

Briefing: Wallingford First Aid Unit

October 2020

Background

Oxfordshire currently has a variety of different services offering same day access for urgent care:

- **Wallingford First Aid Unit**
- Bicester First Aid Unit
- Chipping Norton First Aid Unit
- Witney Minor Injury Unit
- Abingdon Minor Injury Unit
- Henley Minor Injury Unit

Each of these services operate differently with varying opening hours, different providers delivering the service and different levels of care available to patients.

This is reflected across the country with all CCG areas offering different community based urgent care services under different names including: walk-in centres, minor injury units, urgent care centres etc.

NHS England has issued guidance to address this variation, introduce some consistency across the NHS and reduce potential misunderstanding among the public.

In future, all urgent care services will be designated as:

- Emergency Departments in acute hospitals
- Urgent Treatment Centres with a standard specification describing the service provided.
- All other same day access urgent care services are expected to be integrated into primary care as an alternative community service.

In some parts of England, this work has resulted in services closing. It is the intention of Oxfordshire CCG to find solutions to ensure these services are retained and improved for local communities.

OCCG is currently planning how to ensure the current community-based MIUs and FAUs can continue to provide valued services to local populations, while being consistent with the national guidance.

This includes reviewing the patient pathway and taking the opportunity to improve the efficiency within the Oxfordshire system by reducing the number of walk-in type appointments and increasing the number of booked, same day appointments. This will improve the care provided to patients, improve the convenience for patients and

potentially reduce the number of inappropriate attendances at emergency departments at Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust hospitals.

The Wallingford First Aid Unit is a very small unit, based in Wallingford Community Hospital and run by staff from Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust (OHFT). Pre-COVID it saw around 140 attendances per month and serves both the local population (approx 7,995) and out-of-area visitors. Locally this unit has had challenges in maintaining consistent staffing which has led to issues with provision. It has been closed since the outbreak of the pandemic while staff were redeployed to other services.

The unit's opening times pre-COVID corresponded to that of the Wallingford GP practice, which is located in an adjacent building on the site and is open from 8 am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday.

Oxfordshire CCG is now in the final stages of incorporating the FAU activity into the Wallingford Medical Practice premises, with practice staff providing the service from early November 2020. Patients will continue to access the service via an appointment through NHS 111 or through a GP, but are not required to be registered Wallingford GP Practice patients (although around 50% of those attending the FAU are). Some walk-in visits will be possible but under strict COVID-19 safety guidelines.

Giving patients a booked appointment time will bring benefits for patients and the service. For example, the staff will be able to access more information about their patients to support their care and a wider range of medical support will also be available to them.

Public engagement

Although the proposed move of the service is not expected to cause negative impact on patients, OCCG is mindful of the need to engage with the local community and key stakeholders to explain the plan and understand any concerns they may have. It is possible that public feedback may shed light on unforeseen consequences that will require mitigation or action.

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented new challenges in engaging with patients, public and stakeholders over the future delivery of this service (and many others).

As a result of social distancing restrictions it is not possible to hold face to face meetings to hear the views of stakeholders, however we are undertaking the following:

Communications and engagement timeline:

Action	Date	Who	Complete
Request Healthwatch Oxfordshire to send briefing note outlining the plan to PPGs of surrounding GP practices and ask for feedback	w/c 05/10/2020	OCCG Comms	

Send outline of proposed changes to Wallingford GP practice for website/newsletter with feedback invitations to OCCG (via Talking Health email).	w/c 05/10/2020	OCCG Comms	
Send outline of proposed changes to Mill Stream Surgery (Benson) and Goring and Woodcote Medical Practice on website/newsletters of with feedback invitations to OCCG (via Talking Health email).	w/c 12/10/2020	OCCG Comms	
Media release for Oxford Mail requesting online feedback via the OCCG Talking Health email address or postal response to Jubilee House.	w/c 12/10/2020	OCCG Comms	
Social media posts to invite feedback with link to Talking Health email	w/c 12/10/2020	OCCG Comms	
Send media release to OHFT to post on website with feedback invitations to OCCG (via Talking Health email or post).	w/c 12/10/2020	OCCG Comms	

Outline of proposals and public engagement on the Oxfordshire system stakeholder briefing	w/c 12/10/2020	OCCG Comms	
Online reminders of feedback invitations	w/c 19/10/2020	OCCG Comms	
Engagement ends	23/10/2020		
Brief feedback report and actions	w/c 26/10/2020	OCCG Comms	
FAU service opens at Wallingford Medical Practice	w/c 02/11/2020	Wallingford Medical Practice	
Media release	w/c 02/11/2020	OCCG Comms/Wallingford Medical Practice	
Social media	w/c 02/11/2020	OCCG Comms	