

# Ashford Walk-in Centre

## Inspection report

Ashford Hospital  
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Ashford  
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This report describes our judgement of the quality of care at this service. It is based on a combination of what we found when we inspected, information from our ongoing monitoring of data about services and information given to us from the provider, patients, the public and other organisations.

## Ratings

### Overall rating for this location

Good 

Are services safe?

Good 

Are services effective?

Good 

Are services caring?

Good 

Are services responsive?

Good 

Are services well-led?

Good 

# Overall summary

## **This service is rated as Good overall.**

The key questions are rated as:

Are services safe? – Good

Are services effective? – Good

Are services caring? – Good

Are services responsive? – Good

Are services well-led? – Good

We carried out an announced comprehensive inspection at Ashford Walk-in Centre on 24 May 2018. This was the first time the service had been inspected.

At this inspection we found:

- The service had good systems to manage risk so that safety incidents were less likely to happen. When they did happen, the service learned from them and improved their processes.
- The service routinely reviewed the effectiveness and appropriateness of the care it provided. It ensured that care and treatment was delivered according to evidence-based guidelines.
- Staff involved and treated people with compassion, kindness, dignity and respect.
- Patients were able to access care and treatment from the service within an appropriate timescale for their needs.
- There was a strong focus on continuous learning and improvement at all levels of the organisation.

**Professor Steve Field** CBE FRCP FFPH FRCGP  
Chief Inspector of General Practice

## Our inspection team

Our inspection team was led by a CQC lead inspector. The team included a CQC assistant inspector, a nurse specialist adviser and a practice manager specialist advisor.

## Background to Ashford Walk-in Centre

Ashford Walk-in Centre provides nurse-led care for urgent but not emergency conditions located in a dedicated area of the outpatient building at Ashford Hospital. This is a walk-in service for the population of Ashford and the surrounding areas of Surrey and Middlesex. The service is also available for patients who are registered with a GP elsewhere but work or are temporarily in this area. The service is commissioned by North West Surrey CCG to offer assessment, care and treatment for minor illnesses and minor injuries.

The service is provided in conjunction with Central Surrey Health and is one of four walk-in centres managed and operated by Greenbrook Healthcare. Across London and the home counties Greenbrook Healthcare also manages and operates eight urgent care centres, one GP practice, one GP out of hours service and an intermediate community response service.

The service is provided from 8am to 8pm seven days a week and operates everyday including bank holidays. If the centre gets too busy to safely see the number of patients presenting it has an early closing procedure where patients are redirected to the most appropriate service. When the service is closed patients can access the local Out of Hours service by calling NHS 111.

The service is provided by nine full time equivalent nurse practitioners, including Emergency Nurse practitioners, supported by paramedic practitioners and administration/reception staff. Clinical staff can be utilised from other Greenbrook sites and there is a bank of locum nurse and paramedic practitioners.

The service sees approximately 42,000 patients per year and can see on average 120 patients per day. The service assesses all patients presenting for treatment and re-directs those not suitable for nurse led care (for example, children under two, pregnant women and complex elderly patients) to the most appropriate local service. The walk-in centre also receives patients referred from NHS 111 and local ambulance services.

The service shares premises with other services including NHS trust clinics, a community hub and an x-ray department.

The service is registered with CQC to provide the following regulated activities; treatment of disease, disorder and injury and diagnostic and screening procedures.

The service is provided from:

Ashford Walk-in Centre

Ashford Hospital

London Road

Ashford

Surrey

TW15 3FE.

# Are services safe?

**We rated the service as good for providing safe services.**

## Safety systems and processes

The service had clear systems to keep people safe and safeguarded from abuse.

- The provider conducted safety risk assessments. It had safety policies, including Control of Substances Hazardous to Health and Health & Safety policies, which were regularly reviewed and communicated to staff. Staff received safety information from the provider as part of their induction and refresher training. The provider had systems to safeguard children and vulnerable adults from abuse. Policies were regularly reviewed and were accessible to all staff. They outlined clearly who to go to for further guidance.
- The service worked with other agencies to support patients and protect them from neglect and abuse. For example, we saw evidence that where staff were concerned about the safety of patients they had contacted the local authorities and emergency social work teams. Staff took steps to protect patients from abuse, neglect, harassment, discrimination and breaches of their dignity and respect.
- The provider carried out staff checks at the time of recruitment and on an ongoing basis where appropriate. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks were undertaken where required. (DBS checks identify whether a person has a criminal record or is on an official list of people barred from working in roles where they may have contact with children or adults who may be vulnerable).
- All staff received up-to-date safeguarding and safety training appropriate to their role. They knew how to identify and report concerns. Staff who acted as chaperones were trained for the role and had received a DBS check.
- There was an effective system to manage infection prevention and control.
- The provider ensured that facilities and equipment were safe and that equipment was maintained according to manufacturers' instructions. There were systems for safely managing healthcare waste.

## Risks to patients

There were systems to assess, monitor and manage risks to patient safety.

- There were arrangements for planning and monitoring the number and mix of staff needed. There was an effective system in place for dealing with surges in demand.
- There was an effective induction system for temporary staff tailored to their role.
- Staff understood their responsibilities to manage emergencies and to recognise those in need of urgent medical attention. They knew how to identify and manage patients with severe infections, for example sepsis. In line with available guidance, patients were prioritised appropriately for care and treatment, in accordance with their clinical need. Systems were in place to manage people who experienced long waits. For example, the length of time patients had been waiting could easily be seen on the clinical system and patients would be reviewed to ensure their condition was not deteriorating.
- Staff told patients when to seek further help. They advised patients what to do if their condition got worse.
- When there were changes to services or staff the service assessed and monitored the impact on safety.

## Information to deliver safe care and treatment

Staff had the information they needed to deliver safe care and treatment to patients.

- Individual care records were written and managed in a way that kept patients safe. The care records we saw showed that information needed to deliver safe care and treatment was available to relevant staff in an accessible way.
- The service had systems for sharing information with staff and other agencies to enable them to deliver safe care and treatment.
- Clinicians made appropriate and timely referrals in line with protocols and up to date evidence-based guidance.

## Safe and appropriate use of medicines

The service had reliable systems for appropriate and safe handling of medicines.

- The systems and arrangements for managing medicines, including medical gases, emergency medicines and equipment, and vaccines, minimised risks. The service kept prescription stationery securely and monitored its use. Arrangements were also in place to ensure medicines and medical gas cylinders were

## Are services safe?

stored appropriately. The services also had piped medical oxygen which was appropriately labelled, serviced and included emergency shut off valves in case of fire.

- The service carried out regular medicines audit to ensure prescribing was in line with best practice guidelines for safe prescribing.
- Staff prescribed, administered or supplied medicines to patients and gave advice on medicines in line with legal requirements and current national guidance. The service had audited antimicrobial prescribing. There was evidence of actions taken to support good antimicrobial stewardship.
- Processes were in place for checking medicines and staff kept accurate records of medicines.
- Patients' health was monitored in relation to the use of medicines and followed up on appropriately.
- Arrangements for dispensing medicines kept patients safe.

### Track record on safety

The service had a good safety record.

- There were comprehensive risk assessments in relation to safety issues.
- The service monitored and reviewed activity. This helped it to understand risks and gave a clear, accurate and current picture that led to safety improvements.

- There was a system for receiving and acting on safety alerts.
- Joint reviews of incidents were carried out with partner organisations, including Central Surrey Health and acute trusts.

### Lessons learned and improvements made

The service learned and made improvements when things went wrong.

- There was a system for recording and acting on significant events and incidents. Staff understood their duty to raise concerns and report incidents and near misses. Leaders and managers supported them when they did so.
- There were adequate systems for reviewing and investigating when things went wrong. The service learned and shared lessons, identified themes and took action to improve safety in the service.
- The service learned from external safety events and patient safety alerts. The service had an effective mechanism in place to disseminate alerts to all members of the team including sessional and agency staff. Learning from significant events was shared with staff across all the Greenbrook sites through newsletters.

# Are services effective?

**We rated the service as good for providing effective services.**

## Effective needs assessment, care and treatment

The provider had systems to keep clinicians up to date with current evidence based practice. We saw evidence that clinicians assessed needs and delivered care and treatment in line with current legislation, standards and guidance supported by clear clinical pathways and protocols.

- Clinical staff had access to guidelines from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and used this information to help ensure that people's needs were met. The provider monitored that these guidelines were followed.
- Patients' needs were fully assessed. This included their clinical needs and their mental and physical wellbeing. Where patients needs could not be met by the service, clinical staff redirected them to the appropriate service for their needs. For example, to NHS dental services.
- Care and treatment was delivered in a coordinated way which took into account the needs of those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.
- We saw no evidence of discrimination when making care and treatment decisions.
- Regular prescribing audits were undertaken, these included medicines optimisation audits. Audits of individual prescribers formed part of the prescriber's appraisals.
- Arrangements were in place to deal with repeat patients. There was a system in place to identify patients who attended frequently and patients with particular needs. For example, patients with mental health needs had care plans/guidance/protocols in place to provide the appropriate support. We saw no evidence of discrimination when making care and treatment decisions.
- When staff were not able to make a direct appointment on behalf of the patient clear referral processes were in place. These were agreed with senior staff and clear explanation was given to the patient or person calling on their behalf.
- Technology and equipment were used to improve treatment and to support patients' independence. For

example, the service worked with the acute trust to provide a virtual fracture clinic. This had led to a decrease in patient waiting times and improved outcomes.

- Staff assessed and managed patients' pain where appropriate.

## Monitoring care and treatment

- The service used key performance indicators (KPIs) that had been agreed with its clinical commissioning group to monitor their performance and improve outcomes for people. The service shared with us the performance data from April 2017 to April 2018 that showed:
  - 99.9% of people who arrived at the service completed their treatment within four hours. This was better than the target agreed by the CCG of 95%.
  - 95% of people who attended the service were provided with a complete episode of care. This was better than the target of 85%.
  - 96% of people who arrived at the service requiring urgent assessment were assessed within 20 minutes. This was better than the target of 85%.
- The service made improvements through the use of completed audits. Clinical audit had a positive impact on quality of care and outcomes for patients. There was clear evidence of action to resolve concerns and improve quality. Audits were carried out at this location and across all the Greenbrook sites.
- The service was actively involved in quality improvement activity and where appropriate, clinicians took part in local and national improvement initiatives.

## Effective staffing

Staff had the skills, knowledge and experience to carry out their roles.

- All staff were appropriately qualified. The provider had an induction programme for all newly appointed staff. This covered such topics as health and safety, confidentiality and infection control.
- The provider ensured that all staff worked within their scope of practice and had access to clinical support when required.
- The provider understood the learning needs of staff and provided protected time and training to meet them. Up to date records of skills, qualifications and training were maintained. Staff were encouraged and given

## Are services effective?

opportunities to develop. For example, in the last year Ashford Walk-in Centre had supported two nurse practitioners in their training to become emergency nurse practitioners.

- The provider provided staff with ongoing support. This included one-to-one meetings, appraisals, coaching and mentoring, clinical supervision and support for revalidation. The provider could demonstrate how it ensured the competence of staff employed in advanced roles by audit of their clinical decision making, including non-medical prescribing.
- There was a clear approach for supporting and managing staff when their performance was poor or variable.

### Coordinating care and treatment

Staff worked together, and worked well with other organisations to deliver effective care and treatment.

- We saw records that showed that all appropriate staff, including those in different teams, services and organisations, were involved in assessing, planning and delivering care and treatment.
- Patients received coordinated and person-centred care. This included when they moved between services, when they were referred, or after they were discharged from hospital. Care and treatment for patients in vulnerable circumstances was coordinated with other services. The service monitored patients with mental health needs who attended the services frequently and communicated with mental health services. Staff communicated promptly with patient's registered GP's so that the GP was aware of the need for further action. Staff also referred patients back to their own GP to ensure continuity of care, where necessary. There were established pathways for staff to follow to ensure patients were referred to other services for support as required. For example, children under two were fully assessed by clinicians and then directed to the most appropriate service.
- Patient information was shared appropriately, and the information needed to plan and deliver care and treatment was available to relevant staff in a timely and accessible way.

- The service ensured that care was delivered in a coordinated way and took into account the needs of different patients, including those who may be vulnerable because of their circumstances.
- There were clear and effective arrangements for booking appointments, transfers to other services, and organising ambulances for people that require them. Staff were empowered to make direct referrals and/or appointments for patients with other services.

### Helping patients to live healthier lives

Staff were consistent and proactive in empowering patients, and supporting them to manage their own health and maximise their independence.

- The service identified patients who may be in need of extra support. For example, young children, patients with mobility issues.
- Where appropriate, staff gave people advice so they could self-care. Systems were available to facilitate this. Self-care and information leaflets produced by Greenbrook Healthcare were available covering a wide range of topics. For example, emergency contraception, wound care, head injuries and nose bleeds.
- Risk factors, where identified, were highlighted to patients and their normal care providers so additional support could be given.
- Where patients needs could not be met by the service, staff redirected them to the appropriate service for their needs.

### Consent to care and treatment

The service obtained consent to care and treatment in line with legislation and guidance.

- Clinicians understood the requirements of legislation and guidance when considering consent and decision making.
- Clinicians supported patients to make decisions. Where appropriate, they assessed and recorded a patient's mental capacity to make a decision.

# Are services caring?

**We rated the service as good for caring.**

## **Kindness, respect and compassion**

Staff treated patients with kindness, respect and compassion.

- Staff understood patients' personal, cultural, social and religious needs. They displayed an understanding and non-judgmental attitude to all patients.
- The service gave patients timely support and information. Call handlers gave people who phoned into the service clear information. There were arrangements and systems in place to support staff to respond to people with specific health care needs such as those who had mental health needs. For example, staff were given training for various health needs.
- All of the 39 patient Care Quality Commission comment cards we received were positive about the service experienced. This was in line with the results of the NHS Friends and Family Test and other feedback received by the service.

## **Involvement in decisions about care and treatment**

Staff helped patients be involved in decisions about their care and were aware of the Accessible Information Standard (a requirement to make sure that patients and their carers can access and understand the information they are given):

- Interpretation services were available for patients who did not have English as a first language. We saw notices

in the reception areas informing patients this service was available. Information leaflets were available in easy read formats, to help patients be involved in decisions about their care.

- Patients told us through comment cards, that they felt listened to and supported by staff and had sufficient time during consultations to make an informed decision about the choice of treatment available to them.
- For patients with learning disabilities or complex social needs family, carers or social workers were appropriately involved.
- Staff communicated with people in a way that they could understand. For example, communication aids and easy read materials were available.
- Staff helped patients and their carers find further information and access community and advocacy services. They helped them ask questions about their care and treatment.

## **Privacy and dignity**

The service respected and promoted patients' privacy and dignity.

- Staff respected confidentiality at all times.
- Staff understood the requirements of legislation and guidance when considering consent and decision making.
- Staff supported patients to make decisions. Where appropriate, they assessed and recorded a patient's mental capacity to make a decision.
- The service monitored the process for seeking consent appropriately.



# Are services responsive to people's needs?

**We rated the service as good for providing responsive services.**

## Responding to and meeting people's needs

The provider organised and delivered services to meet patients' needs. It took account of patient needs and preferences.

- The provider understood the needs of its population and tailored services in response to those needs. The provider monitored demand hourly and used this information to predict staffing levels in advance. For example, the number of clinicians required for peak periods and on Christmas day. The provider engaged with commissioners to secure improvements to services where these were identified.
- The provider improved services where possible in response to unmet needs.
- The service had a system in place that alerted staff to any specific safety or clinical needs of a person using the service. Care pathways were appropriate for patients with specific needs. For example, children and young people.
- The facilities and premises were appropriate for the services delivered.
- The service made reasonable adjustments when people found it hard to access the service. For example, patients who found it distressing to wait in a busy waiting room could wait in a quieter area or in their own vehicle until they could be seen.
- The service was responsive to the needs of people in vulnerable circumstances.

## Timely access to the service

Patients were able to access care and treatment from the service within an appropriate timescale for their needs.

- Patients were able to access care and treatment at a time to suit them. The service operated every day from 8am to 8pm.
- Patients could access the service either as a walk-in patient, via the NHS 111 service or by referral from a healthcare professional. Patients did not need to book an appointment.
- Patients were generally seen on a first come first served basis, although the service had a system in place to facilitate prioritisation according to clinical need where more serious cases could be prioritised as they arrived. The reception staff had a list of emergency criteria they

used to alert the clinical staff if a patient had an urgent need. The criteria included guidance on sepsis and the symptoms that would prompt an urgent response. The receptionists informed patients about anticipated waiting times.

- Patients had timely access to initial assessment, test results, diagnosis and treatment. We saw the most recent local key performance indicators (KPI) results for the service (April 2017 – April 2018) which showed the provider was meeting the following indicators:
  - 99.9% patients were seen within four hours (target 95%).
  - 94.2% of patients who required urgent assessment received this within 20 minutes (target 85%).

There were no areas where the provider was outside of the target range for an indicator.

- Waiting times and delays were minimal and managed appropriately. Where people were waiting a long time for an assessment or treatment there were arrangements in place to manage the waiting list and to support people while they waited. For example, in the hot weather patients were able to wait outside as long as they provided a way to contact them such as a mobile telephone number.
- The service engaged with people who are in vulnerable circumstances and took actions to remove barriers when people found it hard to access or use services.
- Patients with the most urgent needs had their care and treatment prioritised.
- Where patient's needs could not be met by the service, staff redirected them to the appropriate service for their needs.
- Referrals and transfers to other services were undertaken in a timely way. For example, where possible patients were referred into specialist departments at local hospitals not into A&E.

## Listening and learning from concerns and complaints

The service took complaints and concerns seriously and responded to them appropriately to improve the quality of care.

- Information about how to make a complaint or raise concerns was available and it was easy to do. Staff treated patients who made complaints compassionately.

## Are services responsive to people's needs?

- The complaint policy and procedures were in line with recognised guidance. Eleven complaints were received in the last year. We reviewed 11 complaints and found that they were satisfactorily handled in a timely way.
- Issues were investigated across relevant providers, and staff were able to feedback to other parts of the patient pathway where relevant. For example, we saw correspondence between the service and an acute trust where a delay in referral had occurred.
- The service learned lessons from individual concerns and complaints and also from analysis of trends. It acted as a result to improve the quality of care. For example, following complaints about staff attitude further customer care training was provided to both clinical and non-clinical staff.

# Are services well-led?

**We rated the service as good for leadership.**

## Leadership capacity and capability

Leaders had the capacity and skills to deliver high-quality, sustainable care.

- Leaders had the experience, capacity and skills to deliver the service strategy and address risks to it.
- They were knowledgeable about issues and priorities relating to the quality and future of services. They understood the challenges and were addressing them.
- Leaders at all levels were visible and approachable. They worked closely with staff and others to make sure they prioritised compassionate and inclusive leadership.
- Senior management was accessible throughout the operational period, with an effective on-call system that staff were able to use.
- The provider had effective processes to develop leadership capacity and skills, including planning for the future leadership of the service.

## Vision and strategy

The service had a clear vision and credible strategy to deliver high quality care and promote good outcomes for patients.

- There was a clear vision and set of values. The service had a realistic strategy and supporting business plans to achieve priorities.
- The service developed its vision, values and strategy jointly with staff and external partners.
- Staff were aware of and understood the vision, values and strategy and their role in achieving them.
- The strategy was in line with health and social priorities across the region. The provider planned the service to meet the needs of the local population.
- The provider monitored progress against delivery of the strategy.
- The provider ensured that staff who worked away from their main base felt engaged in the delivery of the provider's vision and values.

## Culture

The service had a culture of high-quality sustainable care.

- Staff felt respected, supported and valued. They were proud to work for the service.
- The service focused on the needs of patients.

- Leaders and managers acted on behaviour and performance inconsistent with the vision and values.
- Openness, honesty and transparency were demonstrated when responding to incidents and complaints. The provider was aware of and had systems to ensure compliance with the requirements of the duty of candour.
- Staff we spoke with told us they were able to raise concerns and were encouraged to do so. They had confidence that these would be addressed.
- There were processes for providing all staff with the development they need. This included appraisal and career development conversations. All staff received regular annual appraisals in the last year. Staff were supported to meet the requirements of professional revalidation where necessary.
- Clinical staff, including nurses, were considered valued members of the team. They were given protected time for professional development and evaluation of their clinical work.
- There was a strong emphasis on the safety and well-being of all staff.
- The service actively promoted equality and diversity. It identified and addressed the causes of any workforce inequality. Staff had received equality and diversity training. Staff felt they were treated equally.
- There were positive relationships between staff and teams. These relationships had been developed and maintained over the last year as the staff teams had undergone changes due to the closure of a local service.

## Governance arrangements

There were clear responsibilities, roles and systems of accountability to support good governance and management.

- Structures, processes and systems to support good governance and management were clearly set out, understood and effective. The governance and management of partnerships, joint working arrangements and shared services promoted interactive and co-ordinated person-centred care.
- Staff were clear on their roles and accountabilities including in respect of safeguarding and infection prevention and control.
- Leaders had established proper policies, procedures and activities to ensure safety and assured themselves that they were operating as intended.

# Are services well-led?

## Managing risks, issues and performance

There were clear and effective processes for managing risks, issues and performance.

There was an effective process to identify, understand, monitor and address current and future risks including risks to patient safety.

The provider had processes to manage current and future performance of the service. Performance of employed clinical staff could be demonstrated through audit of their consultations, prescribing and referral decisions. Leaders had oversight of MHRA alerts, incidents, and complaints. Leaders also had a good understanding of service performance against the national and local key performance indicators. Performance was regularly discussed at senior management and board level. Performance was shared with staff and the local CCG as part of contract monitoring arrangements.

Clinical audit had a positive impact on quality of care and outcomes for patients. There was clear evidence of action to resolve concerns and improve quality.

The providers had plans in place and had trained staff for major incidents.

The provider implemented service developments and where efficiency changes were made this was with input from clinicians to understand their impact on the quality of care.

## Appropriate and accurate information

The service acted on appropriate and accurate information.

- Quality and operational information was used to ensure and improve performance. Performance information was combined with the views of patients.
- Quality and sustainability were discussed in relevant meetings where all staff had sufficient access to information.
- The service used performance information which was reported and monitored, and management and staff were held to account.
- The information used to monitor performance and the delivery of quality care was accurate and useful. There were plans to address any identified weaknesses.
- The service used information technology systems to monitor and improve the quality of care.

- The service submitted data or notifications to external organisations as required.
- There were robust arrangements in line with data security standards for the availability, integrity and confidentiality of patient identifiable data, records and data management systems.

## Engagement with patients, the public, staff and external partners

The service involved patients, the public, staff and external partners to support high-quality sustainable services.

- A full and diverse range of patients', staff and external partners' views and concerns were encouraged, heard and acted on to shape services and culture. The service encouraged feedback from patients through a variety of methods including the friends and family test. In addition to a standard feedback form, the service provided a form specifically designed to capture children's feedback. We saw evidence of several patients returning to the service after treatment to provide positive feedback about their experience. There was information about patient feedback and the performance of the service in the waiting area.
- Staff were able to describe to us the systems in place to give feedback.
- The service was transparent, collaborative and open with stakeholders about performance.

## Continuous improvement and innovation

There were systems and processes for learning, continuous improvement and innovation.

- There was a focus on continuous learning and improvement at all levels within the service.
- Staff knew about improvement methods and had the skills to use them.
- The service made use of internal and external reviews of incidents and complaints. Learning was shared and used to make improvements.
- Leaders and managers encouraged staff to take time out to review individual and team objectives, processes and performance.
- There was a strong culture of innovation evidenced by the number of pilot schemes the provider was involved in. There were systems to support improvement and innovation work.