



# Primary Care for Walk-in Patients

Travellers to or from Manchester Piccadilly and Canary Wharf in London's Docklands can now visit an Atos Healthcare run NHS Walk-in Centre and receive immediate treatment for minor injuries and illnesses. And every year, nearly 60,000 of them do just that.



- > 95% of all patients receive complete episode care, with no further treatment required.
- > The average waiting time at our two Walk-in Centres is 14 minutes.

### Why Walk-in Centres?

Following a Department of Health (DoH) study in 2004, a pilot scheme was launched to provide primary care services for walk-in patients.

The purpose behind the scheme was to provide alternative access to the treatment of minor injuries and illnesses, as well as a healthcare referral and advice service, in locations that people were travelling to and from as part of their daily lives. Patients would be able to receive treatment and advice that fitted in with their work schedule, rather than having to stay at home in order to see their GP or visit their local Accident and Emergency Department.

Of the seven locations chosen for the scheme, Atos Healthcare was selected to set up and operate Walk-in Centres at Canary Wharf in London's Docklands, and at Manchester Piccadilly.

### The challenge

Setting up and operating the Centres presented a two-fold challenge. Firstly, the timescale to opening the Centres was, in effect, 'as soon as possible'. Secondly, the contract required a total 'design, build, operate' solution, including:

- > Identifying appropriate premises for each Centre
- > Acquiring the properties
- > Full fit-out
- > Purchasing and installing all the medical equipment needed
- > Identifying and recruiting medical and administrative staff
- > Operating the Centres in accordance with Standards for Better Health
- > Undergoing and passing pre-opening and post-opening 'go-live' inspections by independent agencies in order to confirm compliance with all necessary primary care legislation.

By providing all these functions in-house at Atos Healthcare, our team were able to make sure that budgets stayed on target and decisions were swiftly agreed and acted upon. At one point, in Canary Wharf, property negotiations broke down, potentially derailing mobilisation plans, schedules and delivery dates. Through flexible and dynamic management the tempo of the project was maintained and within weeks an alternative, highly suitable site had been acquired.

### Our solution

Our solution was designed to deliver integrated primary care services within the terms of the DoH contract. Most importantly, the objective was to combine exemplary clinical standards for Walk-in Medicine with the highest possible percentage of 'complete episode care'. This is the heart of our Walk-in Centre service. Patients can simply walk in to the Centre and if their injury or ailment can be treated on the spot, they will receive diagnosis, treatment and/or advice, and leave the Centre with no more care required by any medical professional.

When a patient's injury or illness is too serious to be treated at the Centre, or where it is discovered that a patient may need longer-term care (perhaps because of a condition they were unaware of), our staff will contact the patient's GP or the Accident and Emergency Department at their local hospital, and make the necessary referrals. If the matter is so serious that it requires immediate treatment, staff will call an ambulance, brief the paramedics, call the local hospital in London or Manchester to inform them of the patient's condition, and facilitate their transfer.

Where a patient is not registered with a GP in their home area, Centre staff will provide information on local GP Practices and where necessary put them in touch with Primary Care Trust (PCT) support services to help ensure they are taken on to an appropriate GP Practice list.

As well as providing high quality treatment, the Walk-in Centres also deliver a service for advising people about other healthcare providers in the local area, such as dentists, services for homeless people and family planning. In this way each Centre provides a very valuable 'signposting' function for those patients who require more specialist care that is not currently provided under the terms of the DoH contract, or is not clinically appropriate to treat within the Walk-in Centre environment.

### What we provide

In order to ensure fast and thorough treatment, the Centres' scope is deliberately limited to 'minor injuries and illnesses'. Typically, a Walk-in Centre will deal with coughs, colds, skin conditions, emergency contraception and advice, stomach and digestive complaints, and a variety of minor injuries that need cleaning and dressing, as well as providing blood pressure checks and health promotion advice on topics such as diet and exercise.

It's also important to note those services that are outside the Walk-in Centre scope. We do not offer x-ray, chemotherapy or renal dialysis treatment. Where these and other continuing care services are required, patients will be referred as appropriate.

Both Walk-in Centres are open from 7am to 7pm Monday to Friday, as well as Bank Holidays other than those which occur during the Christmas period. At Canary Wharf our doctors and nurses provide an average of 80 patient consultations a day, and at Manchester the figure is over 90 consultations a day. In addition, they deal with a further 20% of patient contacts, providing healthcare information such as where patients can register with a doctor or dentist in their local home area.

The speed, convenience, accessibility and level of care provided by our Walk-in Centres are also augmented by an appointments system, in which a Centre will, for example, allot two appointment slots per hour at certain times during the day.

### The highest standards

We welcome the opportunity to confirm our standards of clinical governance, procedures and processes, by providing regular reports and taking part in joint review meetings with both the DoH and local PCTs. The reporting and inspection process is designed to ensure that the operational and care standards we deliver meet, if not exceed, the requirements of the Government's Standards for Better Health.

Independent formal inspection by the Healthcare Commission takes place annually and their report is delivered simultaneously to both the customer and Atos Healthcare as the service provider. Passing these inspections is a fundamental condition of our contract to operate the Walk-in Centre services on behalf of the NHS.

The reporting, reviewing and inspection procedures are invaluable to us, because we believe it is vital for the NHS and Government organisations to be able to trust service providers with the care of patients.

Each week our Centres monitor the throughput of patients. This forms the basis of the management information report we compile and submit each month to the DoH, including key performance indicators. We take part in a quarterly meeting with the DoH and our local PCTs, where we discuss all relevant matters in detail.

We also hold an on-site clinical governance meeting monthly, to which we invite representatives from the DoH and the local trust. In addition, anyone from the DoH or local PCT can make an unscheduled visit to our Walk-in Centre at any time.

### Award winning service

The Public:Private Finance Awards recognise service delivery excellence. In May 2007, our Walk-in Centre services won the Best Operational Health Scheme award and most importantly, also won the Best Overall UK Project. The awards reflect the extraordinary quality of our delivery against the best service providers to the public sector. To achieve this honour, we demonstrated the highest service quality in the following areas:

- > Staff and user satisfaction
- > Performance
- > Working with partners
- > Flexibility
- > Sustained value for money
- > Contract management in relation to contractual stipulations.

### Going forward

If you would like to know more about Atos Healthcare Walk-in Centre services, please call 020 7830 4931 or visit [atoshealthcare.com](http://atoshealthcare.com)





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