

Introduction

Urgent Care Services Fife value your assistance in sharing information with the people who use your service, so that they are able to access urgent care when their GP, dentist or local pharmacy is closed.

This briefing provides some background information on why the service has been reviewed and a new model agreed. It explains the time-scale for changes.

The key message is that the safest way to obtain care out of hours is to call 111 (free number), then NHS 24 will direct you to the most appropriate care for your need. Travelling to what you think is the nearest hospital may delay you being seen by the right profession in the right place.

The service continues to be available across all of Fife for the full out-of-hours period throughout these changes.

What is OOH Urgent Care?

Out-of-hours Urgent Care is care in the community that needs a response before the next routine care service is available, for example, a GP or District Nurse. It is not 999 emergency care.

The main reasons people require OOH Urgent Care are:

- Chest problems (including coughs)
- Urinary tract infections and bladder problems
- Throat infections and pain
- Vomiting and diarrhoea
- Skin problems– rashes and infections
- Advice on treatment or medication
- Breathing difficulty (including wheeze)
- Stomach pain
- Viral Infection / flu
- Mental health and wellbeing

Or for the treatment of a minor injury, e.g. limb problem, wounds, burns.

These are the services providing out-of-hours urgent care

- NHS 24 (tel. 111). This is the route into urgent care. Many people are supported over the phone by this service
- Urgent Care Services Fife, known until 4/11/19 as Primary Care Emergency Service (PCES), provides the following support to Fife and Kinross:
 - urgent care when your own GP surgery is closed (6pm to 8am during the week, all day and all night on weekends and public holidays)
 - advice, appointments and home visits, by GPs, nurses and paramedics
 - a local dispatch team in Glenrothes co-ordinates where people should be seen and who will visit or call to give advice
 - the quickest appointment anyone would be offered is within one hour
- Minor-injury services that are delivered in the out-of-hours periods
- Evening, night and weekend District Nursing.

Why we need to change

As in all parts of Scotland, our services are under constant pressure, and this is having an impact on out-of-hours urgent care. Our priority is to provide the people of Fife with a safe and effective service that best meets their needs. It is no longer

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possible to do that without changing the way we provide services. In Fife we commenced a review of Out-of-Hours Urgent Care in 2016.

The review has sought to address the following challenges:

- It's getting much harder, nationally, to recruit GPs and nurses for urgent care
- The previous model was inflexible, with staff based in one place and unable to move between centres to meet patients' needs
- Use of resources was unbalanced, with some centres busier than others
- People coming to an appointment overnight and needing to see a specialist had to be moved to an acute hospital, sometimes by ambulance; previously the centre at Victoria Hospital was closed overnight
- Clinical guidance recommends that children, who can quickly become very unwell, are seen in a centre with direct access to specialist support.
- We have just enough home visits available at the moment; we will need more as the number of very old people increases
- The services providing urgent care are not as joined-up as could be, which complicates our work and reduces efficiency.

How the service is changing

On 21 June 2019, Fife Integration Joint Board agreed a new clinical model which will see the service move to a flexible, integrated multi-disciplinary team working from three centres, with a Fife-wide model in support of home visiting. The three centres are Victoria Hospital Kirkcaldy, Queen Margaret Hospital Dunfermline and St Andrews Community Hospital.

From 4 November 2019, UCSF will work from three centres on weekday evenings, in the daytime at weekends and public holidays, and on a new rota in St Andrews. The current overnight centre model will continue initially; based at one centre at Victoria Hospital (with minor-injury services still available overnight at Queen Margaret). The Clinical Co-ordinator in the Dispatch Hub will be available more frequently.

By Easter 2020 a full rota review will have been completed to support the full multi-disciplinary team from three Out-of-hours Urgent Care Centres on weekday evenings and at weekends. The Clinically-Led Dispatch Hub / Clinical Co-ordinator model will be available throughout the out-of-hours period.

By July 2020 the services will have implemented a fully-integrated overnight Urgent Care centre model at Queen Margaret Hospital, with a 24/7 Urgent Care Dispatch Hub.

Through each phase there will be ongoing review and refinement of the model.

A new name

A theme from the consultation feedback was that the general public is unaware of the range of professionals working in out-of-hours urgent care. People may also be unclear about the difference between urgent care and emergency care. PCES will therefore undergo a name-change. This is in line with services across Scotland who use the term "urgent care".

From 4th November we will call the service **Urgent Care Services Fife**.

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