felt they should go to the UTC.
- Six people had previously been advised to come to the UTC by a medical professional.
- Five people suspected they needed a scan or x-ray and through the UTC was the best option.
- Two people had been advised to attend by friends/family.



How many times have you visited the UTC in the past year?

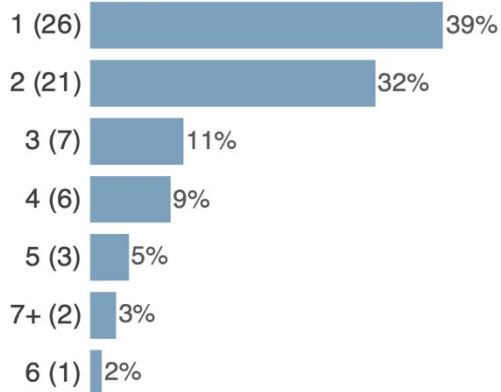
Patients from all areas – Visits to the UTC



For just over half of the 113 people we spoke with, 53%, it was their first time at the UTC in the past year.

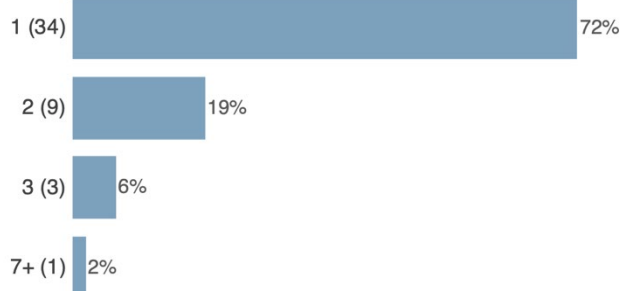
36% had visited the UTC two or three times while 12% had been visited four times or more during the previous 12 months.

Patients from Halton – Visits to the UTC



When we break down the figures by area we can see that 39% of Halton patients were at the UTC for the first time in over a year. Just under 1 in 3 patients, 32%, were at the UTC for the second time, while 18% had used the UTC four or more times in the past 12 months.

Patients from outside Halton – Visits to the UTC

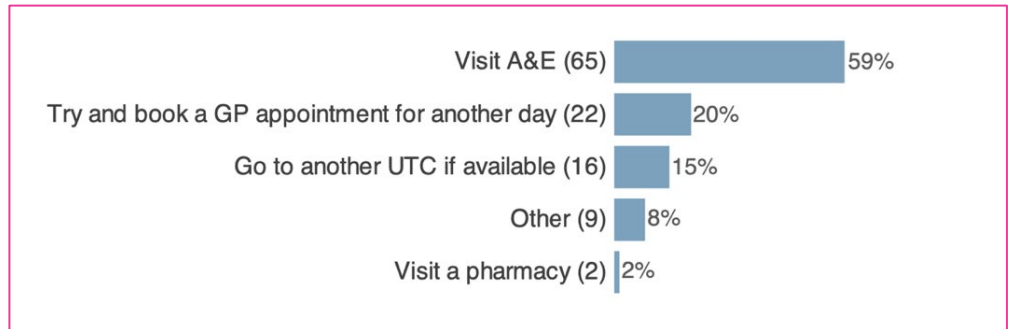


For most patients from outside Halton, 72%, it was their first visit to the UTC in a year or more.

One patient had visited more than seven times for regular dressing changes.

What would you have done today if there wasn't an Urgent Treatment Centre locally?

59% of people said they would have gone to A&E if there hadn't been the option of an Urgent Treatment Centre to visit.



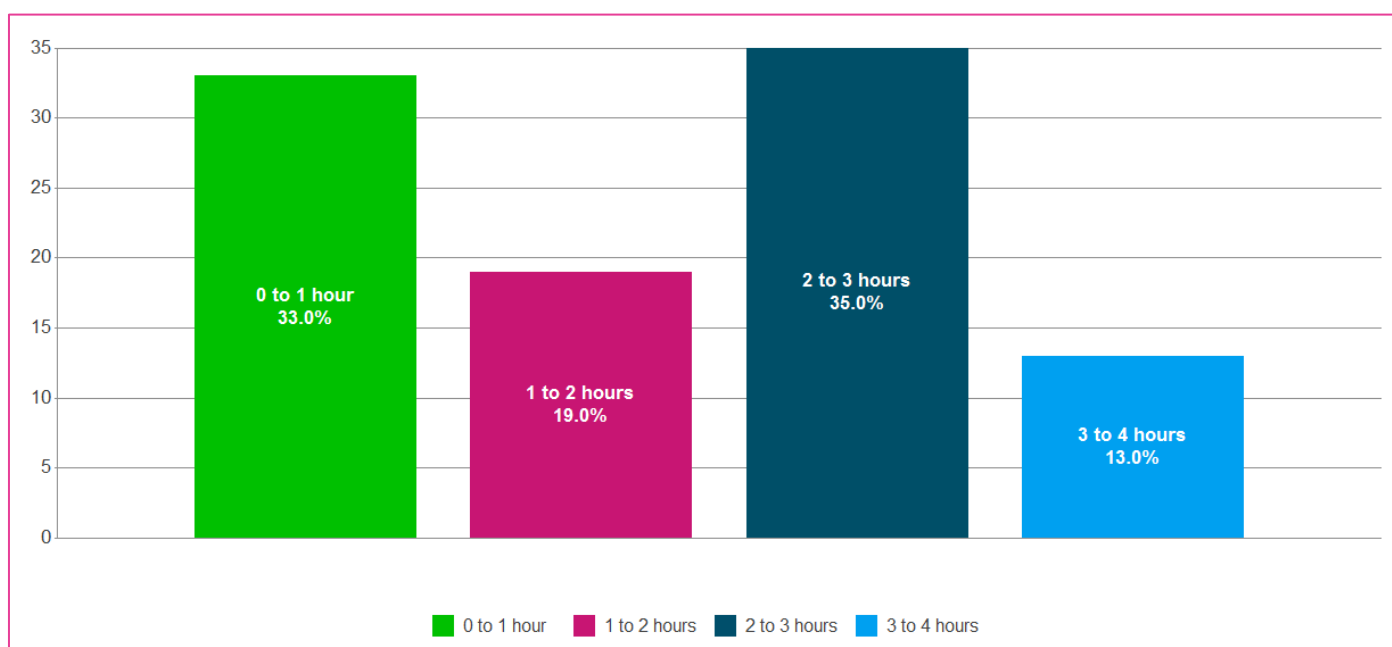
One in five people (20%) said they would have tried to book an appointment with their GP for another day. Another 15% would have looked for a UTC in another area to attend. Two people told us they would have visited a pharmacy for help instead.

Part Two results

We asked people we initially spoke with to complete a second questionnaire once they'd been seen and treated at the UTC. As our visits to the UTC are generally less than four hours in length, we ask for the second questionnaire to be returned via Freepost, or handed in to the UTC reception and forms are then posted on to us. Not everyone completes and returns this form. In total we received 51 'Part 2' forms, a response rate of 45%.

The information given below is based on the responses of these 51 patients.

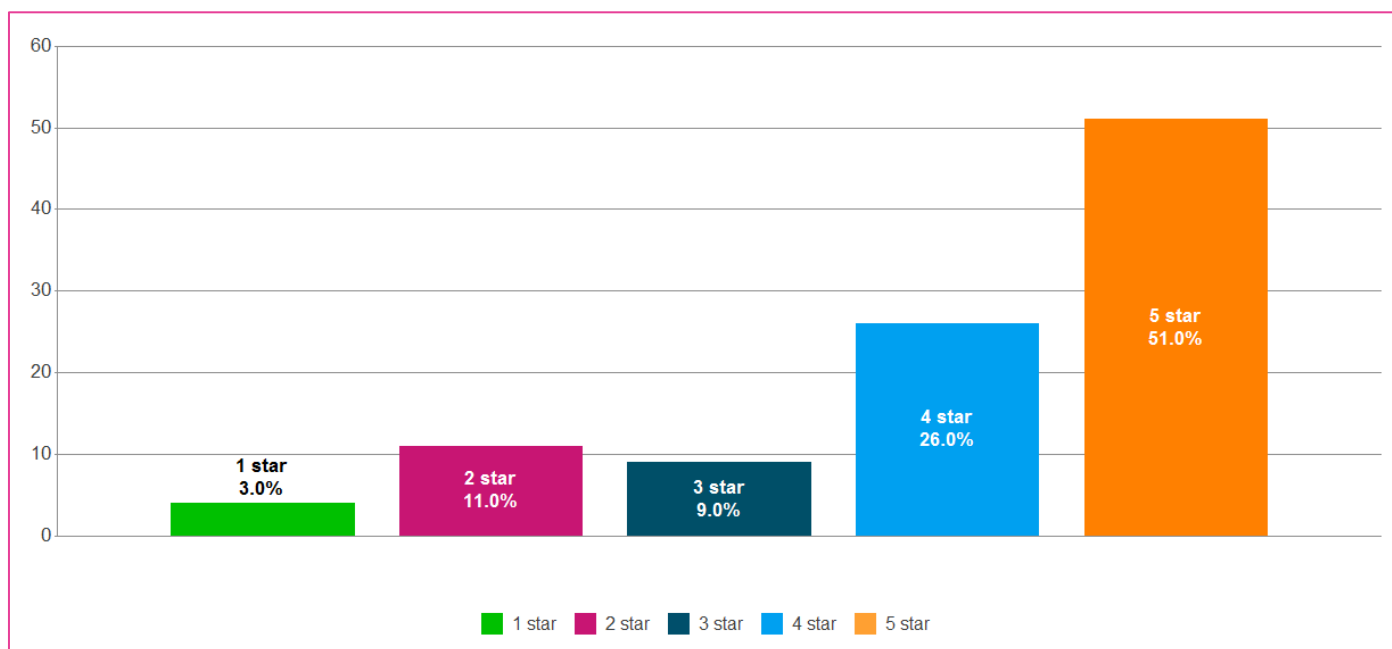
How long has it taken from your arrival at the Urgent Treatment Centre to being treated and discharged?



The UTC was fairly busy during all our visits, but all patients who completed this question were treated and discharged within four hours.

- 33% were seen and discharged within one hour
- 54% were seen and discharged within one to three hours
- 13% were seen and discharged between three to four hours after arrival.

On a scale of 1 to 5 stars (1 being poor and 5 being excellent), please rate your experience today.



51% of people rated their experience at the UTC as five star, with a further 25% rating it as four star. Staff at the UTC were singled out for praise by many of the people we spoke with, with one person telling us, ***'As on previous visits it was excellent care. I did not have to wait long, the staff are friendly but professional and explain everything. Mum felt safe at all times. We think the Urgent Care is a great facility.'***

Other comments included:

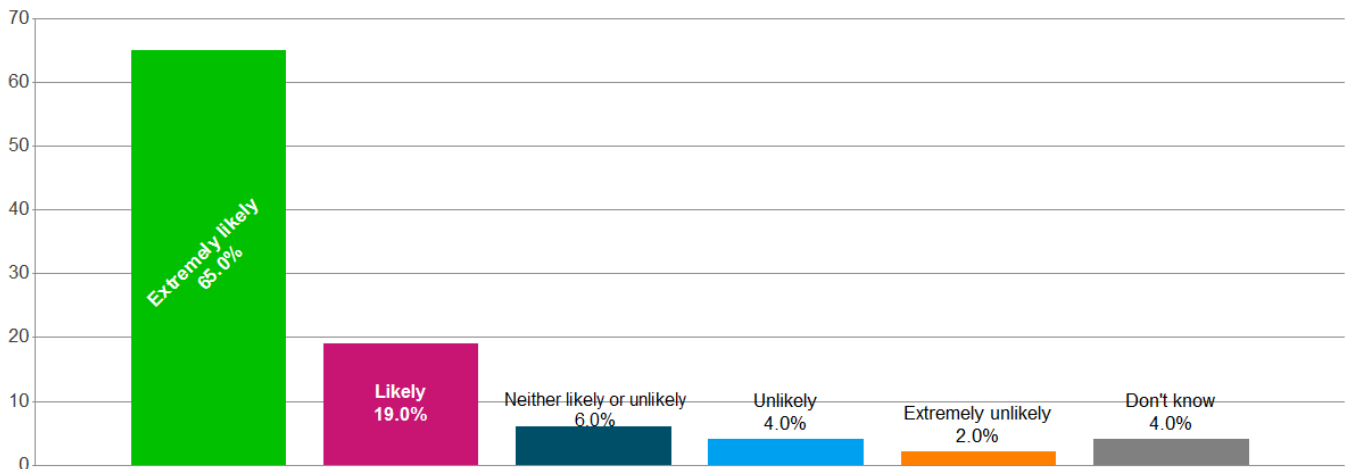
- Overall pleased with the treatment received today. A tannoy system for calling patients would be beneficial.
- Scored 4 due to long waiting times. It's an essential service in the community. Especially as the doctors surgeries are inaccessible at the moment either due to busy phone lines or no appointments available.
- As a family we would be lost without urgent care.
- Always kind, they're apologetic for waiting. I get looked after.
- Good level of care clean and bright environment to sit and wait.
- Staff were very friendly.
- Long wait but that is down to known pressures within the NHS. Once with the doctor my problem was sorted very quickly.

- *Excellent service, very friendly. The nurse explained everything very well.*
- *I was handled efficiently and with care.*
- *Very efficient system that ensured waiting time was minimal, we were very impressed with the positive friendly staff.*
- *Welcoming fast diagnosis*
- *Everyone here is lovely and friendly and very helpful.*
- *Quick friendly service.*
- *Seen very quickly by very good nurses.*
- *Staff were all fantastic and kept me fully informed throughout my stay.*
- *Nurse absolutely fantastic great care for myself.*
- *Staff are always very friendly.*
- *Excellent, so helpful here and answer all questions. They have been brilliant with me.*

While the UTC experience was positive for the majority of people, there were a number of people who felt there was room for improvement.

- *I was waiting such a long time to be seen today. I called NHS 111 yesterday and was advised I'd get a call back. No call back was given, so I had to come to the Urgent Treatment Centre.*
- *I was sent back to GP. It was a waste of time.*
- *Doctor and nurses were very helpful but the wait was too long. The waiting room was extremely warm and sitting with a 6-month-old baby was very difficult.*
- *Triage was no different to booking in at reception. They just asked what I had done.*
- *My attendance to UTC was not appropriate.*
- *Receptionists moody on both visits. I had a long wait. Sent away with no antibiotics first time. I had to come back a week later.*
- *Awful only triaged nearly 2 hours after service is really poor.*

How likely would you be to recommend this service to a friend or family member if they needed similar care or treatment?



84% said they would be **'Likely' or 'Extremely likely'** to recommend the service. While still high this is a slight drop of 7% from the figures in our feedback report in March 2023.

6% gave a neutral **'neither likely or unlikely'** rating, with a further 6% saying they would be **'unlikely or extremely unlikely'** to recommend the service.

Additional comments

- Visited Saturday following a fall and they were brilliant today. There is another pre-arranged check-up for following Saturday.*
- I have been messed around something terrible by Widnes services, Widnes UTC and Treatment Room Booking Line. Following a toenail removal my toe got infected and podiatry gave me a number to call, the man was really rude and said there were no appointments, then he told me without a referral from GP I still couldn't get an appointment, I told him podiatry had given me the number. My daughter had to go to my GP and request a referral to the treatment room the GP didn't have a clue as he hadn't seen me, but he did refer me. There is still no appointments so I went to UTC in Widnes and they stated they didn't*

deal with anything above the foot as my ankle and top of my foot has now ulcerated they sent me here to Runcorn. The staff here have been fantastic. This is my 3rd visit for dressing changes and they said I can carry on coming until the treatment room can take me but that I need to attend that as they specialise in different ulcers and I might need a different treatment. This definitely needs to be looked at and maybe invest in more staff, bigger resources, as I'm 82 and having to go from pillar to post is exhausting.

- I think there should be provision for people, especially elderly, to drop a urine sample off to have a dip test as lots of elderly get urine infections shouldn't have to wait hours at UTC.*
- Warrington have no dermatology, so I was advised to try Halton, is this a shortage in services?*

Service Provider response

Thank you for the report. The report and feedback will be communicated to the Lead Nurses of UTC.

The Lead Nurses will revisit the areas to look at improvements.

Additionally, we will share the positive feedback with the UTC teams.

Claire Grice

Warrington & Halton Hospitals Interim Head of Patient Experience and Inclusion



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