

**Newark Urgent Treatment Centre
Listening Exercise:
Engagement Report**

November 2023

**Nottingham and Nottinghamshire
Integrated Care Board**

1 Executive summary

1.1 Background

The Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC) within Newark Hospital is currently open between 9.00am -10.00pm. These opening hours have been in place on a temporary basis since March 2020, when the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic meant that there were issues with safely and sustainably staffing the UTC worse than there had previously been.

Even before the pandemic, it was very difficult to recruit staff to work overnight at the UTC and retain these on a sustainable basis. There were nights when the service had to be closed at very short notice due to the lack of staff able to support the service. The pandemic intensified these issues, but the underlying challenges remain.

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board (ICB), working with Sherwood Forest Hospitals (SFH), are looking to identify a sustainable alternative solution.

The overarching aim of the listening exercise was to gather the perspectives of both citizens and stakeholders in relation to urgent care services provided and accessed in Newark and the surrounding areas. Specifically, we wanted to understand whether the current opening hours of Newark UTC were suitable, or if there could be a different way to spread the opening hours over the day. We also wanted to check that the other ways to access urgent care overnight are working as we expect them to so that we can best serve the local population's need.

Our listening exercise began on 4th September 2023 and concluded on 17th October 2023 (44 days). A range of different methods were used to listen to citizens and stakeholders, to understand their views. In total, 1,932 individuals participated by either responding to our survey, attending a public meeting or community group meeting or providing a response to the promotion of the engagement on social media.

1.2 Key findings

Newark UTC opening times:

- 70.5% of survey respondents disagreed that the current opening hours of the service are suitable. A similar view was heard in public meetings and when visiting community groups.
- The majority of people we heard from through our various methods told us that they would like Newark UTC to be open 24 hours and/or an Accident and Emergency Department.
- If UTC was to remain open 13 hours a day, there was no consensus of views regarding whether the opening hours should stay as they are, open earlier in the morning and close later in the evening, or open later in the morning and close later in the evening.
- Some people suggested extending the opening hours beyond the current 13 hours.

Experience of out of hours urgent care services

- The majority told us they received a compassionate care, and their needs were met.
- The overall feedback about the service provided and treatment was positive.
- Some people find the services quick and efficient; others find the waiting time is very long.

- There is a view that there is a significant shortage in the workforce which makes services overstretched and increase the waiting time.
- People of Newark find it difficult to access services outside of Newark due to challenges related to transportation and travel, and so prefer to access services locally.
- It is difficult for some to navigate the health and care system and know how to access the right service at the right time.
- Accessing GP services in Newark can be challenging, with a perception that this increases the pressure on other services.

1.3 Next steps

The findings from this listening exercise will be used by Nottingham and Nottinghamshire ICB, alongside clinical and financial considerations, to develop a final set of options for the opening hours of Newark UTC.

2 Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusion 1: There is some confusion with citizens in Newark around understanding how and when to access services for emergency and urgent care needs. There is a need to communicate clear messages about how and when citizens can access emergency and urgent health and care services in the Newark area.

Recommendation 1: Consider developing a full directory of urgent and emergency care services available to citizens, with details about which should be accessed based on medical need.

Recommendation 2: Develop a communications plan with the aim of sharing information about the opening times of the Newark UTC, and how to access alternative urgent care services when this is closed.

Conclusion 2: There is a desire for Newark UTC to be open for 24 hours, 7 days a week, or for an Accident and Emergency Department located at Newark Hospital

Recommendation 3: Consider this feedback as part of the options appraisal for the future opening hours of Newark UTC, taking into account the operational and financial implications.

Recommendation 4: Provide clear information to citizens around the evidence base of any options regarding the future opening hours of Newark UTC.

Conclusion 3: There was considerable positive feedback about workforce in different out of hours urgent care services, including Newark UTC. However, people also talked about staffing shortages, specifically in the context of providing a safe and sustainable service.

Recommendation 5: Consider flexible hours and working patterns for staff members when developing the options regarding the future opening hours of Newark UTC.

Conclusion 4: Transport is an issue, especially for those who have accessibility issues such as a disability or no access to other transportation.

Recommendation 6: Work with system partners (e.g. Newark and Sherwood District Council, Nottinghamshire County Council and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise organisations) to further understand what is available to citizens and whether more could be offered.

Recommendation 7: Provide citizens with information on Patient Transport Services when needing to access services at Sherwood Forest Hospitals sites.

Conclusion 5: The survey respondents are under representative of citizens aged 16 – 34 and those living in the most deprived areas.

Recommendation 8: Reaching younger adults and those living in areas of high deprivation should be the focus of future engagement exercises with Newark citizens.