



Enter & View Visit Report

Details of Visit

Service Name and Address	Ludlow Minor Injury Unit (MIU), Ludlow Community Hospital, Ludlow, SY8 1QX
Service Provider	Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust
Date and Time	22 nd August 2016 9.00a.m. - 12.00
Visit Team (Enter & View Authorised Representatives from Healthwatch Shropshire)	3 Healthwatch Shropshire Authorised Representatives.

Purpose of the Visit

To explore why people have attended the Minor Injury Unit (MIU) and understand their experience of the available service.

Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to findings observed on the specific date set out above. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experience of all service users and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.

Context of Visit

Over the last two years there has been considerable local public debate about how health services can best meet the needs for urgent (i.e. not 'emergency') care in a rural county like Shropshire. People are being encouraged to think about whether A&E is always the right place to go to for urgent care and to think about other urgent care services available to them. Minor Injury Units are provided across the county in the Community Hospitals in Bridgnorth, Ludlow and Whitchurch and Oswestry Health Centre. These visits will explore what is working well for patients and what may need to change. The findings will be used to contribute to the discussions on transformation of urgent and emergency care services in the county.

The Enter and View visits to all four Minor Injuries Unit were semi-announced. Healthwatch Shropshire's Enter & View Officer gave the hospital trust and MIU team leaders a window of four weeks when the visits would take place.

What we were looking at

We wanted to gain some insight into public awareness of urgent care services available, when a visit to an A&E is not needed, and to understand why people choose to attend a local Minor Injuries Unit (MIU). We also wanted to get feedback on the quality of the service experience provided in the MIU. We developed a structured questionnaire (Appendix 1), but also made observations on the environment within the MIU and spoke to the staff.

The questionnaire asked:

- Where people had come from to visit the MIU
- Whether they had used it before, and how they first heard about it
- How easy it is to get to and use
- Reasons for attending on the day we visited
- People's awareness of other sources of urgent care
- People's experience of using the MIU

We chose the busiest day of the week (Monday) and time of day (9am - 12pm) for these visits, in order to talk to as many people using the service as possible.

What we did

The Emergency Nurse Practitioner (ENP) met us and told us about the services the Minor Injury Unit (MIU) offers.

We spoke to 9 people who attended the MIU whilst we there and we completed simple questionnaires with them, asking them about the reasons they had attended, why they had chosen to come to this Unit, where they lived, their understanding of the available services and their level of satisfaction at the end. (Appendix 1)

We also spoke to 2 other members of staff who worked in the MIU; a staff nurse and a student nurse.

We looked at the reception area of the MIU to see if it was clean and tidy and of a suitable size.

What we found out

How the service works

People attending Ludlow MIU report to a reception desk which is staffed and they are then booked into clinics or the MIU. MIU patients are then called and seen by a member of staff; an Emergency Nurse Practitioner (ENP) or a Healthcare Assistant. It was not clear to us if there is any triage system in place to identify more urgent cases.

Findings from the questionnaire

Who comes to the MIU and how did they hear about it?

We asked people “Where do you live? Please tell us the village or town you are from or please give us your postcode”.

Of the nine people we spoke to six lived in Ludlow or villages nearby. One person lived in Knighton, a neighbouring market town over the border in Wales, and two people were on holiday in the area. Ludlow is a popular tourist destination and we asked the tourists coming to the MIU, when we were there, where they were staying.

Seven people had been to the MIU before. Two people already knew about it, six people had been told about the MIU by a friend or family member. One person had been referred to the MIU by their GP surgery when they could not offer them a same day appointment. One person had seen signs to the MIU.

Were there difficulties in getting to, or finding the MIU once on site?

No one we spoke to reported having any difficulty getting to, or finding the MIU. People who were visitors to the area had been told by the people they were staying with how to get to the MIU. Others had come with family members and one person had been brought by a neighbour.

What were the main reasons for attending the MIU?

Seven of the nine people we spoke to had come to the MIU because they had had an accident. The accidents included falls, car accidents. One person had an ongoing condition. One person had come because they could not get an appointment that day with their GP and the GP surgery had advised them to see a nurse at the MIU. Two people had attended the MIU the day before and they had come back to be checked.

Awareness and previous use of other services for urgent health care or advice

Of the nine people we spoke to during the visit all of them knew that they could go to see their GP for urgent advice or care. One person had spoken to their GP before coming to the MIU but had not been able to be seen by them that day. Two had gone to their GP on previous occasions for urgent care.

Most people were aware of other services and some had used them in the past:

- Eight people knew about A&E and two had used it previously.
- Of the eight people who knew they could speak to a pharmacist, three had done so before.
- Four of the eight people who were aware of Shropdoc had used that service in the past and one person said “it was very good”.
- Five people were aware of 111 but had not used it.

- Of the four people who knew about the Walk-in-Centre, two had used it in the past.
- 3 people knew about the NHS Choices website and 1 had gone on it

Nobody we spoke to was aware of the Shropshire Choices website.

Feedback on the whole experience of attending the MIU today

We asked “Please give us your feedback on your experience of using Ludlow MIU today. Please circle a number from 1 (unhappy) to 4 (very happy).

All nine people said they were very happy with the service they had received at the MIU.

Comments from people using Ludlow MIU:

‘Should be 10/10. If I had been at home I would have had to have waited 6 hours at A&E. Excellent, swift service’. [Holiday maker visiting Ludlow]

‘I am happy to come here. It saves me an hour driving to A&E. I have been reassured and they have told me they are here until 8pm if I need any more help’.

‘Very good, very professional, they explained things’.

‘We need this unit, it is brilliant’.

‘I cannot get on the bus to Telford - it takes me 3 buses and Shrewsbury is as bad. I cannot go on the train because it is hard for me to get on and off. We must have it [Ludlow Hospital]’.

Observations

The staff spoke kindly to the patients and all were dealt with promptly.

Discussions with staff

Services available through the MIU

The Minor Injuries Unit in Ludlow is open 7 days a week 8.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. A staff member told us that x-rays can be done 9.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m. Monday - Friday¹.

The ENP told us they thought that 20% of people who attend have minor illnesses and should have gone to the GP and 10% should probably have gone straight to A&E. However the staff are proud that they attend to all people who attend and either treat them directly or ensure their safety until they are transferred to the appropriate centre for further care. The ENP said they will even treat people with dental pain, “they do what they can”, but they can only treat patients with minor injuries not those that come because of a minor illness e.g. skin condition.

While we were there we saw a doctor call into the MIU after completing the ward round to check if their help was needed. We were told that ShropDoc rents a room on the premises but they are not actively involved with the MIU. The staff have increased their skills and knowledge and, as ENPs can now prescribe, the need for a GP to be involved has declined.

We were told by the ENP that patients are referred for care to other centres e.g. Stoke on Trent for cardiac treatment or other A&Es if necessary. We were told that at times they have had to wait for an hour and a half for an ambulance to attend to transfer the patient as they are deemed by West Midlands Ambulance service to be “in a place of safety”. However, if there is only one trained nurse and a Health Care Assistant (HCA) on duty, which we were told by the ENP, is the usual level of staffing at weekends, this will mean no other patients can be seen by the nurse until the ambulance has arrived, causing delays in treatment for other patients.

Changes in patterns of attendance at the MIU by the public and staffing levels

The ENP told us that the busiest month is July due to people being out and about and children and families on holiday followed by peaks in attendance in winter and in icy weather.

¹ At the time of writing the report the Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust website says the x-ray service at Ludlow MIU is available 9am-3pm on weekdays.

The ENP told us that during the week there are 2 trained members of staff on duty as well as HCAs. We were told that the full complement of staff should be 4 full time and 2 part time nurses but there are currently 3 full time and 1 part time staff members. We understand more staff are about to leave for other posts

Public awareness of the MIU

The staff have actively promoted the MIU in the local community by doing events in their own time. They have had groups of Brownies visit the centre, attended Stroke Awareness day events, spoken at Future Fit meetings, ensured press coverage, for example when the Friends of the Hospital have purchased new toys for the MIU.

The staff we spoke to felt signage in the town could be improved; putting signs on the nearby A49, placing signs around the town. They would also like to continue to do roadshows in the local market. These have been held in certain market towns in the past but have stopped due to a change in staff.

Sharing x-rays cross border

The ENP told us that many people live in the neighbouring county of Herefordshire and they will often choose to attend the MIU at Ludlow for an x-ray. If the condition needs to be referred to a consultant or other service for treatment any x-ray taken at Ludlow can only be viewed electronically at other hospitals in Shropshire. There is a system to send the x-ray via a secure server to Hereford, but we were told this system often does not work which means patients can need a second x-ray at Hereford Hospital.

Additional Findings

Waiting area environment

The MIU shares a reception area with any clinics that are running. The reception area was often full with people, whilst we were there, with people mainly waiting to be called to their clinic appointment. At times all the chairs in the waiting area were full. The ENP told us that out of hours, people access the MIU was through a different entrance to ensure they are met and seen by a triage nurse on arrival.

We saw information leaflets and posters on the walls and on tables. The reception area was clean and tidy. Chairs of different heights were provided. There were toys and a small table and chairs for young children to play at. There was a Wendy house in the corner. Music was played softly and unobtrusively. There was a vending machine available, a water cooler and also a disabled toilet for service users.

Gathering feedback

There was an electronic screen for people to give feedback. We saw one person use this as they left. Staff said very few people use it often due to the reason they have attended or due to the older demographic population of Ludlow who appear more reluctant to use technology. There were also paper feedback forms and a box to place responses in.

Summary of Findings

- All the people who attended the MIU during our visit were very happy with the service they had received.
- Most people using the MIU lived in or near to Ludlow and had used the MIU before.
- Most people had gone to the MIU after having an accident.

- The nine people we spoke to had not had any difficulty getting to the MIU but staff said they felt more signs on the A49 and in the town would be helpful.
- Most people were aware of other services but only one person had sought advice elsewhere.
- There was an x-ray unit which was open from 9.00 am - 5.00pm Monday to Friday.
- During our visit we saw staff being kind and efficient in the way they spoke with patients.
- Two patients had returned for a check-up following attending the MIU over the weekend.
- A doctor called into the unit to check if staff needed help.
- The reception area was very busy as it was shared with people attending clinics.
- There were toys for children to play with in the reception area.
- Music was playing quietly.
- Staff had promoted the MIU at events which they had attended in their own time.
- Staff said there were difficulties in transferring x-rays electronically to hospitals outside Shropshire meaning sometimes patients have to have an x-ray repeated which is frustrating and unnecessary.
- Staff told us that patients needing to be transferred to another hospital can wait an hour and a half for an ambulance because West Midlands Ambulance Service considers them to be “in a place of safety”.
- We were told there are staff vacancies.

Recommendations

We recommend that:

- The system for transferring x-rays electronically, especially out of the county be reviewed and improved.
- Signage to the centre from the A49 and around the town is reviewed and improved to ensure visitors and residents are aware of the service offered by the MIU.
- The market stall roadshows be reintroduced and held in Ludlow to promote the MIU.
- Vacant posts are filled as soon as possible.

Service Provider Response

Healthwatch Shropshire received the following update and action plan in response to our recommendations from the Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust on 18th October 2016:

The system for transferring x-rays electronically, especially out of the county be reviewed and improved.

The Clinical Services Manager to review the system for transferring x-rays with the Radiographer to make improvements. Once reviewed and improvements made, staff in the MIU to be informed of new processes.

Update: This action has been completed and there is an IEP system in place which allows transfer of x-rays and reports. Email confirmation of sent x-ray received back. MIU staff to notify radiologist of which clinic the patient was sent to and noted for audit.

Signage to the centre from the A49 and around the town is reviewed and improved to ensure visitors and residents are aware of the service offered by the MIU.

Update: The MIU Team Leader contacted Estates regarding road signage and the Communications & Marketing Manager to look at developing up to date promotional information on 30th September 2016. The trust aims to complete this piece of work by the end of November 2016.

The market stall roadshows be reintroduced and held in Ludlow to promote the MIU.

By the end of November the Team Leader will:

- Organise a market stall roadshow
- Liaise with the League of Friends to see if they can participate in the event
- Secure funding for the event

Update: The MIU Team Leader has contacted the Communications & Marketing Manager regarding the promotional information required (e.g. flyers and posters).

Vacant posts are filled as soon as possible.

Update: The closing date for applications for the Band 2 position of Health Care Assistant (15 hours) was 29th September 2016.

Vacancy Requisitions Forms for two Band 6 posts, Team Leader and Emergency Nurse Practitioner, have been approved and the closing date for applications is 24th October 2016.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Shropshire would like to thank the service provider, service users, visitors and staff for their contribution to this Enter & View.

Appendix 1: The Questionnaire

Healthwatch Shropshire is inviting people using the Minor Injuries Unit (MIU) to tell us about their experience of accessing the service. We would like you to fill in this short questionnaire and/or talk to the Healthwatch Shropshire Volunteers who are here today.

Please return this questionnaire when you have finished. The information you provide will be anonymous and handled confidentially in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. You will not be identifiable in the final report.

Please tick appropriate answers

1. Where do you live? (Please tell us the village/town you are from or give us your postcode)			
2. Have you used this MIU before?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
3. How did you know about this MIU?			
Family/Friend <input type="checkbox"/>	GP referral <input type="checkbox"/>	Pharmacy <input type="checkbox"/>	Website <input type="checkbox"/>
Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Details		
4. Did you have any difficulty getting here?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Hard to find <input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty parking <input type="checkbox"/>	Transport <input type="checkbox"/>	Needed someone to come with me <input type="checkbox"/>
Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Details		
5. Tell us your reason for coming to the MIU today <i>*'Condition' includes a mental health condition</i>			
Accident/injury <input type="checkbox"/>	Sports injury <input type="checkbox"/>	Illness <input type="checkbox"/>	Victim of crime <input type="checkbox"/>
Thought might need x-ray <input type="checkbox"/>	Referred by GP/111/Pharmacist <input type="checkbox"/>	New or existing symptom/condition <input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>

Other reason/details:

6. Are you aware of / have you used any other services when you have needed urgent health advice or care?								
	Aware of	Used today	Used before		Aware of	Used today	Used before	
GP	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ShropDoc	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Pharmacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	NHS Choices Website	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
111	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shropshire Choices Website	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
A&E	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Walk-in-Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Comments/feedback:

Please give us your feedback* on your experience of using Ludlow MIU today

**Please circle a number from 1-4*

 1	←—————→	2	3	 4
Comment/feedback:				

Thank you for your time

Who are Healthwatch Shropshire?

Healthwatch Shropshire is the voice for people in Shropshire about the health and social care services delivered in their area. We are an independent body providing a way for people to share their experiences to help people get the best out of their health and social care services. As one of a network of Local Healthwatch across England we are supported by the national body Healthwatch England, and our data is fed to the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

What is Enter & View?

Healthwatch Shropshire gather information on peoples experiences of health and social care services and there are times when it is appropriate for Healthwatch Shropshire to see and hear for ourselves how services are being delivered: these visits are called 'Enter & View', they are not inspections.

Teams of specially trained volunteers carry out visits to health and social care services to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement. The Health and Social Care Act allows Healthwatch authorised representatives to observe service delivery and talk to services users, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies.

Get in Touch!

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