OUT OF HOURS (URGENT PRIMARY CARE) SERVICES

BRIEFING DOCUMENT
CONTENTS

1. Purpose
2. The Out of Hours (Urgent Primary Care) Service
3. Current Challenges
4. Strengthening Out of Hours services
5. Testing a new way of working
6. What next?

Appendices

A Questionnaire
OUT OF HOURS (URGENT PRIMARY CARE SERVICES)

1. PURPOSE

This briefing has been prepared to share information with you about our Out of Hours (Urgent Primary Care) services, and to seek your view on a proposal for their further development.

Specifically we want to hear your views on:

- Our strengthening of community based services that support out of hours arrangements
- Our more effective management of the busiest service times
- A reduction in service provision at the least busy times on the least busy site

The detail of this proposal can be viewed within this document. There are public drop in sessions which you can attend and also a questionnaire that you can complete should you wish to offer comments on the proposal.

All comments should be returned to Gareth Thomas (details below) by Wednesday 12th April 2017:

GPOOH.Enquiries@wales.nhs.uk

Gwent Out Hours Service
Vantage Point House
Ty Coch Way
Cwmbran
NP44 7HF

2. THE OUT OF HOURS (URGENT PRIMARY CARE) SERVICE

The Health Board provides access to primary care services overnight, on weekends and on Bank Holidays when a patient’s own GP Surgery is closed.
The service is for people with urgent primary care concerns that cannot wait until their own doctor’s surgery is open the following morning or over the weekend. Our service receives contact from approximately 2000 people a week, a number which increases during holiday periods. Throughout the year therefore we see approximately 100,000 people. Our busiest times are on weekends and Bank Holidays.

People who contact the service may have one of the following:

- An assessment by telephone
- A face to face consultation with a doctor or a nurse
- A home visit provided by a doctor or nurse

The service is currently provided from 3 Primary Care Centres:

- St Woolos Hospital, Newport
- Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr, Ystrad Mynach
- Nevill Hall Hospital, Abergavenny

The service is scheduled to be available between 6.30 pm in the evening until 8.00 am in the morning Monday to Thursday and is available all day on Saturdays, Sundays and bank holidays.

3. CURRENT CHALLENGES

Whilst people using the Out of Hours service give good feedback about the care they have received, there are a number of challenges that face the service at this time.

Like many other Health Board areas in Wales, we experience difficulty when recruiting doctors to provide out of hours services. When we are able to recruit, it is often easier to recruit doctors who wish to work Monday – Thursday, and more difficult to find those who wish to work weekends and holidays. This has meant that there have been occasions where the service has had to be managed from 2 centres instead of all 3 to ensure we can provide a service to all at the busiest times.

4. STRENGTHENING OUT OF HOURS SERVICES

We have been doing many things to ensure we can continue to provide safe services to the population of Gwent. Here are some examples:
We have...

- Increased our district nursing service to work more closely with out of hours services and be available for longer hours than previously
- Developed nurse practitioner roles to support the service when there is not a GP available
- Developed pharmacy services to support good access to prescriptions, and to support people who have a minor injury.
- Added more children’s nurses into our service on weekends
- Worked with the ambulance service and now have advanced paramedics working within our teams
- Updated our computer based patient decision support system
- Looked at where our busiest times and busiest places are and considered how we can best support the service as a whole.

5. TESTING A NEW WAY OF WORKING (Service pilot)

The busiest times for Out of Hours services are Weekends and bank holidays. The service is much quieter during week nights. The least busy of our centres is the Primary Care Centre located in Nevill Hall hospital, which sees between 1 and 2 patients per night.

In order to ensure that this site had cover at its busiest times (weekends and bank holidays), we have recently piloted the closure of the service between the hours of midnight and 8 am Monday to Thursday. During this time, all of the services outlined above were in place, home visits were offered if required and the very few people who needed urgent care during this time were supported to access the same service at St Woolos hospital in Newport or Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr in Caerphilly.

The key messages from this pilot are here:

- The pilot took place between 6th October 2017 & 17th November 2016
- There were 667 patients who contacted the service during the pilot
- 202 of them were from North Gwent
- As normal the majority of patients were offered advice by telephone
- 20 patients needed to be physically seen during the pilot
- 4 of the 20 people were visited at home
- The remaining 16 had appointments at either St Woolos hospital or Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr
• No additional service pressure was experienced by Accident & Emergency or the Welsh Ambulance Service
• Services at the weekend (there was no bank holiday during the pilot) were more successfully filled ensuring the service was strengthened at its busiest times and when people need it most.

6. WHAT NEXT?

We would like to make the increase in community services (supporting out of hours); the more effective weekend and bank holiday cover and therefore the reduced service between midnight and 8am Monday-Thursday in Nevill Hall hospital permanent. We know these arrangements offer better access to service at the times patients need them most.

We do however want to hear your views about this. There are some questions at the end of this briefing that we hope you will consider and let us have your thoughts that we can consider these alongside the findings of the pilot before we make any final changes.

We will also be running community drop in sessions during February for people who would like to come and speak with us in person about the developments in the Our of Hours service. The dates and venues for these are:

**Blaenau Gwent** - TBC
**Caerphilly** – TBC
**Monmouthshire** – TBC
**Newport** – TBC
**Torfaen** - TBC

Please contact Gareth Thomas via the following, should you wish to attend:

**GPOOH.Enquiries@wales.nhs.uk**

**01495 745659**

You can of course comment by completing the attached questionnaire, and returning it to:
OUT OF HOURS (URGENT PRIMARY CARE) SERVICES

QUESTIONNAIRE

ABOUT YOU

Name: __________________________________________________________

Address: ________________________________________________________

Post Code: ______________________________________________________

Age: __________________________________________________________________

Have you used urgent primary care outside your regular GP service overnight on weekends or on a bank holiday within the past 12 months?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

ABOUT THE SERVICE

1. As a result of this briefing, do you feel you have a good understanding of the role of out of hours (urgent primary care) services?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Comments

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________
2. As a result of this briefing do you feel you have an understanding of the current challenges the Out of hours (urgent primary care) services face?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Comments
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

3. As a result of this briefing do you feel you have a good understanding of the additional services that have been put in place to strengthen out of hours services in Gwent?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Comments
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

4. As a result of this briefing do you understand the need to consider how we ensure that our service is planned for the busiest periods?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Comments
ABOUT OUR PROPOSALS

5. Would you support the continued increase in our community services to support Out of Hours provision?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Comments
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________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

6. Would you support the need to increase provision at the busiest times?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Comments
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________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

7. Would you support the need to reduce provision at the least busy times?

Yes ☐ No ☐
8. Do you have any other comments that you wish to make?

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

Please return this questionnaire and any comments you wish to make to
Gareth Thomas (details below) by Wednesday 12th April 2017:

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