

## **Impact assessment of the suspension of overnight access to urgent care services at North Tyneside General Hospital – October 2018**

### **1. Background**

Northumbria Healthcare initiated the suspension of overnight access to urgent care services at North Tyneside General Hospital ('Rake Lane') in December 2016. The trust argued that the service was poorly utilised between 24.00 – 08.00 and that more effective use of the clinical workforce could be made if provision was centralised at NSECH during the overnight period. This was part of a wider reconfiguration which resulted in urgent care services in Hexham, Wansbeck and North Tyneside being closed overnight.

In late September 2017, Northumberland CCG announced that it planned to re-introduce overnight urgent care services in Hexham and Wansbeck from 30<sup>th</sup> October 2017. North Tyneside CCG declined to follow Northumberland's decision on the grounds that:

- The Urgent Care Service at Rake Lane Hospital was not well-used during the overnight period.
- The CCG could not justify a decision to withdraw clinicians from front-line A&E services in order to staff an under-utilised walk-in service which only deals with minor conditions.
- The CCG is no longer proposing to commission 24 hour walk-in access as part of the new Integrated Urgent Care Service for North Tyneside.

### **2. Utilisation of urgent care services in North Tyneside during the overnight period**

North Tyneside CCG uses the Secondary Uses Service system (SUS) to monitor the volume and types of clinical activity presenting at local A&E departments and urgent care centres. The following tables show the average number of North Tyneside urgent care attendances per hour at Rake Lane Hospital, the Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital (NSECH) and the Royal Victoria Infirmary (RVI) between 23.00 and 08.00.

Table 1 shows the average number of attendances per hour at North Tyneside General Hospital (Rake Lane) in the 6 months prior to the suspension of overnight access in December 2016.

<b>Table 1 - Average attendances per hour at NTGH 01/06/16 - 30/11/16</b>							
<b>Hour / Day</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Sunday</b>
23	0.56	0.83	0.78	0.94	0.53	0.82	0.76
00	0.22	0.33	0.22	0.24	0.76	0.29	0.24
01	0.06	0.28	0.33	0.00	0.35	0.18	0.47
02	0.11	0.06	0.22	0.18	0.12	0.24	0.12
03	0.11	0.06	0.11	0.18	0.18	0.35	0.00
04	0.11	0.00	0.11	0.18	0.06	0.00	0.29
05	0.06	0.22	0.11	0.06	0.35	0.18	0.24
06	0.17	0.33	0.50	0.29	0.12	0.24	0.29
07	1.44	1.39	1.56	1.59	1.47	1.12	1.53
<b>Total average attendances per night</b>	<b>2.83</b>	<b>3.50</b>	<b>3.94</b>	<b>3.65</b>	<b>3.94</b>	<b>3.41</b>	<b>3.94</b>

Table 2 shows the average number of attendances per hour by North Tyneside residents with urgent care needs at NSECH in the 6 months prior to the suspension of overnight access to walk-in services at Rake Lane in December 2016.

<b>Table 2 - Average attendances per hour at NSECH 01/06/16 - 30/11/16 NORTH TYNESIDE RESIDENTS ONLY</b>							
<b>Hour / Day</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Sunday</b>
23	1.33	0.72	0.83	0.71	0.82	0.71	0.41
00	0.72	0.22	0.56	0.41	0.47	0.29	0.94
01	0.22	0.61	0.56	0.29	0.76	0.24	0.59
02	0.28	0.44	0.44	0.24	0.53	0.29	0.71
03	0.11	0.33	0.44	0.18	0.65	0.47	0.59
04	0.33	0.22	0.17	0.18	0.12	0.41	0.41
05	0.11	0.17	0.61	0.35	0.47	0.29	0.53
06	0.28	0.39	0.28	0.35	0.35	0.12	0.12
07	0.39	0.56	0.50	0.35	0.53	0.35	0.35
<b>Total average attendances per night</b>	<b>3.78</b>	<b>3.67</b>	<b>4.39</b>	<b>3.06</b>	<b>4.71</b>	<b>3.18</b>	<b>4.65</b>

Table 3 shows the average number of attendances per hour by North Tyneside residents with urgent care needs at NSECH in the 6 months after the suspension of overnight access to walk-in services at Rake Lane in December 2016.

<b>Table 3 - Average attendances per hour at NSECH 01/12/16 - 31/05/17 NORTH TYNESIDE RESIDENTS ONLY</b>							
<b>Hour / Day</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Sunday</b>
23	0.92	0.81	0.92	1.16	0.69	0.81	1.31
00	0.54	0.58	0.88	0.52	0.54	0.23	1.12
01	0.42	0.54	0.50	0.52	0.42	0.65	0.62
02	0.42	0.31	0.62	0.28	0.54	0.31	0.69
03	0.35	0.27	0.27	0.20	0.23	0.46	0.69
04	0.27	0.19	0.38	0.24	0.50	0.46	0.54
05	0.35	0.23	0.42	0.32	0.23	0.35	0.31
06	0.38	0.46	0.15	0.16	0.42	0.15	0.42
07	0.54	0.31	0.46	0.68	0.35	0.35	0.31
<b>Total average attendances per night</b>	<b>4.19</b>	<b>3.69</b>	<b>4.62</b>	<b>4.08</b>	<b>3.92</b>	<b>3.77</b>	<b>6.00</b>

Tables 4 and 5 show the same data for North Tyneside urgent care attendances at the RVI

Hour / Day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
23	0.89	0.56	0.83	0.82	0.65	0.82	1.06
00	0.89	0.61	0.61	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.82
01	0.50	0.56	0.61	0.12	0.47	0.59	0.41
02	0.22	0.44	0.17	0.35	0.41	0.47	0.35
03	0.22	0.28	0.50	0.65	0.18	0.41	0.53
04	0.17	0.33	0.17	0.18	0.18	0.29	0.53
05	0.06	0.22	0.33	0.18	0.12	0.41	0.18
06	0.28	0.17	0.17	0.29	0.18	0.18	0.12
07	0.00	0.22	0.50	0.59	0.24	0.18	0.35
<b>Total average attendances per night</b>	<b>3.22</b>	<b>3.39</b>	<b>3.89</b>	<b>3.47</b>	<b>2.71</b>	<b>3.65</b>	<b>4.35</b>

Hour / Day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
23	0.54	0.65	0.77	0.60	0.65	1.00	0.38
00	0.73	0.88	0.73	0.56	0.42	1.15	0.96
01	0.81	0.31	0.58	0.48	0.54	0.58	0.58
02	0.35	0.23	0.23	0.44	0.50	0.54	0.50
03	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.08	0.31	0.19	0.58
04	0.27	0.27	0.31	0.28	0.27	0.23	0.46
05	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.24	0.31	0.12	0.42
06	0.15	0.27	0.23	0.04	0.08	0.12	0.23
07	0.12	0.08	0.42	0.36	0.35	0.19	0.27
<b>Total average attendances per night</b>	<b>3.35</b>	<b>3.08</b>	<b>3.65</b>	<b>3.08</b>	<b>3.42</b>	<b>4.12</b>	<b>4.38</b>

A total of 763 patients used the urgent care service at Rake Lane Hospital between 23.00 – 08.00 between June 2016 – December 2016. Overnight attendances accounted for 5% of the total activity dealt with by the service during this period. 483 of those patients (63%) required either no medical investigation or treatment, or only the most basic forms of healthcare (e.g. provision of written advice, booster inoculation, oral administration of medication, application of steristrips). 316 (41%) of the 763 patients who attended the walk-in service at Rake Lane during the overnight period were referred on to other services, including A&E and fracture clinics located at the hospital sites in Cramlington and Newcastle.

The next table shows the total volume of activity referred to the North Tyneside GP Out of Hours Service during the period June 2016 – May 2017. Out of hours activity is collected via a different reporting system and therefore it is not possible to provide an hourly breakdown of activity. This data includes all activity seen by the service between 18.30 – 08.00 on weekdays and 08.00 – 08.00 at weekends. It is therefore not directly comparable to the hospital datasets shown above which only relate to overnight activity.

<b>Month</b>	<b>Telephone Advice</b>	<b>Home Visits</b>	<b>Centre Visits*</b>
Apr-16	457	124	635
May-16	483	160	764
Jun-16	440	136	618
Jul-16	476	146	700
Aug-16	456	120	605
Sep-16	452	129	618
Oct-16	497	164	697
Nov-16	437	115	654
Dec-16	555	164	918
Jan-17	512	156	792
Feb-17	429	115	663
Mar-17	427	97	681
Apr-17	590	164	842
May-17	534	197	658

\*Centre visits (face-to-face appointments with a healthcare professional) are available from 18.30 to 23.00 on weekdays and 08.00 – 23.00 at weekends.

### **3. Impact analysis**

The data indicates that:

- Rake Lane urgent care centre dealt with an average of 3.6 attendances per evening between 23.00 – 08.00 in the six months prior to December 2016.
- 63% of the people using the service required only the most basic forms of investigation and / or treatment or no treatment at all.
- In the six months after overnight suspension of the Rake Lane service came into effect, the average number of North Tyneside residents presenting at NSECH with urgent care needs has increased by 0.4. This is equivalent to 1 extra patient every 2-3 days arriving at an A&E department which typically receives around 300 attendances per day.
- There is no evidence to suggest that overnight closure has had any impact on the provision of A&E services in Newcastle, with the average number of North Tyneside urgent care attendances at the RVI increasing by 0.08 in the six months after December 2016. This is equivalent to 1 additional North Tyneside patient arriving at the RVI every 20 days and is well within the bounds of normal demographic activity growth.
- The average number of North Tyneside patients accessing the North Tyneside Out of Hours Service also increased during the six months after walk-in access to the urgent care centre at Rake Lane Hospital was suspended in December 2016. The average number of patients accessing telephone based appointments with a healthcare professional increased by 1.6 per day, while the average number of clinician home visits increased by 0.4 per day. However it should be noted that an hourly breakdown of out of hours activity is not available and therefore these figures represent all clinical activity dealt with by the service between 18.30 – 08.00 and weekdays and 08.00 – 08.00 at weekends and bank holidays. It is therefore not possible to determine whether there is a direct correlation between the removal of walk-in

services between 23.00 – 08.00 and a rise in the number of people accessing the Out of Hours Service.

#### **4. Impact of the implementation of North Tyneside Integrated Urgent Care**

The CCG is proposing to commission a revised model of integrated urgent care which does not include 24 hour *walk-in* access to a single Urgent Treatment Centre.

Under the proposed model, walk-in access to the North Tyneside Urgent Treatment Centre would cease at 22.00 instead of 24.00. The current walk-in service at Rake Lane Hospital sees an average of 1.6 patients per evening between 22.00 and 24.00.

The evidence set out above would suggest that only 10% of the patients currently accessing urgent care services in North Tyneside on a walk-in basis are likely to be displaced to A&E once the proposed changes come into effect. This equates to an additional 60 A&E attendances per year, split across 2 A&E sites which typically deal with an average of 300 attendances per day. The remaining 90% of patients will either access the Urgent Treatment Centre earlier in the day, be absorbed into existing out of hours provision, or practice self-care.

#### **5. Conclusion**

- There is no evidence to suggest that the overnight closure of urgent care service at Rake Lane has had a detrimental impact on clinical standards across the local health economy or placed undue additional pressure on other services.
- The number of patients using the urgent care centre during the overnight period was extremely small and often involved only the most minor of healthcare needs.
- In the six months after overnight closure was introduced there appears to have been a net reduction in the total volume of urgent care activity occurring in North Tyneside during the hours between 23.00 and 08.00.
- This pattern is typical of those seen elsewhere in the region following the closure or suspension of services and suggests that a significant proportion of overnight attendances were driven by discretionary factors rather than clinical need.
- As a consequence of the closure patients appear to be accessing local urgent care services earlier in the day, making better use of the Out of Hours Service, or practicing self-care.
- It should also be noted that patient satisfaction data collected by both the NHS and Healthwatch indicates that the number of complaints relating to urgent care services appears to have dropped in the first six months of 2017.
- Further qualitative data on the impact of service closure will be collected as part of the planned patient survey.

- There is no evidence to suggest that the proposed plans to replace the two existing urgent care centres in North Tyneside with a single Urgent Treatment Centre open from 08.00 – 22.00 will result in significant numbers of patients being displaced to services located out of the borough.

**Mathew Crowther**  
**Commissioning Manager**  
**October 2017**