



Enter & View Visit Report

Details of Visit

Service Name and Address	Whitchurch Minor Injuries Unit, Whitchurch Community Hospital, Claypit Street, Whitchurch, SY13 1NT
Service Provider	Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust
Date and Time	22 nd August 2016 9.00a.m - 12.00 and 19 th September 2016 9.00am - 11.40am
Visit Team (Enter & View Authorised Representatives from Healthwatch Shropshire)	2 Healthwatch Shropshire Authorised Representatives at each visit

Purpose of the Visit

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

When we arrived on 22nd August, we were met by the Sister who is Team Leader for the Minor Injuries Unit (MIU). She explained to us how the service is run.

We then sat in the waiting room and one representative offered a questionnaire and a feedback form to be completed after patients had been treated. The second representative observed the interactions between patients and staff within the waiting room area. A total of three patients visited the MIU during the three hours that we were there.

Due to the small number of patients who visited the MIU on 22nd August we returned for a second visit on 19th September when we were met by a Staff Nurse. We spoke to the first 10 patients who visited that morning.

What we found out

How the service works

There is a Reception hatch in the waiting room. As patients arrive they are handed a clipboard and asked to fill in a form with their details. These are then left at the hatch and collected by a member of the MIU team. If more detail is needed it is asked for. We were told during the September visit that, unless there is an urgent case, children are given priority. There is a triage process, though there is no separate triage room. The nurses keep a close eye on patients in the waiting room, and pain relief is offered where appropriate. Once a patient has been seen they may be sent for an x-ray or other tests. They return to the MIU for results or further treatment.

Findings from the questionnaire

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

On 22nd August, two of the three patients we spoke with had been before. Two lived in Prees and one lived at a care home near to the Hospital.

All had been referred to the MIU by their GP, one because they could not be seen by their GP that day.

On the 19th September, 8 out of 10 patients had been before. Eight lived in Whitchurch, one in Whixall and one in Holt, just across the border in Wales.

Three of the 10 patients we spoke to were of school age or younger.

Three people were told about the MIU by family or friends, four by their GP, one person said 'local knowledge', one read about it in a magazine and one was referred by their school in Malpas, Cheshire.

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

On 22nd August no-one we spoke to had any difficulty in getting there.

On 19th September those arriving early did not have trouble parking but later in the morning all had difficulty. All 10 people knew how to find Whitchurch Community Hospital; all found the MIU by going through the main Reception area. The first two patients waited on seating in the corridor outside the MIU, one because they came before it opened at 9 a.m. and the other told us it was because they were not sure where to go.

What were the main reasons for attending the MIU?

On 22nd August two respondents had attended because of an accident/injury and one because of a new or existing symptom/condition.

On 19th September six attended because of an accident/injury, one of which was sports related. Two of those thought they might need an x-ray. One person attended because of an illness and two with a new or existing condition. Three had been referred to the MIU by their GP; one of these attended with an eye problem and another had seen the GP that morning.

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

On 22nd August one person had used their GP before for urgent care and advice and a second had used A&E, this person had attended A&E before going to the MIU that day.

One person had used Shropdoc before and one had used a Pharmacy for urgent care before. One person had used a Walk-In Centre before.

None of the three was aware of NHS 111, the NHS Choices website or the Shropshire Choices website.

On 19th September all the patients we spoke with were aware of and used their GPs and A&E. One said they would use Chester A&E rather than Shrewsbury as it was easier to get to.

Six were aware of and five had used their local pharmacy for urgent care. Two did not know they could get urgent care advice there and one said that there was no out-of-hours pharmacy available for advice.

Seven people knew about NHS 111 of whom five had used it in the past; three people were not aware of it.

Eight people were aware of Shropdoc and five had used it in the past. One person was new to the area and was not aware of Shropdoc.

Five people were aware of the NHS Choices website but only two people had used it; one person said they disliked using the Internet. Two were unaware of it.

One person was aware of and had used the Shropshire Choices website

Four of the patients we spoke with did not know about the Walk-In Centre at Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, one said they would not choose to use it because Shrewsbury is a long way away. One said they would not use a Walk-In Centre.

Feedback on the whole experience of attending the MIU today

All the feedback from patients during both visits was extremely positive.

Comments from people using Whitchurch MIU:

22/08/16:

‘Excellent service’

‘Very good service’

19/09/16:

‘Always an enjoyable occasion. Efficient, great communication and a positive ethos. Thank You’

‘Great service. Lovely staff. Professional & reassuring. Thanks’

‘Have always found Whitchurch’s facilities very good. The staff show concern, want to do the best for you and have on occasions gone the extra mile when appropriate. An excellent addition to the community’

‘Very happy with the service here - I would recommend it to anyone’

‘Excellent. They communicate well with the local surgery’

‘It has always been very good. I wouldn’t recommend NHS 111 - I always come here’

‘Very good’

‘It’s brilliant’

Observations

During the visit on 22nd August one member of the team observed the interactions between patients and staff. They noted the manner in which staff spoke to patients, how well they explained things, how aware they were of any pain or discomfort and how well they identified what the patient needed. All the observations made on the day were very positive.

Patients were asked to complete an initial questionnaire upon arrival that was then checked and, if needed, clarified through the hatch between the office and waiting room. Although there was a radio playing in the waiting room the conversations between nurse and patient through the hatch could still be heard by the other people who were waiting.

All patients were seen on arrival by nursing staff to assess the degree of urgency and treatment started in less than 20 minutes.

On the 19th September the procedures were the same but the radio was not switched on until 10.30am and then was on at low volume. Triage was less obvious than on the previous visit though we observed that pain killers were administered as appropriate as people waited. Waiting times extended to about 1 hour for some patients with children being prioritised. Three children attended whilst we were there. Several patients had x-rays during their visit.

We noticed that at 9.00am patients were sitting in the corridor outside and were not immediately called into the waiting room when the door to the MIU opened. During the morning some patients had to sit in the corridor outside as the MIU waiting room was full.

Discussions with staff

Services available through the MIU

- Whitchurch MIU is based in Whitchurch Community Hospital and it is open Mondays to Fridays, 9am -5pm.
- X-ray services are available four mornings a week (not Thursdays)¹.
- The staff team also covers the hospital outpatients' clinics but there are usually two qualified nurses available within the MIU at any one time.

¹ At the time of writing the report the Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust website says the x-ray service is available 9am-1pm on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday.

- Nursing staff have added to their expertise, undertaking training to enable them to take on tasks previously requiring referral to others.
- The Unit has access to GP support from both Bridgewater and Richmond surgeries. Additionally, being within the Community Hospital, it is able to benefit from the expertise of other consultants and departments (e.g. physiotherapy) when needed. For example, we were told that the ENT consultant was consulted on one occasion that morning.
- The Richmond surgery is due to close shortly with patients being relocated to other practices. The Staff Nurse told us that there are plans for a new GP practice on site at the hospital but exact details are not yet known².

Sharing x-rays cross border

Staff told us that different x-ray systems in neighbouring areas e.g. Wrexham and Crewe, cause problems for patients coming from those areas. This is because each area uses a different x-ray system and so these patients have to travel to Shrewsbury to have their x-rays read and interpreted.

Changes in patterns of attendance at the MIU by the public

Monday is generally the busiest day in the MIU. We were told that the fact that the MIU had only treated three patients on the morning of 22nd August was very unusual and outside the normal pattern of work.

The average waiting time is 20 minutes. When the MIU is extremely busy people can wait up to 1.5 hours to be seen.

When we asked staff if, in their view, the MIU is being used appropriately, it was recognised that the general public is not very aware of options available for urgent health care. It was also suggested that some local GPs might be choosing to treat minor injuries in their own surgeries, even when very busy, rather than referring them to the MIU.

² On 30th September 2016 a press release from Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group stated: 'The new GP service, which is expected to be in place for 18 months, will be located on Beech Ward at Whitchurch Community Hospital from November 1. The new practice will be called "Claypit Street Medical Practice".'

Public awareness of the MIU

The Sister in charge told us she is actively seeking to promote the work and availability of the Whitchurch MIU. She is looking forward to an event, “Keeping Well”, organised by Whitchurch and District Patient Group in September in the Civic Centre where she will have a stand and have the opportunity to talk to other health practitioners in the area.

Additional Findings

The environment

The door to the MIU is set back a little from the corridor and is not immediately obvious. The MIU consists of a waiting room (with a children’s play table), two treatment rooms (1 x adult and 1 x child) and an office with a hatch into the waiting room. There is also a sluice room, prescribing room and a treatment room for use by GPs.

The environment was warm, clean and bright with particularly clear and informative notice boards. One notice highlighted the chaperone service which would be provided on request. The atmosphere was very friendly.

There is no dedicated play area for children due to lack of space and there is no private space for the nurses to carry out triage. One patient was taken into the staff office to view their x-rays and have them explained in detail. While this was clearly much appreciated by the patient, there was no way of preserving confidentiality. The staff have suggested that it might be possible to reorganise the use of existing space as there is a separate storeroom which could be turned into a triage/privacy room if storage of essential items could be located close by. However they appreciate there would be a cost involved.

Parking and finding the MIU

Parking at Whitchurch Hospital can be difficult when it is very busy but we had no problems at 9 a.m. on either morning. The MIU has its own door in from the car park but people are also redirected from the hospital’s main reception. We observed that the door to the MIU and sign above it are hidden from view from the

car park by a wall. The external sign indicating the direction to go for the 'Minor Injuries Unit' is small.

Satnav and directions obtained from internet search engines send people into a housing estate at the back of the hospital. The staff make people aware of this problem if they have the opportunity to do so. The hospital is well signposted in the town and on approach roads into the town.

At the main reception to the hospital there is an electronic tablet with touch screen which is available for patients to give their views on the service received. There are also notices in the waiting room and on the initial questionnaire clipboard encouraging people to give their feedback. The location of the iPad is not ideal as many people choose to leave the MIU through the nearest exit and they do not leave through the main reception area.

Patient Choice

The relative of the patient who lived in Wales was very aware of services available in Wales and England and was also knowledgeable enough to know how to ask to be seen at their venue of choice. When referred to Shrewsbury in the past they had successfully asked to be followed up at Arrowse Park Hospital, Wirral. This sort of choice would not be offered as a general rule.

Summary of Findings

- The Whitchurch MIU is providing an excellent service which is much appreciated by patients. However, the fact that there were so few patients treated in the period that we were there on our first visit highlights the need for greater public awareness. On the second visit the number of patients seen was closer to the norm.
- When on the hospital site it is difficult to see the entrance to the MIU; the door and sign above it are hidden by a wall and there is just a small sign indicating the direction to go for the 'Minor Injuries Unit'.
- There are issues with satnav/internet directions which make it hard for people to find the MIU.

- There is an issue around the reading of x-rays for patients from outside Shropshire because different areas use different x-ray systems.
- On the second visit three patients were of school age or younger and of those one had attended Whitchurch because they had been referred by their school in Malpas, Cheshire.
- The use of the hatch between office and waiting room means that private and confidential conversations can be overheard. This is not resolved by the use of the radio playing.

Recommendations

- The MIU is taking and should continue to take advantage of opportunities to raise awareness of their work within the local community. However, the catchment area of Whitchurch MIU crosses Health Trust borders. There needs to be a more comprehensive approach at management level :
 - to promote the role of the MIU to the public both in Whitchurch and throughout the whole catchment area, including local schools
 - to make people aware of other alternative parking near to the hospital when the car park is full
 - to consider ways to make people aware of the difficulties they may experience when using Satnav or other directions to find the MIU
 - to address the difficulties sharing x-rays cross borders which currently cause some members of the public to choose not to use Whitchurch MIU
- Signage to the MIU from the car park is reviewed and improved to ensure patients are aware of the service offered by the MIU and able to find it easily
- When other patients are present in the waiting room conversations between nurse and patient should be moved away from the hatch into a private room.

- Should funding be available, a review of the use of the existing space might be worthwhile to improve privacy for the patients and allow for more effective triage.

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:

To promote the role of the MIU to the public both in Whitchurch and throughout the whole catchment area, including local schools

- Attend local health awareness days to promote the MIU
- Mailshot GP surgeries locally and in the catchment area
- Mailshot local supermarkets
- Mailshot local and surrounding schools

This will be overseen by the Clinical Services Manager and MIU Team Leader. To be completed by December 2016.

Update: In September 2016 there was a mailshot to local supermarkets and a member of staff attended a patient group event promoting the MIU.

To make people aware of other alternative parking near to the hospital when the car park is full

- Review current parking issues
- Review current signage
- Work with Estates and NHS Property Services to formulate a parking strategy

To be overseen by the Clinical Services Manager and completed by November 2016.

Update: Clinical Services Manager met with NHS Property Services on 6th October 2016 to review signage. Property Services discussing with the local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). Awaiting feedback at next meeting on 20th October 2016.

To consider ways to make people aware of the difficulties they may experience when using Satnav or other directions to find the MIU

- Ensure the website clearly states a Satnav postcode that gets patients to the hospital site
- Ensure all posters/leaflets contain this postcode as well

To be overseen by the MIU Team Leader and Communications & Marketing Manager and completed by November 2016.

Update: The correct Satnav postcode has been established.

To address the difficulties sharing x-rays cross borders which currently cause some members of the public to choose not to use Whitchurch MIU

- Liaise with The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust (SaTH) to establish how radiology images can be shared with Wrexham, Chester and Leighton Hospitals
- Establish secure means of data image sharing

This will be overseen by the Clinical Services Manager and completed by December 2016.

Update: Service Delivery Group Manager will discuss this with the Radiology Manager on 10th October 2016.

Signage to the MIU from the car park is reviewed and improved to ensure patients are aware of the service offered by the MIU and able to find it easily

- Review current signage
- Improve current signage

This will be overseen by the MIU Team Leader, Estates and Clinical Services Manager and completed by January 2017.

Update: A meeting with Estates is being arranged for October.

When other patients are present in the waiting room conversations between nurse and patient should be moved away from the hatch into a private room.

- Review current procedures
- Ensure all patients are offered privacy when booking in
- Trial new ways of working

This will be overseen by the MIU Team Leader and the MIU Team and is to be completed by November 2016.

Update: Information to be shared with staff and minuted at the team meeting in October 2016. The team are currently trialling new ways of working.

Should funding be available, a review of the use of the existing space might be worthwhile to improve privacy for the patients and allow for more effective triage.

- Review existing space with Estates
- Establish improved use of space
- Offer space that is confidential for triage

This will be overseen by the MIU Team Leader, Clinical Services Manager and Estates and is to be completed by January 2017.

Update: A staff meeting will take place in October 2016 to discuss ideas and ways to improve the use of space.

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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