

1.18.1 North Equitable Access

When considering the locations for the North locality face to face centres, what approach will you use to determine the sites to ensure equitable access for all patients?

Please provide a detailed rationale as to why these sites are proposed, your response should take into consideration the geographical challenges of the North Locality local health economy and include such things as access to public transport, demand and patient demographics.

(Maximum Word Count 1500)

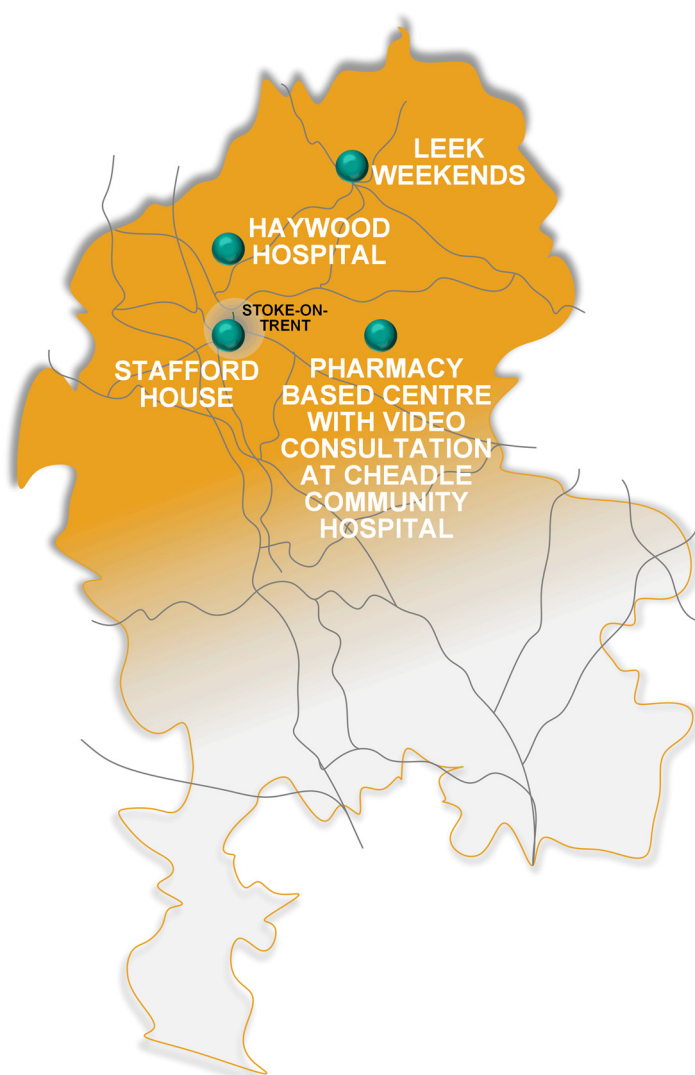
Words used = 881

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1.18.1.1-Aspects we considered in selecting locations with equitable access

As the incumbent provider, Vocare already operates three Centres in the North Lot as shown in Figure 1. We will be adding a weekend-only Centre in Leek.

As part of the tender preparation and in view of the geographical scope changing, we reviewed the suitability of each of our locations, ensuring we considered their ability to aid equitable access. Influencing factors included:



- Activity demand from information provided and supported by local knowledge and prior experience.
- Based on location of calls, using heat maps to target optimum face-to-face locations.
- Town and city based locations ensuring access via public transport.
- Rural locations including car parking as public transport is less likely, especially in the OOH period.
- Where essential for patient attendance at a centre, our GP-OOH service has established a taxi contract with ABC Supreme for this specific group of individuals who struggle to attend. For clinical requirements the indicate a centre visit is preferential we use a taxi.

Figure 1: Centre locations

1.18.1.2-Geographical challenges of the North locality

Geographical challenges for locating GP-OOH Centres in the North Lot include that:

- The dense city population of Stoke-on-Trent accounts for a large proportion of the activity. Our choice of Haywood Hospital and Stafford House was influenced by those areas being of high use.
- Levels of deprivation are higher in the North Lot, which means fewer people own vehicles, which limits ability to travel easily to Centres at night.
- Moorlands – Very rural but people have own transport in these areas in most circumstances and activity lower. Patients more mature and often find able to make own way or are true home visits

Experience from our existing service shows us that Haywood Hospital is a good location, but people are willing to travel to Stoke as needed based on availability. So long as a Centre is in the main city, they will travel. As part of the drive to reduce pressure on the hospitals and to change patient behaviour from thinking ED first, we have strategically placed a location at the Haywood centre. We currently operate from this popular location.

Our previous experience of locating a Centre in Leek was not successful as demand was not sufficient to justify the site. However, we believe demand is sufficient for a weekend site so we will be including a weekend venue in Leek.

We do have experience of adapting locations, as during the pandemic, to meet the needs of patients and commissioners. We mobilised a Covid-19 Hub in Staffordshire House, Stoke on Trent within 24 hours and services were amended as required with CCG support.

1.18.1.3-Process to identify and assess potential locations

The team involved in determining the locations for the new contract included the current contract leads (Operations Manager, Clinical Services Manager and Medical Lead) and the Area Management Team (Operational, Clinical and Medical Directors). They were supported in their deliberations by our Business Intelligence Team, which assisted with data visualisation such as demand heat maps.

The team reviewed our experience of location Centres across the whole of Staffordshire and considered the feedback we have received from patients, staff and stakeholders on locations and their effectiveness.

Haywood Hospital and Staffordshire House are current locations where patients have positive experience and understanding of how to access the services. There is also significant demand and throughput in these locations that when analysed against the 'heat maps' confirmed them to be optimum locations and central to the patients' main locations.

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We started with a minimum target of three Centres in the Lot. Our identification process accounted for requirements in the specification e.g. 30-minute target for travelling time. We also considered aspects such as waiting areas, which are tight in number of locations but not a key factor as we are basing on modelling that ensures throughput at suitable rate. Overnight use of Haywood Hospital was outruled due to the community hospital being closed.

We agreed that all of the sites will operate on the principle of a peripatetic service as needed especially overnight. Based on activity, we believe that North Staffordshire (Leek) will only need face-to-face Centre availability at weekends as weekday volumes are very small.

1.18.1.4-Proposed locations for face-to-face centres

Location and type of premises	Population served	Rationale for proposing the location
Staffordshire House – Consulting Rooms & Operational Base	North Staffordshire & Stoke on Trent	Central location based off the main road A500/A50. Public transport links are reasonable. It is in middle of the ST3 and ST5 postcodes where heat maps indicate significant users of the service.
Haywood Hospital – Community Hospital	Stoke on Trent	Designated UTC location. Good public transport links. It is in the middle of two highest user areas in the North footprint. There is a link into WIC support with ability to escalate patients for medical review as required.
Cheadle – Community Hospital	Staffordshire Moorlands	This is the highest user area in Staffordshire Moorlands. It is co-located with district nursing services. It covers a large out of area population travelling to Alton Towers. It can provide cover for the top ends of the city in ST9 and ST3 postcodes.
Leek	Staffordshire Moorlands	Leek is the predominant market town within the Staffordshire Moorlands with a large population. It has options to locate within a community hub delivering place-based care