

HEALTHWATCH WORCESTERSHIRE - WHY PATIENTS “WALK IN” TO A&E DEPARTMENTS IN WORCESTERSHIRE - A SNAPSHOT

HEADLINES FINDINGS FOR PUBLIC BOARD MEETING - THURSDAY 27TH JANUARY

Background

HWW undertook this project to **increase understanding of why patients “walk in” to the two Accident and Emergency (A&E) Departments in Worcestershire**. We completed 11 visits to the public waiting areas at the Accident & Emergency (A&E) Departments at the Worcestershire Royal Hospital (WRH) and 4 visits to the Alexandra Hospital (the Alex) between 30th November 2021 - 14th December 2021 with the co-operation of the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust. The project was intended to be a **snapshot of patient experience**.

323 people completed our Survey - 292 face to face and 31 online.

The following are some early headlines from the findings, further detail and analysis will be available in the Report.

Headline Findings

- Overall **70% (n227)** of respondents had **contacted another health service** about their condition **BEFORE** going to A&E
- **More respondents** who had contacted another health service before attending A&E were **female and in the older age ranges** of our respondents
- The **top three services** that patients last contacted before attending A&E were their **GP practice (n80)**, the **NHS 111 telephone service (n67)** and **Minor Injuries Units (n29)**
- **92% (n209)** reported they were sent to A&E by the health service that they had contacted
- 75 (94%) of the 80 patients who contacted their GP prior to attending A&E were told by the practice to go to A&E. **67 (89%) were sent by the GP** at the practice, 6 (8%) by reception/administrative staff and 2 (3%) by another health professional.
- **30% of respondents (n96) had self-referred to the A&E Department**. That is, they had not contacted another health service prior to attending A&E on the day of their visit.
- A higher proportion of respondents who self-referred attended A&E on **weekends**, were in the **younger age groups** and **lived nearer** to the A&E Department
- The **top three reasons** for self-referring were: **needed an X-Ray or other diagnostic test (n46 48%)**, **illness/injury too serious to be dealt with outside of hospital (n18 19%)**, **didn't think they would be seen quickly enough by a GP (n10 10%)**. Top three injuries/illnesses reported were possible broken bone (30) and injury to muscles/joints (11) wounds, bruising or cuts (9)
- **59% (n57) of self-referred patients were aware of Minor Injuries Units in the County**. **41% (n39) were not**. Of those who were aware of MIU's the MAIN reason that they gave for attending A&E rather than a MIU were: MIU is too far away (n 18, 32%), unsure if their illness or injury could be treated at an MIU (n 16, 29%) and unsure if they could get an X-Ray or other diagnostic test (n 7,13%).
- **56 of the 96 patients who had self-referred lived in either Worcester or Redditch**, where there is no direct access to a MIU / walk in clinic
- **81% (n77) of patients who self-referred said they would still have attended A&E** even if they had a GP appointment on the same or next day, and **most (n57) thought they were in the right place** to meet their needs
- Patients returning to A&E, or undergoing or awaiting hospital treatment did not seem to be major drivers of visits to A&E for the respondents that we spoke with.
- Overall, when asked what would have made a difference to their decision to visit the A&E Department **most patients (n202) thought they were in the right place** to meet their needs.