

Urgent Care



Listening to local
people
Shaping health
services in Somerset

December 2020 – Urgent Care

Who has given us feedback ?

A South West regional survey into the NHS Covid-19 response took place in Summer 2020 and saw over 6000 responses including 700 from Somerset. We were told that:

- People expect urgent care services to remain open during the pandemic, to be and to feel safe.
- Considerations for people on low incomes, those who are shielding and people with transport limitations should be considered in any service change.
- We should let people know the status of services that have temporarily closed, the schedule for reopening them or making permanent decisions regarding their future.
- Introduce clear, easy to understand and consistent eligibility criteria and access routes for urgent care and that GPs and 111 call handlers are informed of these.

What has been done to improve this?

Urgent and emergency care has remained open and safe during the pandemic. We have also launched our Think 111 First service on 1 December 2020. Think 111 First makes it easier and safer for patients to get the right advice or treatment when they urgently need it including being able to book direct appointments into a service (such as A&E or Minor Injuries Unit).

We have a directory of services that is regularly kept up to date and that is used by urgent care staff and organisations when advising the patients. The directory will identify the most suitable service for a patient to be referred to and is also improving joined up working between organisations.

What are we still working on?

We plan to continually monitor feedback on the Think 111 First service through our Citizens' Panel, Patient Advice and Liaison service and Somerset Engagement and Advisory Group. Further service developments and improvements are being considered to improve the urgent care service in Somerset now Think 111 First has gone live. This includes how patients can access Same Day Emergency Care (SDEC) services without the need to attend A&E first.

We know that transport to NHS services is an issue for some people. We are in very early discussions with Voluntary and Community Sector partners to explore developing a pilot to provide additional transport support.

What do we know could be done better?

We know that people's experience of calling NHS 111 is not always good. We continue to monitor our feedback on this service and hope to work closely with Healthwatch Somerset over the coming months to look at whether any service improvements should be made.