

Press Release

Date: 11 June 2014

Health chiefs advise: “Think before you visit A&E”

With local temperatures set to rise significantly by the end of the week and the national media predicting a future heat wave, Stafford and Cannock health chiefs are advising, “think before you visit A&E”.

You can be seen faster and receive treatment for minor illness and injury quicker by using other services, they say.

And they suggest dialling 111 first to find out, free of charge, where the best service is for you.

Increased numbers of people visiting A&E in hot weather puts pressure on the service and can significantly extend waiting times for those urgently needing help.

Chris Oliver, of Stafford and Surrounds Clinical Commissioning Group explains: “We want to get an early message to everyone locally to ensure they know what to do and where to go to be seen the fastest if they do need medical help.

“The best course of action is to avoid illness or injury associated with hot weather altogether of course, but if help is needed it is essential people recognise there is more than one place to go.”

Alternative services for less serious illness and injury include:

Your GP surgery: Your GP surgery deals with illnesses including chronic conditions like diabetes, asthma.

Your GP out-of-hours service: If you call your GP out of hours needing urgent medical advice or assistance your call will be answered by or diverted to a specially trained healthcare professional, doctor or nurse who will assess you and offer a range of health support.

Your pharmacist: Your local pharmacy can provide a whole range of services including free advice, support and guidance on all your health problems. Check the opening times of your local pharmacist via NHS Choices www.nhs.uk

Your minor injuries unit: Your local Minor Injury Unit (MIU) can treat a wide variety of problems, including sprains and strains, insect and animal bites, minor head injuries and minor burns and scalds. Cannock Minor Injuries Unit, Cannock Chase Hospital. Open from 8.00am to midnight, seven days a week.

Your dental access centre: Providing emergency treatment. Available to everyone even if they are not registered with a dental practice: Please call to make an emergency appointment. Central Clinic, Stafford, Tel 01785 22 36 46

By dialling NHS 111 first local people can find out whatever time of day or night, “twenty-four-seven,” which service, including A&E, will meet their needs. And where there is an emergency, the NHS 111 call handlers can make arrangements for an ambulance if necessary.

Issued on behalf of Stafford and Surrounds and Cannock Chase CCG