

Minor Injury Unit at Congleton Hospital

This report gives the Health and Adult Social Care and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee an overview of the service offered and the issues that have led to the unit being closed on a number of occasions in recent months.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Trust is aware of the impact for residents of Congleton and surrounding areas given the Congleton Minor Injury unit has been closed on a number of occasions over recent months due to pressures at the Macclesfield Emergency Department

1.1 The trust is aware of some patient dissatisfaction due to the intermittent closure of the Minor Injury Unit at Congleton. It is important to note that there are no reported cases of harm to patients due to the closure but the Trust recognises the inconvenience to patients..

1.2 Congleton hospital provides a number of services including 28 rehabilitation beds, outpatient facilities, x-ray and a minor injury unit (MIU).

1.3 This report focuses only on the MIU.

1.4 The trust manages the Congleton Minor Injury Unit as part of the overall urgent care service to the public and works in partnership with the main Emergency Department at Macclesfield. The winter pressures felt across the country as well as locally have led to the MIU not being open consistently. Due to staff being redeployed top the Macclesfield Emergency Department (ED).

2 SERVICE PROVIDED

The number of patients treated at Congleton is low in comparison to the Macclesfield ED and it is not a 24 hour service

2.1 The MIU is planned to be open at the following times:

Weekdays : 10am – 6pm

Weekends: 8:30am – 4:30pm

Bank Holidays: 8:30am -4:30pm

It is staffed by 1 Emergency Nurse Practitioners (ENP)

The types of conditions treated at the MIU include burns, cuts, sprains, splinter removal and minor finger dislocations. Some of these can also be treated by primary care and other health care professionals.

c.1,800 patients were treated at the MIU during 2017/18 which compares to c 49,000 patients at the Macclesfield ED.

On average the unit sees 8 patients per day with a range of 4 to 16 per day (April 2018 data).

It is worthy of note that the numbers of people using the service has reduced significantly over the past few years as more care is available through primary care and other services.

In 2015/16 c. 5,700 patients used the services; this had reduced to c. 3,700 in 2016/17 and is less than 1,800 in 2017/18.

During the winter period of 2017/18 additional appointments in general practice and Out-of-hours were provided in evenings and weekends to provide patients with additional alternatives to attending the MIU or ED.

3 DAILY CLOSURES

The staff in the MIU have been redeployed to the Macclesfield ED over the winter period to maximise staffing levels to the volumes of patients

3.1 During the winter period there was significant pressure on the Macclesfield ED and the trust has redeployed staff to where the greatest clinical need has been.

This has, on a number of occasions, led to the nurse at Congleton becoming part of the staffing rostered at the Macclesfield ED leading to the closure of the Unit.

This has been done on a day by day basis in an attempt to provide as much service as possible to Congleton.

This has led to confusion for some members of the public about when the unit is open or closed. The trust has tried to ensure it communicates with partners and the public (via the website) on a daily basis. Action taken included:

- Highlighting the closure on the Trust's website
- Informing NHS 111 so they could divert patients to other solutions
- Informing the CCG
- Ensuring other internal departments were aware so they could also advise patients

The NHS Choices website cannot be changed at short notice so a message was posted to ask patients to check the trust website before setting off for the MIU.

The trust did consider closing the facility for a definite period of time but on balance, it was believed better to try to staff the unit when able.

The table below shows the number of days the unit has been closed by month over the last 6 months:

Percentage Closure of MIU November 2017 – May 2018

Month	Days Open	% Closed
May	16	41.9%
April	20	33.3%
March	12	61.3%
February	13	53.6%
January	2	93.5%
December	11	64.5%
November	19	36.7%

Chairman: Lynn McGill

Chief Executive: John Wilbraham

The position at the current time is leading to weekend closures as the nurse is being routinely employed at the Macclesfield site.

4 Urgent Treatment Centres – Principles and Standards

There is a national review of urgent care services with a required specification of service standards for the provision of facilities

4.1 NHSE published a document in July 2017 entitled Urgent Treatment Centres – Principles and Standards. Eastern Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group will be expected to respond to this which will include the Congleton MIU.

It has already been agreed with NHS England that the Congleton MIU, would not comply with the required standards to become a wave 1 or wave 2 Urgent Care Treatment Centre. A decision on all remaining sites that will become Urgent Care Treatment Centres must be made by December 2019. Eastern Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group will produce a formal response to this publication including its impact on the Congleton MIU in the Autumn of 2018. The review will also include the expected benefits of the new extend hours primary care which will be implemented by October 2018.

The trust will work alongside the CCG to agree how this is delivered in the future and further dialogue with Health and Adult Social Care and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee will take place in the coming months.

5 SUMMARY

5.1 The OSC are asked to note that the pressure on the ED at Macclesfield required the redeployment of Nursing Staff from Congleton to Macclesfield in line with activity volumes and staffing requirements.

The availability of the unit has improved since January.

Continued staff challenges during the weekends in Macclesfield is leading to the routine closure of the MIU at the weekends and this is expected to continue.

The trust wished to maintain the Congleton service when possible but this has led to intermittent closure of the MIU made at short notice; this has caused concern for patients especially those who have arrived at the facility to find it closed.

Sign Off John Wilbraham
Chief Executive