

Stonehaven Minor Injury Service update briefing

Background

Across Aberdeenshire, prior to the onset of the COVID-19, there were 7 community hospital-based sites able to deliver a minor injury service. Three (Peterhead, Huntly & Fraserburgh) are currently open and operate on a 24/7 basis. The other 4 units (Stonehaven, Aboyne, Turriff and Banff) suspended activity for the duration of the pandemic.

At the March 2022 meeting of the IJB it was agreed that operational teams should begin the work to re-mobilise these units. So far, the units at Turriff and Banff have re-mobilised and now offer some sessions each week to treat minor injuries. To be clear these units are not offering a 24/7 walk-in service but rather a few afternoon or morning sessions where people who have a minor injury can attend if they have been given an appointment to do so following a call to NHS24 (111)

The units that are currently open are by far our busiest:

Average monthly attendances: April 2019 – December 2020

Peterhead: 1,183

Fraserburgh: 561

In comparison to Stonehaven: 72

What can a Minor Injury Service treat?

The Minor Injury Service can only treat minor injuries such as small burns, cuts, sprains, some fractures, and head injuries. The service is not able to treat young children and would have to refer most on to the A&E service at Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital (RACH) Most people with a suspected fracture will be sent home with advice and an appointment made for them to attend for an X-Ray and, should it be required, plastering. KCH does not have an X-Ray service so anyone with a suspected fracture will be referred on to Aberdeen.

The Minor Injury Service is separate from the Minor or Out of Hours illness service (GMED) however both are accessed by calling NHS24 on 111. GMED is not operated by the Partnership but does often operate from a base at one of our Community Hospitals such as KCH.

Stonehaven:

As you will be aware there is currently a truly unprecedented level of demand across all of our services. This is being felt keenly across our Community Hospitals where patient numbers are increasing, and levels of patient acuity are rising.

Our three busiest units are staffed separately from the in-patient wards whereas the unit at Kincardine Community Hospital (KCH) was staffed by nurses from the Arduathie Ward. With the current levels of demand on our nursing team at KCH we would not be able to safely provide in-patient care if nurses were having to leave the ward to attend to a minor injury and it would not be right to ask this staff group to take on more than they already being asked to.

Separate to the current levels of demand there is also the issue of staff training. Essentially all nurses delivering minor injury care need to be MI trained and must also keep what is referred to as 'their competency' levels high. This basically means that for a nurse to be able to provide good care and treatment they need to be treating and seeing a relatively high number of injuries to ensure that they are seeing enough to be able to treat and diagnose competently. All of our nurses at KCH would have to undertake the MI training and would have to do some shifts in other units to be able to begin to offer a service at Stonehaven.

All of these issues require careful thought and planning prior to the re-mobilisation of the Minor Injury Service at KCH.

Accessing Minor Injury and Illness Services

Anyone with a minor injury must first call NHS 24 on 111 where they will be triaged and if required, offered an appointment at their nearest open Minor Injury Service, Optometrist if it is an eye injury, video consultation with a clinician or potentially, sign posted elsewhere. This is also the case if people are experiencing illness out with GP opening hours.

For life threatening emergencies, phone 999 or go straight to A&E.