





**We want our urgent and emergency healthcare services to meet the needs of local people – so you have the best possible outcomes and a better experience when using our services.**

We're planning to open our first **urgent treatment centres (UTCs)** in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent in 2024. UTCs will help when you have a minor injury or illness that needs attention quickly.

In this booklet, we tell you about the treatment UTCs will provide and how they will make a difference for patients. We also explain the differences between **urgent** and **emergency** healthcare and our approach to improving these services.

## Who are we?

We are NHS Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board. **We're responsible for the health and care of 1.1 million people across the local area.**

Our work to improve local urgent and emergency health services is being done with our partner organisations. These include the University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust, University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust, Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust and The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust.

There may be other services you use that are outside Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, provided by other NHS services nearby.

# The difference between 'urgent' and 'emergency' healthcare



## Urgent care:

This is for an illness or injury that needs attention

quickly, but is not life-threatening. Although some urgent care is provided in hospitals, much is also provided by services outside hospital.

## Call 111 for advice or an appointment (examples)

- sprains and strains
- suspected broken bones
- minor head injuries
- cuts that need stitches
- minor burns and scalds
- feverish illnesses
- abdominal (tummy) pain
- urgent mental health concerns.



## Emergency care:

This is help for life-threatening conditions. If

someone is in immediate danger because of an injury or a severe health problem, they need emergency care quickly. This is available at emergency departments (EDs). These are also known as accident and emergency (A&E) or casualty.

## Call 999 or go to ED (examples)

- signs of a heart attack
- signs of a stroke
- severe difficulty breathing
- seizures
- heavy bleeding (blood spraying or pouring)
- choking
- rapid swelling of lips, tongue or mouth
- severe injuries after serious accident.

# The challenges facing our services

## Rising demand at emergency departments:



More and more people are going to EDs. This is making them very busy, with long waiting times – especially for patients who have less serious conditions or injuries.

## Staffing shortages:



EDs are feeling the pressure with fewer staff available. This is due to reasons like retirements, not enough new trainees, and the high stress of the work.

## Not being sure where to go for urgent care:



People have told us that, with the current mix of services, it's not always clear which is the most appropriate service to use. This has led to people going to EDs with more minor conditions, often waiting a long time for treatment and adding pressure to our emergency health services – which could be avoided.

## An ageing population:



Many people who visit EDs are over 65 years old, and as this age group expands, the demand on EDs rises. We can help by providing more support and preventative care earlier on.

## We are investing in services, and we must ensure we provide value for money.



We must make the best use of the available budget to meet our local patients' needs.

# How we're working to improve local urgent and emergency health services

We want to make sure you receive help and treatment in the place that best meets your needs and will give you the best outcomes. We will do this through:



**Supporting you to look after your health:** We'll share guidance about when it's sensible to look after yourself at home, and where to seek help if your condition changes.



**Care closer to home:** A lot of urgent care can be safely delivered outside of hospital. The services include GPs, pharmacists and urgent eye and dental care services. We want you to know more about these services and be able to access them easily.



**Supporting you to use NHS 111:** Trained advisors at NHS 111 assess your needs and direct you to the best service for help. Contact NHS 111 online, by phone or by using the NHS app.



**Services that are consistent, offer treatment quickly, and are easier to understand:** Our new urgent treatment centres (UTCs) will all be open at least 12 hours a day and provide the same services. This will help you feel confident about what urgent care you can access and when. See page 6.



**Urgent and emergency care are part of a bigger healthcare picture:** We want our services to work together to provide good healthcare as soon as possible when you need it – reducing the need for emergency treatment.

# Urgent treatment centres

We're setting up UTCs in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent as part of a national programme.

## What are the benefits of UTCs?

Current services have different names and opening times, and do not all offer the same services. UTCs will help us provide consistent urgent care services that offer treatment quickly and are easier for people to understand.

Our local UTCs will:

- treat patients of all ages
- treat minor illnesses as well as injuries
- have access to your up-to-date electronic patient records
- have arrival times bookable through NHS 111.

## What treatment can I get there?

UTCs will treat many of the common injuries and illnesses that people go to emergency departments for, including:

- sprains and strains
- suspected broken bones
- minor head and eye injuries
- minor burns and scalds
- cuts that need stitches
- abdominal (tummy) pain
- high temperature in children and adults
- skin infections and rashes
- urinary tract infections (UTIs).

**Booked arrival times:** We'll encourage everyone to book these through NHS 111 – helping to cut waiting times.

**More X-ray services:** X-ray will be available during the full opening hours. UTCs will be able to do a wider range than some existing units.

**Making every contact count:** Where appropriate, UTCs will give advice on health and wellbeing and let you know about other services that might be helpful to you.

**Taking pressure off emergency departments:** By making access to urgent treatment easier and quicker, UTCs should help relieve pressure on EDs – improving patient care and experience there as well.

## How we have prepared for setting up UTCs

**UTCs need to meet a set of standards. This is to make sure they can be run safely and effectively.**

When thinking about where our UTCs should be, we looked in detail at:

- what demand has been like at existing urgent units
- our buildings and facilities – for example, layout and access
- whether our current services meet national UTC standards
- if we would need to recruit and train more staff.

For our local UTCs, we are proposing that:

- some sites will be ‘standalone’ UTCs – this could be as part of a community hospital
- some UTCs will be alongside a hospital ED
- not all the existing walk-in centres or minor injuries units would be replaced with a UTC. Where this is the case, we will speak to and involve local people as part of NHS England’s process for changing services.

**These remain as proposals – no final decisions have yet been made.**



## Finding out more and getting involved

We want to tell you about the work we've been doing to make our local urgent and emergency care services better. We'll be attending meetings and organising drop-in sessions, so you have the chance to ask us questions.

We'll be posting details of these, and how you can access our survey, on the ICB website:

[staffsstoke.icb.nhs.uk/uec-get-involved](https://staffsstoke.icb.nhs.uk/uec-get-involved)

### Contact us

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Follow us on Facebook: [StaffsStokeICB](https://www.facebook.com/StaffsStokeICB)

Tweet us: [@staffsstokeicb](https://twitter.com/staffsstokeicb)

If you need documents in different formats or languages or need help to complete the survey, please phone us on 0333 150 3069.



Our new urgent treatment centres and our work to improve urgent and emergency care services