

MEDIA RELEASE

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Is it really an emergency?

Local commissioners are keen to remind people that A&E is Accident and Emergency, not anything and everything.

Around 11 per cent of people who attend A&E are sent home requiring no treatment. A further 38 per cent receive guidance or advice only* for minor conditions such as coughs, colds, muscular pain, minor wounds or allergies. These could have been managed safely and effectively at minor injuries, pharmacies or even self-care at home. NHS 111 is available for non-urgent medical advice.

More than 300 people attend A&E at Basildon and Thurrock University Hospital every day. During the summer holidays, A&E can get busier. So it is important that people are aware of the alternative places where they can seek advice and treatment for their illness or injury.

Dr Vikram Bhat, local GP and Unplanned and Planned Care lead at Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group, said: "During the summer months extra people come in to our South Essex area to enjoy our beaches and holiday parks. To ensure that health provision remains adequate people should be aware of the alternatives. We want to encourage everyone to stop and think before going to A&E.

"A&E is there for life-threatening emergencies such as loss of consciousness, suspected heart attacks, breathing difficulties, or severe bleeding that cannot be stopped and stroke. If it is not a serious medical emergency, A&E is not the right choice."

Jane Foster-Taylor, Chief Nurse at NHS Thurrock CCG, said: "People attending A&E who could obtain care elsewhere put extra strain on both the department and the hospital as a whole. On many occasions it would have been better for the patient and the hospital if they sought treatment from a more appropriate service. Everyone should remember that NHS

111 is available for non-life threatening conditions and advice, and can book out of hours GP appointments and self-care advice.”

Thurrock CCG has developed a guide to help people navigate local health services and decide which service is best. This is available online at: <http://www.thurrockccg.nhs.uk/your-health/where-to-go-for-your-healthcare>

Ends

Notes to Editor

***NHS Digital 2017**

The NHS 111 number is free to call from both landlines and mobiles and allows people to access healthcare for any health problem that is not life-threatening. You can ring the 111 number 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

For more information, please email: louise.banks3@nhs.net or ring 01375 365810.