

Urgent Health Care – Where should we be able to get it from our NHS?

Sheffield Clinical Commissioning Group says that existing arrangements for urgent health care are confusing for patients especially if they can't get GP appointments. The CCG want to close the Minor Injuries Unit and Walk-In Centre, restrict the Eye Clinic to sight-threatening emergencies and set up an Urgent Treatment Centre at Northern General. For other conditions they want to use whatever they can save from the closures (and they don't tell us how much this will be) to resource GPs and opticians to provide covering services in different parts of the cities. They have been consulting the Sheffield public since October on these proposals.

We find the CCG proposals unclear and unconvincing. They have little detail – including about money. Essentially they ask us to sign a blank cheque for the proposed closures.

- 1) The Minor Injuries Unit and Eye Clinic are valued highly by those who use them. They have specialist staff and for many people in Sheffield are much easier to access than Northern General. These are effective, well-run and convenient services.
- 2) The Walk-in Centre currently provides a selection of essential health services to people in the city centre or people from elsewhere who cannot see their GP. No plans are offered for the city centre resident, working, student and visiting populations other than redirection to Northern General.
- 3) Northern General is a good site for those who live nearby but is overloaded in access terms and difficult to get to by public transport from many parts of the city. The public have told us firmly and consistently that sending everyone to Northern General for minor injuries is a NO NO. Over 6700 people have signed our petition.
- 4) GPs are already hard pressed and there are increasing shortages of GP and nursing staff. We are given no information about how these cover clinics will actually lessen the burden on existing GPs or how they will be resourced. We are also concerned that the level of skill in the Eye Clinic will not be replicated when it is diluted to opticians.
- 5) Insisting on telephone appointments for Urgent Care via 111 for everywhere except the Urgent Treatment Centre and A&E will be a deterrent to many and a barrier for disadvantaged groups.
- 6) These proposals risk opening up Urgent Care to even more private provision.

We consider that there is significant danger that services will close and their replacements will not be adequately installed, will be found wanting, and may collapse. **We think that the proposals as they stand place the provision of Urgent Care at risk and should be rejected.**

- **KEEP THE MINOR INJURY UNIT AND EYE CLINIC OPEN AT THE HALLAMSHIRE**
- **MAKE A PROPER PLAN FOR THE HEALTH NEEDS OF CITY CENTRE PEOPLE**
- **FIND BETTER WAYS OF SUPPORTING GPs TO OFFER URGENT APPOINTMENTS**