



# Patient Experience at St Mark's Urgent Care Centre

**healthwatch**  
Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead

# Contents

Contents.....	1
Background.....	2
What we did.....	2
Summary of findings .....	3
Recommendations and response.....	3
Patient feedback.....	4
Accessibility.....	8
Appendix 1- demographics .....	11

# Background

When we attend meetings and engage with the public, we heard that there was a need to better understand people's decision making and choices when seeking urgent care. We wanted to find out more and to share people's experiences to help the system learn and plan accordingly, ensuring people can get the best possible care in the most efficient and accessible way.

Patients can be given an appointment at Maidenhead urgent care centre in St Mark's Hospital when they require an urgent appointment with a GP or have a minor injury. Their GP care navigator or 111 can make the appointment and the patient will be seen on the same day.

There is no walk-in service available, with this option being ceased from April 2020. There has been a local campaign to re-open the walk-in element. At present there are no plans to offer a walk-in service. Appointments are booked for patients via the routes detailed above.

St Mark's Urgent Care Centre is open 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday

Additionally, St Mark's offers blood tests and ultra-sound scanning which are pre-booked.

Healthwatch in Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead have not received any feedback about St Mark's Urgent Care Centre in the previous 12 Months.

## What we did

We visited St Marks Urgent Care Centre on 3 occasions in October and November 2024, talking to patients and distributing a survey for completion. In total we spoke to 52 patients and received 40 completed surveys.

We also made observations and completed an accessibility check with a volunteer who has a visual impairment and uses a walking stick.

Disclaimer, please note that this report relates to findings observed on the dates set out above. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all service users. It is only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.

# Summary of findings

Patients generally expressed high satisfaction with the service at St Marks, appreciating the quick access to care in a convenient location.

However, a few patients were dissatisfied due to communication issues with their GP (2 patients) and difficulty finding parking (1 patient).

Most patients were happy with their waiting experience, highlighting the kindness of staff, comfortable seating, and prompt service. Additionally, patients were generally satisfied with the treatment and care they received from healthcare professionals.

Patient suggestions for improvement included extending opening hours and allowing more time for appointments.

While the site is largely accessible, Healthwatch recommends improving the entranceway to better accommodate individuals in wheelchairs and with sight loss.

## Recommendations with response from provider

### Recommendations

Communicate with GP practices to make sure they are giving patients enough information about what to expect on arrival at St Marks.

Continue to make the public aware of the service including opening hours via communications campaigns

Improve exterior signage to ensure patients can easily find the urgent care centre.

Address the issue with the exterior door lip, improving access for disabled patients.

Conduct a full review of accessibility with a local disabled patients' group.

Install an emergency pull cord in the disabled toilets and consider changing the toilet seat for one in a contrasting colour.

## NHS Frimley response to Healthwatch EB reports

NHS Frimley appreciates receiving feedback about the services which it is responsible for commissioning. The three reports for Brants Bridge Urgent Care Centre, Slough Urgent Care Centre and St Marks Urgent Care Centre highlight the positive work of our provider colleagues as well as some areas for improvement.

Two of the sites hosting these services are co-located in shared buildings, demonstrating NHS Frimley's commitment to ensuring services are joined up and accessible within the community. These services support patients where appropriate to be seen more quickly, dependent on their clinical needs after triaging, this ensures patients who require continuity of care can access this. The Slough Urgent Care Centre was developed as a pilot, the feedback provided through this report will be utilised as part of evaluating its effectiveness.

The responses from patients demonstrate they are accessing these services using the routes promoted by the NHS locally, in turn supporting them to be triaged to the most appropriate service.

The feedback highlights areas where we can continue to support development, including working with the landlords to improve accessibility and ease of navigation, as well as ensuring patients have clearer expectations of the sites and why they have been booked into them."

# Patient Feedback

10 patients who filled in a survey were attending for treatment of a minor injury

14 patients who filled in a survey were attending to see a GP

10 patients who filled in a survey were having a blood test

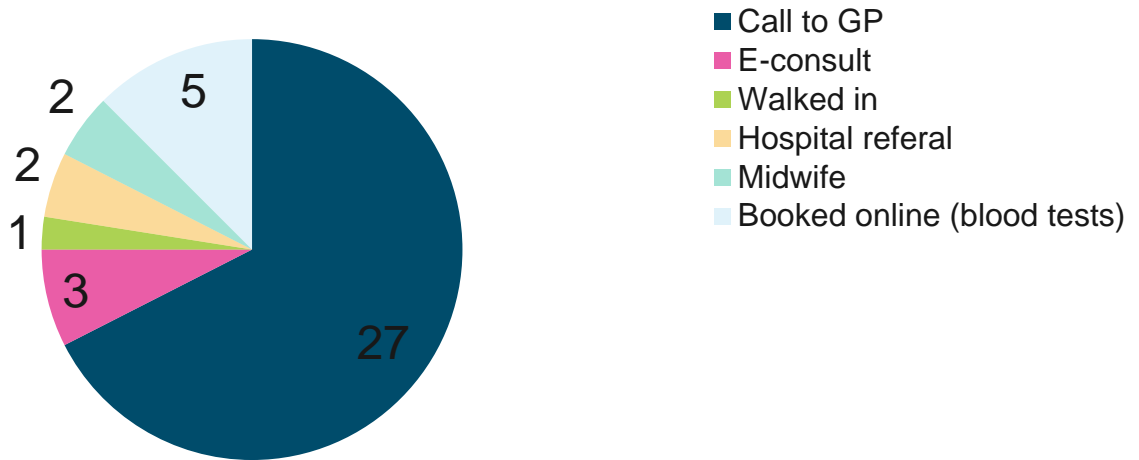
5 patients who filled in a survey were having an ultrasound scan

1 patient who filled in a survey was having a diabetic eye screen appointment

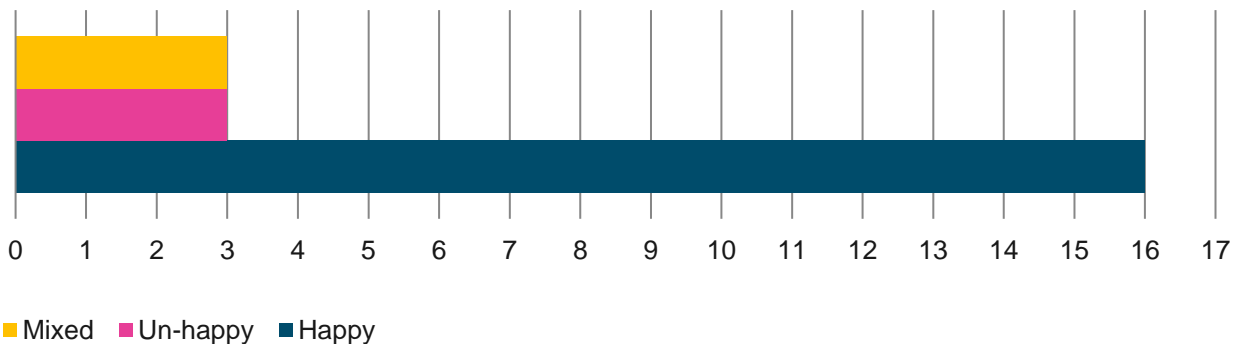
## Access

We asked patients for feedback about how easy it was to access the urgent care centre.

### How did you access the service today?



### Were you happy with the way you accessed the service?



### What did you like?

I phoned the GP and got an appointment time very quickly- so very helpful

Calling GP good, appointment to see someone, very easy

Booking online works well

## What could be better?

GP book my appointment in the wrong slot on Monday. I wanted to see a lady doctor, but it was moved to a male doctor. Attention to detail would be nice when the appointment was first booked by the GP.

When I called my doctors, they just told me to go to St Marks. They didn't tell me who I was seeing or where to go when I got here

While we were on-site, we observed a patient who arrived with a minor injury after a fall who thought that the walk-in offer was still open. Staff were seen treating the patient kindly and made them comfortable before a health professional came out to assess the injury. The staff helped them arrange a taxi to take them to A&E as there was no minor injuries service running on that day.

## Waiting for appointments

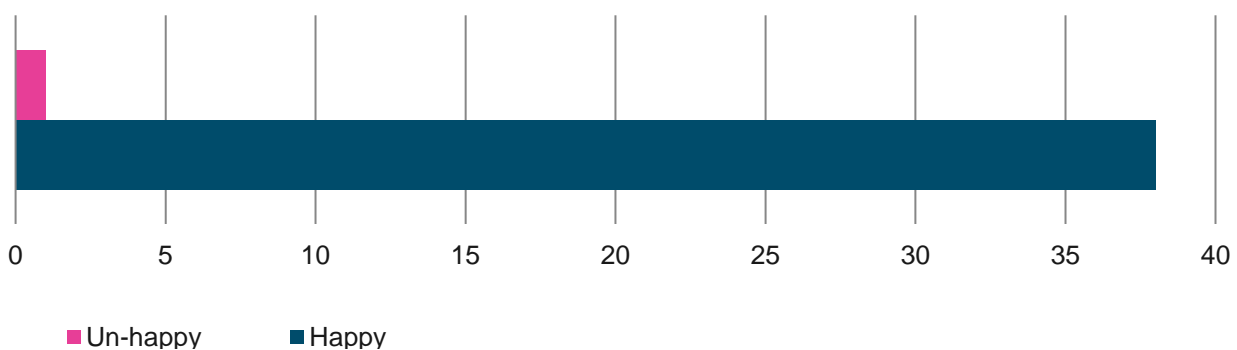
We asked patients about the experience of waiting. The waiting room was spacious, and the seating was comfortable. There were different areas so that people who wanted to stay away from other patients could do so.

The area around the reception desk was clear and reception staff dealt with patients quickly.

27 patients told us that they had a booked appointment and were seen on time

12 patients told us they had a booked appointment but needed to wait in the waiting area as well.

## Were you happy with your experience of waiting?

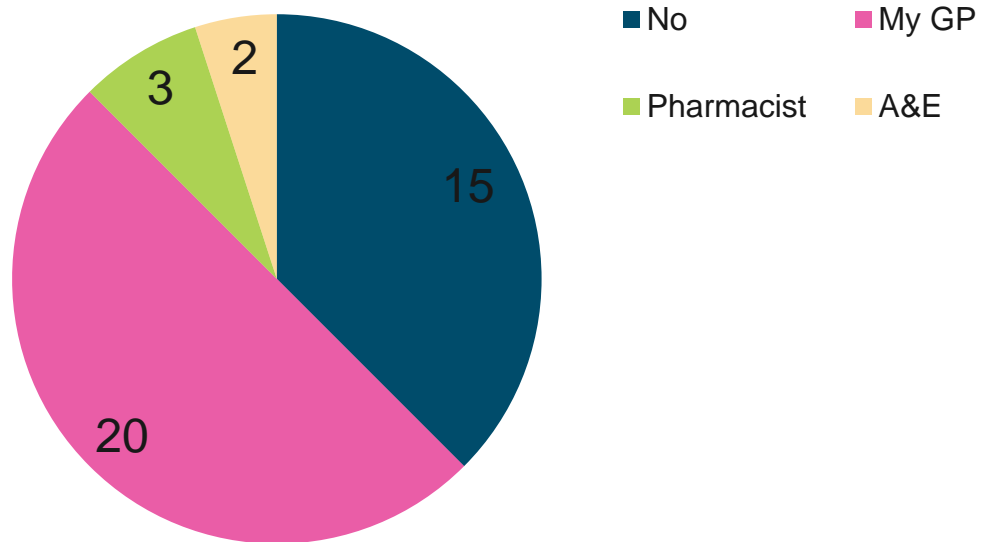


It was quick, the doctor called us in on time

The receptionist got me a glass of water, they were very kind

Waiting time was not too long, although whole appointment was around 1 hour including plaster

**Before coming here today, had you used any other health service for this issue?**



**Satisfaction with treatment and care**

37 people who had seen a GP or other health professional were happy with the care they received. Only 1 patient reported that they were un-happy.

The doctor was very kind and accommodating, very helpful to the care home resident I was supporting

**Any other feedback?**

People were generally happy with the service with some ideas for improvements suggested.

We were very grateful that my daughter was able to get an appointment. She is at university and has been unwell for 6 weeks. She was not able to get an appointment there, her and her friends just get sent to A&E whenever they try to see a GP. Please keep St Marks open, it is really appreciated. Great that the parking is free, and we have this option of a floating GP so all can get access.



Very clean and pleasant. Staff are always helpful. I asked the receptionist to call me a taxi which she did and there are seats in a good position so I can see the taxi arrive

Very efficient, polite and friendly. Very gentle

### **Suggestions for improvement**

Carry on the good work. Longer opening times and weekends would be a great asset to Maidenhead

It can be difficult to get a GP appointment so it would be a benefit to be able to discuss 2 issues at the same appointment

I have previously seen a physiotherapist at my GP surgery. I think the appointment today was a bit rushed

# Accessibility

## **Exterior and entrance to the building**

There is a free car park which was appreciated by patients.

The signage on the outside of the building was not clear. The sign reads 'outpatients department' with a smaller sign saying, 'out of hours service' and 'radiology'. There is no mention of minor injuries or GP appointments.

We were approached in the car park by somebody who was looking for minor injuries, this needs to be improved.



There is a slope, followed by a lip on the outside door going into the main reception area that is a trip hazard for people with sight loss.

Our volunteer found it difficult to navigate. It is very difficult to get a wheelchair over this lip and we helped someone who was struggling to manoeuvre into the building.



## Reception Area

There is space and privacy around the reception desk and the signage in this area was clear.

## Waiting Rooms

The waiting area is comfortable and feels spacious. We noticed some chairs did not have arms making them suitable for bariatric patients in the waiting area. There is a seating area near to the doors which was being used by people waiting for taxis.

The lighting was adequate for people with sight loss and the flooring was suitable.

## Signage

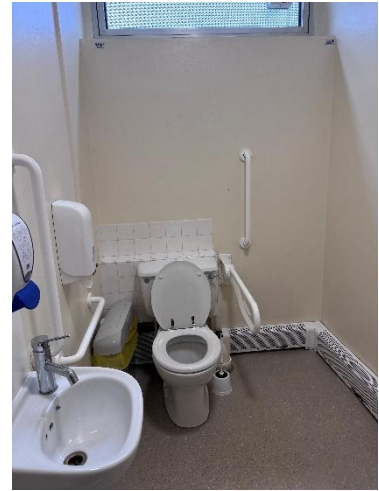
Direction finding signage was clear and easy to read. We noted that the toilet signage was excellent and suitable for people with dementia and sight loss.



## Toilets

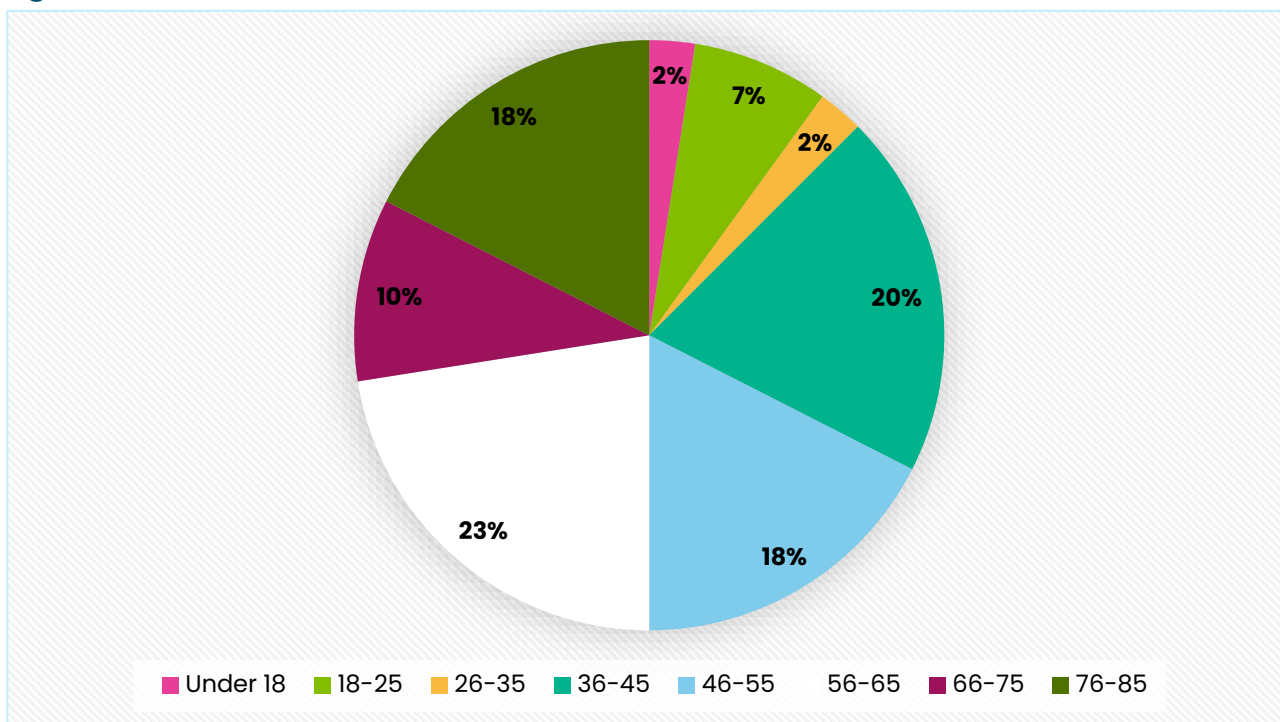
There were 2 disabled toilets, one of which had a contrasting-coloured seat. Contrasting coloured seats make the facilities easier to use for people with dementia.

The emergency pull cord was missing in both disabled toilets.

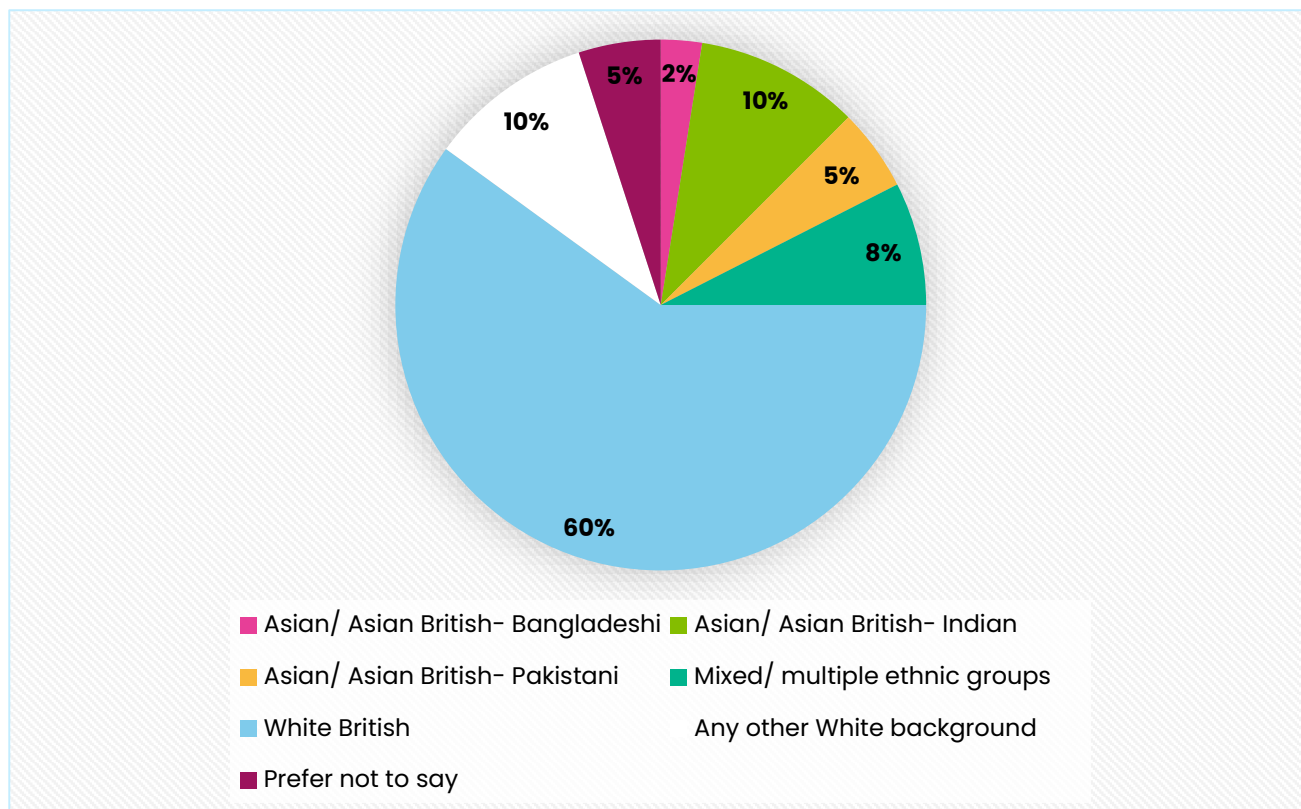


# Appendix 1 – Demographics

## Age



## Ethnicity



### **Please tell us your sex recorded at birth**

27 people were female, 13 people were male.

### **Please tell us if you are an unpaid carer**

37 people told us they were not an unpaid carer, 2 people were an unpaid carer, 1 preferred not to say.

### **Please tell us if you have a disability**

34 people did not have a disability, 4 people did, 2 preferred not to say.

### **Please tell us if you have a long-term health condition**

25 people did not have a long-term health condition, 13 people did, 2 preferred not to say.

### **Please tell us if you consider yourself to be neurodiverse**

32 people did not consider themselves to be neuro-diverse, 3 people did, 5 preferred not to say.

### **Please tell us your sexual orientation**

32 people were heterosexual/ straight, 7 people preferred not to say and 1 preferred to self-describe.

### **Is your gender identity the same as your sex recorded at birth?**

37 people had the same gender identity recorded at birth; 3 people preferred not to say.



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