

Urgent treatment centres update: Hampshire

1. Urgent treatment centres (UTCs) are GP and nurse-led services, open at least 12 hours a day, every day of the year.
2. The concept of UTCs were established following the publication the NHS Long Term Plan in 2018 and broaden out the range of services available in Minor Injury Units (MIUs). Whereas previously a MIU would be focused predominantly on treating injuries, a UTC can also treat a number of minor illnesses in addition to injuries. The development of UTCs in recent years mean we have moved to a genuinely integrated urgent care service, aligning NHS 111, UTC and routine and urgent GP appointments with face to face urgent care. For example, GPs have a key leadership role in UTCs which did not exist before they were established with the MIU concept.
3. In Hampshire, UTCs offer appointments that can be booked through 111, and are equipped to diagnose and deal with many of the most common ailments people attend Emergency Departments (EDs) for. Therefore UTCs play a vital role in easing pressure on EDs in our local hospitals, creating more capacity for this part of the system to treat the most serious and life threatening cases.
4. By encouraging patients to book through NHS 111, this provides an additional opportunity for the NHS to direct patients to the most appropriate and closest service to them. For example, depending on the illness, NHS 111 may connect a patient to a nurse, emergency dentist or a GP for an appointment. If a patient requires an urgent face-to-face appointment as a result of the assessment on the phone, they may be directed to the nearest urgent treatment centre and NHS 111 may be able to book an appointment directly into a UTC. Alternatively patients can walk into their nearest urgent treatment centre without an appointment and wait.
5. These services are led by experienced clinicians including highly skilled nurse practitioners, paramedics, GPs and other health professionals who can offer treatment, advice and information. Many services also have on-site x-ray facilities. Waiting times can be shorter than at Emergency Departments and the team can also refer or direct patients to the most appropriate service if required, supporting patients to access the right care in the right place, in a timely way.
6. Urgent Treatment Centres can help with a number of conditions including:
 - Strains and sprains
 - Suspected broken limbs
 - Minor head injuries
 - Cuts and grazes
 - Bites and stings
 - Minor scalds and burns
 - Ear and throat infections

- Skin infections and rashes
 - Minor eye problems
 - Coughs and colds
 - Feverish illness in adults
 - Feverish illness in children
 - Abdominal pain
 - Emergency contraception
7. In Hampshire we have a mixed model of Urgent Treatment Centres and minor injuries clinics available to our population. UTCs in operation in our area are:
- Gosport War Memorial Hospital Urgent Treatment Centre (provided by Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust)
 - Lymington Urgent Treatment Centre (provided by Partnering Health Limited)
 - Petersfield Urgent Treatment Centre (provided by Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust)
 - Urgent Treatment Centre, St Mary's, Portsmouth (provided by Practice Group Plus).
 - Southampton Urgent Treatment Centre, the Royal South Hants Hospital, Southampton (provided by Practice Group Plus).
8. In Andover, a minor injuries clinic exists at Andover War Memorial Hospital. This service is provided by Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (HHFT). This provides similar services to UTCs which are accessible to patients by booking an appointment through NHS 111. This means the clinic in Andover is benefiting from integration with 111, in line with UTCs across the country, but a walk-in option is not currently available.
9. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, UTCs have played a vital role in supporting the system and, in particular, pressure on our Emergency Departments. In 2021, almost 140,000 people received treatment at a UTC in Hampshire and Isle of Wight, with our two busiest sites being in the cities of Southampton and Portsmouth.
10. Over a quarter of those who have received treatment at a UTC in Hampshire have been recorded as being discharged home following treatment and we believe this number to be much higher. If these attendances had been to ED rather than a UTC, the pressure on our system would have been considerable.
11. Across our area, we are seeing a trend of more people attending UTCs, as shown in the graph below. As a system, we continue with our work to promote this service to the public, to help patients make an informed choice of where to go. This is in addition to promoting the 111 service (both telephone and online) which will direct patients to the most appropriate service based on the information shared. We are also exploring ways to help patients make an informed choice based on issues important to them, such as waiting times.

Some UTC websites will provide detail on the live waiting times for their sites, but across Hampshire and Isle of Wight we are putting together an app/digital platform where patients will be able to access live information about waiting times at UTCs and EDs in their area.

