

## **News release**

Tuesday January 17, 2011  
For immediate release

### **Health services take to social networks**

The city's emergency department and Urgent Care Centre will be taking to social networks Twitter and Facebook to raise public awareness about the many non-urgent cases doctors and nurses deal with daily.

The ten hour event will give people a realistic snapshot of who uses our emergency services, highlighting the conditions and cases that walk through the doors.

Staff will take to the social networks Twitter and Facebook between 8am and 6pm on Tuesday January 24 when members of staff will share information on the types of conditions they see in the department as well as providing advice on where the patient could have gone. Real time updates will highlight the delays and inconvenience non-emergencies can cause. Staff will also tweet on the real emergencies they treat throughout the day.

Catherine Griffiths, chief executive of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland PCT Cluster, said: "This will give the public an excellent chance to see for themselves the pressure that hardworking A&E staff, come under on a daily basis. Obviously we do not know what kind of challenge will walk through the door at A&E but it promises to provide people with a fascinating and informative insight."

David Anderson manager from Leicester's Hospitals Emergency Department said "This is really new for us, we've never taken to social networks before to give people an insight to what we do everyday. For us it is just another day at work, but sharing what we face in a busy city centre emergency department might change people's attitudes and perceptions. Ultimately what we want to do is make sure people only use us when they need to, in an emergency, and that they are aware of other health services available to them."

The Choose Better campaign uses a new approach to keep people who don't need urgent medical attention away from A&E while also signposting other available services locally. This forms the next stage of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland PCT Cluster's Choose Better campaign.

Choose Better is challenging the public to play their part in keeping A&E free for those suffering from the most serious illnesses and injuries during one of the busiest times of the year.

Leaflets and posters are displayed in GP surgeries, health centres and community centres with the Choose Better message and members of the public will be able to pick up their own pocket-sized information guides giving details on where to turn when they or a member of their family fall ill, and advice on where best to seek treatment.

Patient confidentiality will be maintained throughout the day and no personal information will be used in the messages staff post on Twitter. Members of the public can follow activity from the day by searching for #choosebetterllr at [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com).

For more information on Choose Better visit [www.choosebetter.org.uk](http://www.choosebetter.org.uk). Blackberry, iPhone and Smartphone users can also scan a special barcode available on Choose Better posters or the websites to carry the information on where to go for medical treatment with them on their phones.

ENDS

**For interviews or more information please contact media officer Liz Thomas on 0116 295 7677 or [liz.thomas@leicestercity.nhs.uk](mailto:liz.thomas@leicestercity.nhs.uk).**

Notes to editor:

In October 2010 NHS Leicester City and NHS Leicestershire County and Rutland joined forces to form a 'cluster', in line with the requirements of the Department of Health. Although we share one Cluster Board and our staff work across the city and county boundaries, we have not legally merged, and retain our separate statutory duties. Together we serve a population of more than a million people. Cluster formation is an interim stage in the reform of the NHS, involving on-going transfer of most local commissioning functions to GP-led clinical commissioning groups, in line with the Health and Social Care Bill, now before Parliament and the House of Lords.