

# Croydon residents' urgent and emergency care journeys help improve services

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Over 1000 people responded to our survey: 52% made either GPs visit or NHS 111 their first choice, 40% who chose 999 or A&E first felt they needed to be seen quickly or had a serious injury; 15% had difficulty seeing a GP and 74% got seen within two contacts but other have more complex journeys.

- People understand the difference between emergency care and urgent care, but not between a GP and GP Hub.
- Overall satisfaction was 62% but there was significant variance by age, gender and ethnicity.
- This insight has influenced recommissioning of NHS111 services for Croydon and the shape of services being defined by Croydon Urgent Care Alliance.

Urgent and emergency care service planning is being influenced by patient insight due to feedback from Healthwatch Croydon, the local champion for health and social care.

In 2021, they received responses from over 1000 Croydon residents, to gain views on their views from local Croydon residents on their experiences of Croydon University's Accident and Emergency Department, as well as examining the patient journey. Healthwatch asked questions around which services patients had accessed prior to A&E, questions around their understanding of various terms across primary and secondary care as well as their experiences of other healthcare touch points such as the 111 service, GP Hubs, and Ambulances to name a few.

## Findings

Many patients did use the NHS's 111 service and or called their GP as their first choice and where also able to access the right service more quickly compared to those who had accessed the GP Hubs or pharmacy services. There was also a need for patients to be seen quickly as well as concerns about access to GP appointments. They found a higher

proportion of those using urgent care services were those with certain sets of illnesses. Patients also detailed confusion around the various NHS service touchpoints and how to access them and when. Overall satisfaction was rated at 62% but this rating varied when our data was segmented into ages, gender, ethnicity and disabilities from between 50% and 75% respectively.

## Recommendations

- Fully integrate pharmacies and GP Hubs into the pathway and create positive communications to give confidence that this is as good as going directly to A&E/Urgent Care or GP.
- Define NHS 111 as the single reliable point of access to direct care via GPs, pharmacies, GP Hubs or A&E/Urgent Care and give it capacity to do the job it needs to do.
- Learn more about how condition and situation may affect choice and reflect that in pathway.
- Understand these services more from the user perspective.
- Reduce satisfaction gaps between ages, gender, ethnicity and disability and services in geographic location.

You can view the report [here>>>](#) [Linked to be added>>](#)

## Impact

This insight has been presented at the Urgent and Emergency Care Transformation Board set up to redesign the pathways in line with patient demand and expectations. A focus on making NHS111 a reliable first step which allows booking to other services has been influenced in recommissioning of this service. Further developments are being put together by the Croydon Urgent Care Alliance to transform all aspects of the service and Healthwatch has had continued discussions with those designing the services. The ability to show how patients used pathways and that there a gap in satisfaction between certain demographics provides useful insight to shape services going forward.

**Gordon Kay, Healthwatch Croydon Manager said:**

"Urgent and Emergency care is an important service for Croydon residents. By receiving over 1000 responses, one of the larger datasets we have received for a single insight project, we have been able to show the NHS how patients use services and their experience of their journeys. This work has helped our local NHS partners to understand more about patient choice, perception of services and expectations, so they can redesign services to meet patient needs. We thank NHS South West London for their partnership all along the project from their initial invitation to contribute to their planning, to their openness to our findings as they plan transformation work in this area. It is a good example of how the NHS and local Healthwatch can work together to improve services. We look forward to seeing further developments in the coming months and years."

**Paul Cooper, Programme Manager - Urgent & Emergency Care at NHS South West London Integrated Care Board said:**

"The Croydon Urgent Care team have found the survey and subsequent analysis very useful in understanding patients' experiences and pathways in the Croydon Urgent Care system. We learnt that patients who contacted their GP or 111 had a lower number of touchpoints before they were treated. The survey findings supported plans to mobilise an additional Urgent Care Service at the Croydon University Hospital site which was mobilised last week. The Urgent Care team have done considerable amount of work with NHS 111, therefore, we are very encouraged that patients value NHS 111 and that it is key in reducing the number of services accessed before receiving treatment. There are findings which suggest that more could be done to ensure equality of experience and we will feed this back to system partners in the coming weeks, we will also work hard to improve clarity on what services should be accessed and when. Healthwatch Croydon is a valued partner and we would like to thank Gordon and team for their hard work on this report. We look forward to our continued work with the Croydon Healthwatch team so that we can understand how we can better meet the needs of the Croydon population."

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## Editor's notes

Healthwatch Croydon is here to improve the experience that Croydon people have when they need to use health and social care services. We believe that the best way to do this is by listening to patients and service users.

There is a local Healthwatch in every local authority area in England.

Our role is to make sure that that local health and social care services, and the local decision makers, put the experiences of people at the heart of their care.

We are a statutory body - this means that we have a legal status to exist within the Health and Social Care Act 2012. This means decision-makers should listen to us when we give them feedback and make suggestions.

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