

Media Release



14th December 2020

New Urgent Care Centre will Provide Quicker Clinical Advice and Help Keep People Safe

Changes to the way people access A&E services have been introduced in NHS Forth Valley as part of new national arrangements to help people get the right care in the right place.

This new approach will make it easier for people to quickly access clinical advice and treatment from experienced local healthcare staff and ensure the Emergency Department is able to provide safe and effective care to people when they really need it.

Under the new national arrangements anyone with a non-life-threatening condition who would usually go to A&E should now **call NHS 24 on 111 day or night** to be directed to the right NHS service. NHS 24 will assess people by telephone and, where appropriate, refer them to a new Urgent Care Centre at Forth Valley Royal Hospital. This new facility, which is staffed by experienced local doctors and nurses, brings together a number of existing services within the hospital, including minor injuries, GP Out-of-Hours services and assessment services, in one location to provide comprehensive advice, support and treatment for a wide range of urgent healthcare issues.

Local clinical staff based in the Urgent Care Centre will be able to arrange a telephone or video consultation to help keep people safe and avoid any unnecessary trips to hospital. If a face-to-face consultation is necessary, staff will be able to arrange an appointment for people to be seen in the Urgent Care Centre or another local facility to reduce the length of time patients need to wait to be seen and help avoid overcrowding in communal waiting areas.

There are no changes to the arrangements for emergency healthcare care and people should continue to call 999 or go direct to Forth Valley Royal Hospital for emergencies. People can continue to call their local GP practice, dentist or optometrist between 8am to 6pm for advice on a wide range of illnesses and injuries as well as routine checks and treatments. Local pharmacies can also offer expert advice and offer free treatment for many common health conditions without the need for a prescription as part of the national Pharmacy First service.

When your GP surgery or dentist is closed people can call 111 where NHS 24 will direct them to the most appropriate healthcare service, depending on their individual needs. People can also access help online at any time from www.NHSinform.scot

This new change to urgent care was tested in NHS Ayrshire and Arran throughout November 2020 to help inform the national roll out across the rest of Scotland during December 2020. It is being supported by £20 million of investment and a major public information campaign to enable people to get the right care in the right place.



@nhsforthvalley



nhsfvcomms@nhs.net



01786 457243

To ensure they get the right care in the right place, people in Forth Valley should:

- Visit the NHS [inform.scot](https://www.nhs.uk/inform.scot) website for wide a wide range of healthcare advice and information on how to look after yourself as well as detailed of where to go if further medical care is needed
- Contact their local GP practice during the day for over-the-phone advice or an appointment
- Call 111 day or night when they think they may need to attend A&E but it is not life-threatening
- Call 111 and select the Mental Health Hub to access mental health advice and guidance or call the Breathing Space telephone helpline on 0800 83 85 87
- Call 111 day or night if they have worsening symptoms of COVID-19
- Call MIA (Minor Injuries Assessment Service) on 01324 566130 if they have a minor injury including a suspected broken bone

Dr Dan Beckett, NHS Forth Valley Consultant Physician and Clinical Lead for the new Urgent Care Centre, said: “The development of our new Urgent Care Centre will help ensure local people across Forth Valley can quickly access clinical advice and support without having to attend the Emergency Department at Forth Valley Royal Hospital.

“In many cases we will be able to provide this over the phone or via a video consultation but if we do need to see people we can arrange an appointment for them to attend Urgent Care Centre or another local healthcare facility which will mean they won’t have to wait long period to be seen.

“Giving people staggered appointment times also avoids lots of people turning up at the same time and stops our waiting and treatment areas from becoming overcrowded. This means we can help reduce the risk of infection, help keep patients and staff as safe as possible during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and, in some cases, help avoid the need to attend or be admitted to hospital.”

Health Secretary Jeane Freeman said: “The NHS is always there for you. However, for many of us, A&E is not the right place for the care we need. That is why we are making it easier to get the right care in the right place. From December 2020, if you think you need to go to A&E for care that is not life-threatening, the NHS 24 telephone service on 111 will be available day and night to direct you to the care you need.

“Your GP Practice is also always there for you and can be contacted for urgent but non-life threatening conditions. However, in an emergency, you should continue to call 999 or go to your nearest A&E department.

“By doing so, we will continue to help our doctors and nurses through this pandemic, and ensure A&E provides the fastest and most appropriate care for people when they really need it. Help us keep you and our NHS safe by making the right call at the right time to access the right care in the right place for you and your family.”

BACKGROUND

See the Scottish Government Media Release [here](#).

Read [more information on the Redesign of Urgent Care Programme](#).