

## Fact File

# FIT FOR THE FUTURE

## Developing urgent and hospital care in Gloucestershire

### Urgent and Emergency Care Services

You have asked us to explain the difference between urgent and emergency care.

**Urgent Care** – An illness or injury that requires urgent attention i.e. generally needs to be assessed and dealt with on the day, but is not a life threatening situation.

**Emergency Care** – When you have a life or limb threatening illness or injury which requires rapid and intensive treatment.

#### How services are currently organised

Patients who need urgent advice or care for an illness or injury can get help on the same day through a range of services in Gloucestershire:

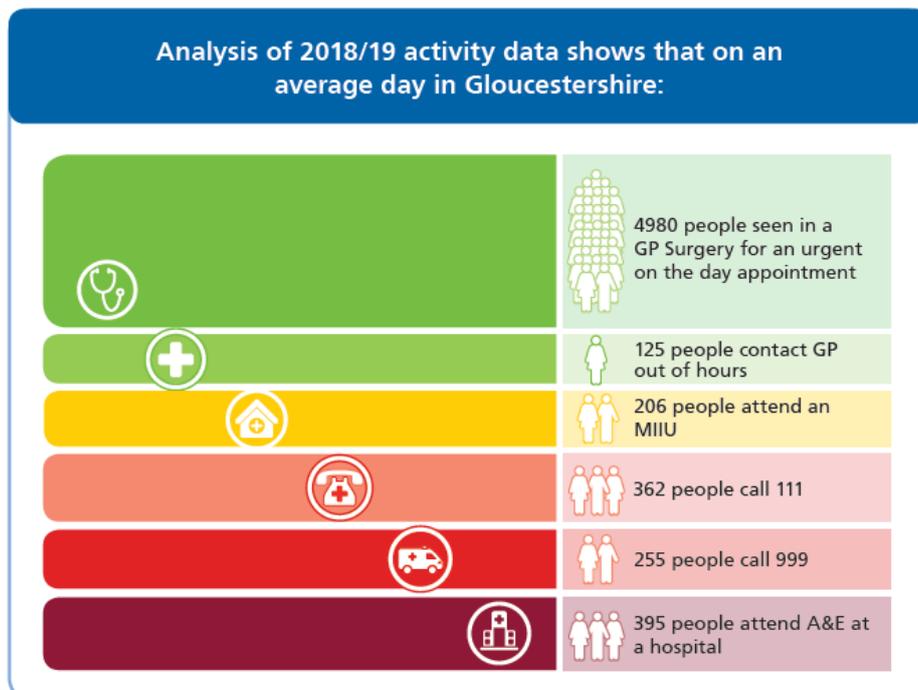
- **Community Pharmacies:** There are 113 pharmacies in the county on the high street and in supermarkets. Fifty-five provide a walk-in Minor Ailments Scheme which offers assessment of minor ailments such as sore throats, headaches and fever. Many are open into the evening and at weekends.
- **Online and telephone advice:** There are a number of national and local NHS websites and Apps as well as the 24/7 NHS 111 telephone service which local people also use to contact the Gloucestershire Out of Hours GP service. NHS 111 provides advice and guidance to people who have an urgent need and require support in self-management or signposting to the most appropriate service.
- **GP surgeries for illness:** There are currently 74 GP practices across Gloucestershire that support people with their long term conditions as well as urgent ailments. **Out of Hours GP service:** This Out of Hours service operates between 18.30 – 08.00 hours Monday to Friday and 24 hours a day at weekends and bank holidays. This service provides urgent telephone advice, face-to-face appointments and a home mobile visiting service. The Out of Hours, face-to-face service is provided within a number of the current community hospitals.
- **Private and NHS dental practices:** These are located throughout Gloucestershire with an urgent, Out of Hours service based in Gloucester City.

- **Minor Illness and Injury Units (MIUs):** There are nine community Minor Injury and Illness Units (MIUs) across the county, seven of these MIUs are based at community hospitals in Cinderford (Dilke), Cirencester, Dursley (Vale), Lydney, North Cotswolds (Moreton-in the-Marsh), Stroud and Tewkesbury. These units support people with a variety of minor injuries such as sprains, broken bones and cuts as well as minor illness including sore throats, rashes and headaches.

There is an Minor Injury Unit at Tetbury Hospital (run by an independent Trust) that supports people with a range of injuries including minor head injuries and broken bones and a Minor Injury Unit at Winchcombe Medical Centre (GP surgery).

- **Emergency Departments (A&E):** There are two Emergency Departments, in Gloucester and Cheltenham. The doctors and nurses there provide care for people who have a life threatening illness or serious injury. At the moment, people with less serious (including minor) illness and injury can also 'walk in' to these services. These services support patients with life threatening conditions such as heart attacks and major injuries following a road traffic accident. They also see people with a range of injury-related conditions such as broken bones, cuts and head injuries.

Figure 1 below shows that most people in Gloucestershire access urgent care via their GP.



*Figure 1 – Urgent Care activity in Gloucestershire on an average day*

### Challenges in the service:

- You have told us that when you are unwell, you do not always know when to visit the pharmacy, call your GP surgery or when to go to hospital
- We have also heard that because there are a range of different opening times at community minor injury and illness units across the county it can be confusing to know which service to use and when
- The number of people going to community minor illness and injury units in Gloucestershire can be very low at times, particularly in the evenings. In some places there can be between 1 and 2 people an hour
- Tests such as x-rays and scans are only available when specialist staff are available, which isn't all the time, everywhere
- Around 1 in 3 visits to the Emergency Departments (A&E) at Cheltenham and Gloucester are for injuries and problems that could be treated safely by a different NHS service
- People who choose to attend the Emergency Departments (A&E) for treatment for minor illnesses and injuries find they have to wait longer as their needs are less critical than seriously ill emergency patients.