

Update on Local Urgent Care Services (LUCS)

East Cambridgeshire and Fenland

Issue 4, October 2017: This latest edition provides an update on the development of the Local Urgent Care Services (LUCS) in East Cambridgeshire and Fenland.

Working towards a 'one stop' service for local patients

The Ely LUCS Hub pilot has been operating since May 2017. The pilot is developing the Minor Injuries Unit (MIU) based at the Princess of Wales Hospital, with GPs now working alongside the nurse practitioners. This means more patients with minor injuries or minor illnesses can be seen and treated in a 'one stop' service. Through integrating local health services, the LUCS Hub aims to provide a local alternative to A&E for those with urgent but not life threatening health issues.

During this first stage of developing the service the focus has been on expanding the MIU team to include GPs being available to see MIU patients Monday to Friday. Here, Dr James Howard, a local GP who is now working at the Ely LUCS Hub, gives an update on his experience of the new service so far:

"Since we started to support the MIU the GPs have been involved with a variety of patients ranging from people with jellyfish stings to common infections. We've been able to support the nurse practitioners to treat a wider range of conditions, not only helping to improve patient experience but to ease pressure on services elsewhere.



"For example, there are conditions that the nurse practitioners are able to diagnose but are not allowed to treat and therefore, previously, patients would be referred to an alternative service such as A&E or back to their GP for treatment.

"Now, by having a GP present in the MIU, we can help prevent patients being passed on to another service by treating them there and then. If a GP had not been available I would say about half the patients the MIU GPs now see would have had to go back to their own GP and the other half would have been referred on to the A&E department at Addenbrooke's.

"In time, through further integration with local services and working closer with local GP practices, we expect that the range of services the MIU will be able to provide will increase with more diagnostic tests and a greater range of treatments available.



"The MIU at Ely has always been a highly valued service for local residents and we're pleased to be able to support the excellent nurse practitioners in their role to help to provide better, high quality, joined up care for our patients."

Ally Coe, Clinical Service Manager and Lead Nurse at the MIU said: "We are excited to be working with GPs, hospitals, and commissioners to develop the MIU. It can only be good news that we are enhancing the nurse-led service to provide an alternative to local people having to travel to A&E in Cambridge unless it is a medical emergency."

Service performance and development

By week 15 of the new pilot service, the MIU had seen 284 more patients compared to the same period in 2016, an increase of 6%.

Patient case study: Kidney infection

A very unwell patient visited the MIU with a severe kidney infection. They also had a number of other health problems which meant that expert medical advice was required before they could be effectively treated. Before, there would have been no alternative to referring them to A&E but after consulting with the in-house GP the MIU was able to treat the patient there and then and discharge them back home safely.

Over the summer the GPs and nurse practitioners have also been working with the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust to develop a new approach. Now, when ambulance crews attend calls from patients at home or in care homes in the Ely area, they have the option to ring the MIU GPs for clinical advice and, if appropriate, to take patients to the MIU to be assessed. The ambulance crew will still take patients straight from home to A&E if the MIU GP and paramedic agree it's the best course of action.

In addition, as part of the LUCS hub pilot, the NHS 111 service is now able to refer more patients to the MIU in Ely for a wider range of conditions. Again, this helps to ease pressure on services elsewhere.

As the service continues to develop, patients should continue to use the MIUs in the same way they have been doing. The MIU remains open seven days a week from 8.30am to 6pm for walk in patients with minor injuries and conditions as listed on the website [HERE](#).

Wisbech and south fenland update

The Ely LUCS Hub is the first local pilot but the intention remains to develop local urgent care services for Wisbech and for the south fenland area, learning from the Ely experience.

Within south fenland, Doddington Hospital already has many of the services needed for a LUCS hub. However, local GP practices are experiencing significant pressures due to the growing and ageing population and challenges in recruiting GPs and nurses. The south fenland GP practices have been working together as a 'Time to Care Testbed' initiative which is part of a national pilot that aims to help create capacity in general practice and improve access for patients. This has been funded by the CCG to help the practices to manage workload more effectively based on learning and experience from across England.

In Wisbech, the CCG is continuing to work with local GP practices and other services on how best to deliver improvements effectively, efficiently, and in ways which make sense for the locality. Updates will be shared as these services develop. In the meantime, patients should continue to use the MIU services at Wisbech and Doddington as they have previously.

Keeping people up to date and involved



Patient feedback has been an invaluable part of developing the local services in East Cambridgeshire and Fenland. Patient and Healthwatch representatives are part of the steering group and we will continue to provide updates and communications throughout the development of the services.

Emma Watson, patient representative, said: "Attending monthly meetings of the steering group enables me to witness each stage of development of service provision at Ely's MIU and to contribute from a patient's perspective. Please continue to attend the MIU, as appropriate, and complete a short freepost Healthwatch survey after your visit."

Feedback from the public, patients, and staff is always welcome and you can do this by contacting the CCG Communications and Engagement Team at capccg.contact@nhs.net or 01223 725304.