

October 2025

Hospital's urgent treatment service thanks its community as it marks success

A hospital's urgent care service has thanked its community for its support in using it for the right reasons – as it marks its success.

The urgent treatment centre at the University Hospital of Hartlepool is a GP and nurse practitioner service treating people with minor injuries and illnesses.

Since opening in 2016 it has been offering a 24 hours a day, seven days a week service for people needing urgent support and have been unable to gain access to their GP. Over this time the service is treating more than four times the number of patients – with more than 200 people now coming through the doors for treatment every day.

The service is a joint collaboration between University Hospitals Tees, the North East Ambulance Service and Hartlepool and Stockton Health GP federation.

Nicola Grieves, head of nursing of urgent care services across University Hospitals Tees, said: "The service is very busy throughout the year.

"That is due to it being well known to our local community and the expertise of our team of health professionals in the service. The urgent treatment centre is here to help people with minor issues, something the majority of people completely understand. People appreciate the fantastic care our staff give them, as we see in the many compliments we get. I want to thank people for using the service at the right times and for helping contribute to its success, as well as to our own teams for the fantastic care they deliver and their commitment to our patients."

The centre – which includes experienced nurse practitioners and health support workers – can help people with issues including:

- Sprains or strains
- Suspected broken bones
- Grazes, burns and cuts
- Minor illness – for example sore throats, earache, eye conditions, stomach ache

The service is not there to deal with complex issues that require continuity. Unless there is an urgent need these conditions should be addressed by a person's own GP.

Mark Lauder, one of the nurse practitioners working in the service, said: "We are lucky to have an extremely experienced team here. We get a lot of thanks from local people who are very appreciative of what we do."

The urgent treatment centre at Hartlepool is one of four being run by the same staff across the University Hospitals Tees group. The other sites are located at The James Cook University Hospital, Redcar Primary Care Hospital and the University Hospital of North Tees.

If you need urgent care

If you need medical treatment, please visit **NHS 111** or **call 111**. An experienced call handler will signpost you to the most appropriate service.

Healthwatch Hartlepool

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Health experts call on public to ‘trust the NHS’

HEALTH experts on Teesside have asked communities across the region to trust in their health care providers regarding advice about vaccinations.

University Hospitals Tees, comprising of North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust and South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, has urged the public to listen to the advice and guidance of clinicians and other experts surrounding the safety of vaccination programmes and administration of drugs for particular groups of patients.

Vaccinations continue to be a topical debate following recent announcements from the US government about medication during pregnancy.

Esther Mireku, public health consultant, who had her flu jab at the University Hospital of North Tees last week, said: "There is a continued dialogue about the safe use of vaccinations and medications which conflicts with our advice and guidance as your national health service. Across our region we have some of the lowest uptake of vaccinations in the country. This is creating a massive health risk for some of the most vulnerable within our communities.

"As a health professional, getting vaccinated means I have done what I can to protect myself, patients, staff and my loved ones from the flu. I want to encourage our community to trust in the advice your health professionals give you."

James Dunbar, consultant in infection and general medicine, said: "There is no evidence of a link between vaccination and autism. The doctor who first made these false claims was struck off the medical register for fraudulent research.

"The best way to protect our loved ones from killers like influenza and measles is vaccination. I urge everybody to have their immunisations."

In the UK many of the routine vaccines offered for children drop below the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommended targets. Data suggests that from April 2024 to March 2025 one in five children in the UK did not receive their pre-school booster vaccines.

In Teesside specifically, Middlesbrough has the lowest uptake across our region of the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccination. Hartlepool follows closely with Stockton and Redcar and Cleveland still behind the national target of 95%.

As we approach the UK's colder months, flu vaccinations are now a key focus for the National Health Service. Working to protect the most vulnerable members of the community is a priority objective to ensure patients are kept well, and out of hospital settings. The vaccine is offered to people at risk of serious illness, those over the age of 65, pregnant women, those with underlying health conditions, frontline health care workers and household contacts of immunocompromised individuals.

Ramamurthy Sathyamurthy, consultant in respiratory medicine, said: "Flu vaccination prevents serious illness and it is estimated to have prevented around 96,000 to 120,200 people from being hospitalised in England last winter. "It's crucial that we protect ourselves and our loved ones by getting flu vaccination this winter at the earliest opportunity."

University Hospitals Tees is urging those who have been invited to have a vaccination to do so at the earliest opportunity.

Speaking about the positive impact of vaccinations, Emma Nunez, chief nursing officer for the organisation, said: "The success of vaccination programmes cannot be underestimated. For example, since the introduction of the HPV vaccine to protect against the human papillomavirus - linked to cervical cancers, cases have reduced significantly.

"We are worried that credible sources of information about appropriate health guidance are being discredited by inaccurate and poorly informed sources. If anyone is concerned, they should talk to their health and care provider directly."

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