

Kent Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Briefing Note: Swale Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC) Model (Feb-22)

Background

Within Swale there are two Minor Injury Units (MIUs), one based at each community hospital (Sheppey Community Hospital and Sittingbourne Memorial Hospital) that are provided by Kent Community Health NHS Trust (KCHFT) and a GP Walk In Centre (WIC) based at Sheppey Community Hospital.

The UTC national guidance was published in July 2017 which set out a core set of standards for UTCs to establish as much commonality as possible. In response to the national system pressure, NHS England prioritised development of UTCs and the enhancements of UTC standards to decompress both Type 1 and ambulance activity. They have shared an updated "*Urgent Treatment Centres - Principles and Standards*" document to reflect changing ways of working, and the importance of UTCs as part of an NHS 111 First model of care.

As a result, the requirement to develop the MIUs and WIC into a UTC model within Swale that meets the 34 standards, is fit for purpose and ensures equitable access to the Swale community is not only a local system priority but a national requirement.

At the previous update to this committee in June 2021, a phased approach was outlined. As part of phase 2 of Swale's UTC development, Minster Medical Group (MMG) were awarded the contract to provide an interim GP WIC service at Sheppey Community Hospital, to replace DMC Healthcare's Alternative Provider Medical Services (APMS) contract that ended in October 2021.

MMG seamlessly launched the service on 1 November 2021, which included enabling patients to physically walk in and not having to wait for telephone triage first (DMC Healthcare instigated telephone triage as part of their response to the pandemic) and more recently enabling NHS111 Direct Access Booking.

Current position

The transition to develop the MIU and WIC into a UTC is underway, and the services currently work together to support each other and ensure patients are seen by the most appropriate clinician for their needs. This will continue, as the service develops and begins to meet more of the national standards, providing quality care, closer to home for the residents of and visitors to Swale.

Some minor building works to the existing area used by the WIC is underway and once complete, the MIU team will move across to enable the services to operate as one within an improved, safe and secure unit. The pandemic has resulted in issues sourcing materials which has caused a delay to this move but this is expected to be completed within the next 2 months.

There has been a delay to the timeline described in June 2021 due to wave 3 of the pandemic and the subsequent mandated requirement to put on hold any work that was not critical to vaccination, flow and surge or a statutory requirement. As the MIU and WIC services were functioning well together, further enhancements to these services were not critical, given the unprecedented pressure within the system.

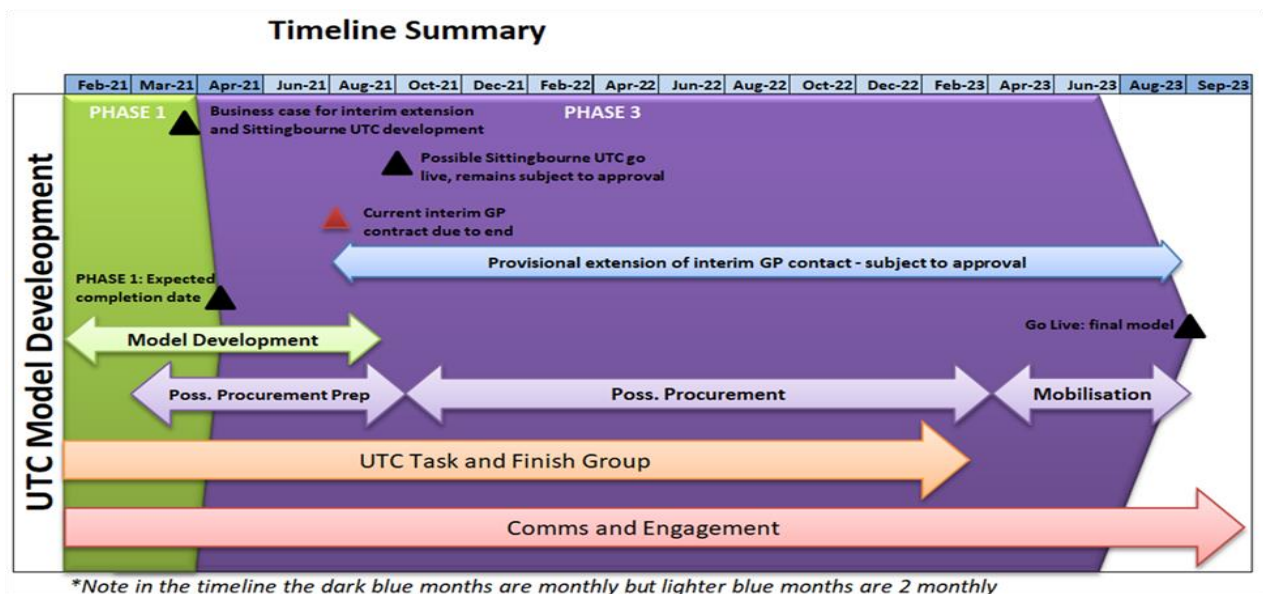
This work is now being prioritised by the CCG to ensure that Swale residents will benefit from the UTC model. Provisionally the interim arrangements in Sheppey are likely to be extended until August 2023 and include potential development of the Sittingbourne UTC (subject to business case approval), with the final model commencing September 2023.

UTC Model Timeline

The timeline of the project is divided into three phases as detailed below. Phase 1 is partially complete, building works have delayed final completion but this is expected in the next 2 months. Phase 2 is complete, with Phase 3 the longer term development of the final model.

Phase	Description	Development Period	Go Live
Phase 1	The alignment of the existing MIU and WIC services, this could result in some minor contractual changes	Apr 21 – Apr 22	Expected by April 22*
Phase 2	The provision of an interim service that will 'replace' the WIC element of the service when the WIC contract expires at the end of September 2021	Completed	Completed 1 Nov 21
Phase 3	This is the final UTC model that is required for the Medway and Swale system. This element is likely to include to procurement hence time has been built in to allow for the right engagement, time for procurement and mobilisation. If a risk is taken and procurement option not selected time may reduce	Apr 21 – Aug 23* (incl. procurement)	1 Sep 23

**subject to building works completion, delayed due to pandemic causing issues sourcing materials*



Next Steps

- Complete integration of Sheppey MIU and WIC to UTC
- Business case to the CCG to agree update timeline, possible extension of interim service and development of Sittingbourne MIU into a UTC
- Updated Communication and Engagement Plan
- Further updates will be provided to HOSC as the model is developed