

Overview of Future Communications Campaign to raise awareness of urgent care services in Southampton City

The communications campaign aimed at raising people's awareness of the services available to them when they become unwell will take place across the city and target a variety of audiences. Local qualitative and quantitative research indicates that people attend the walk-in service for minor illnesses because it is accessible and convenient. People use the service when they need reassurance, outside of standard GP opening hours for minor illness/injury which they do not deem serious enough to attend the Emergency Department. Furthermore, evidence suggests people use the service due to a perceived lack of GP appointments.

The communications plan must therefore address the following issues:

- a lack of awareness of the services available and how to access them
- a lack of confidence in those services
- a lack of awareness of how to manage minor illness, such as coughs and colds, at home
- the need for reassurance when a person or their family member becomes unwell.

In order to do that we must:

- enhance patients' confidence and engagement in their health care
- ensure patients have the information and support to make informed choices about their health care
- increase positive awareness and understanding of the right services to use for the right health concerns
- promote the convenience of services such as NHS 111 (available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, call free of charge) and pharmacists (some are open 100 hours per week and many offer the new minor ailments service)
- enhance people's trust in the services by explain the training staff receive along with their experience in relevant disciplines (NHS 111 has a dedicated mental health practitioner and midwife to answer related calls, pharmacists receive five years training and are able to offer private consultations without the need for an appointment on a range of minor illnesses)
- work with GP practices to promote extended hours appointments, the variety of ways to book appointments (e.g. online) and the variety of services available e.g. telephone and nurse appointments
- educate people on ways to manage a minor illness at home, along with the signs which indicate they should seek medical advice.

The primary groups of people we aim to reach with this work are:

- parents/carers of young children (the main users of the walk-in service)
- young adults
- working age adults who use the service for its ease of access outside standard GP opening hours
- older people, who although relatively low users of the walk-in service have demonstrated, through consultation feedback, that communications around urgent care services in the city have not reached them.

Throughout the work we also aim to reach the following groups in order to disseminate our messages:

- Pharmacies
- GP practices
- Health visitors
- Providers including University Hospital Southampton, community service providers and South Central Ambulance Service
- Southampton City Council
- CCG staff
- Media
- Voluntary sector and organisations
- Large employers within the city

The ways in which we will do this are:

- through local engagement events such as University Freshers' fairs, parent and toddler groups, faith groups, focus groups and through our voluntary sector partners
- via social media, disseminating messages via Twitter and Facebook and obtaining advertising space where necessary
- via our website promoting the services available
- via the press by releasing timely articles regarding both services and information regarding the self-management of seasonal minor illness
- via our internal and external newsletters
- by supporting GPs to promote NHS 111 as the gateway to out of hours services
- by supporting the national NHS England 'Stay well this winter' marketing campaign which provides the frail elderly with advice and support on keeping healthy over the winter period
- local business forums such as the Chamber of Commerce