



# Media Release

Friday 13 May 2016

The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust's (SaTH) Strategic Outline Case (SOC) for its Sustainable Services Programme describes potential solutions to the challenges of Accident & Emergency and Critical Care provision in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and mid Wales. The SOC proposes one single fully staffed and equipped Emergency Centre supported by a network of Urgent Care Centres, one Diagnostic and Treatment Centre and Local Planned Care on both the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital and Princess Royal Hospital sites. No decisions have been made and several options are suggested in the SOC, which is effectively the first stage of the project. Below Mr Mark Cheetham and Dr Kevin Eardley, who are both Care Group Medical Directors at SaTH, offer their views:



**Mr Mark Cheetham**  
*Consultant General & Colorectal Surgeon  
and Scheduled Care Group Medical  
Director*

"One Emergency Department doesn't mean worse access to healthcare. In fact, it would mean greater access to the right people in the right place at the right time. This is better for our patients.

We need to be brave and we need to look at ways of providing the best care for our patients in a sustainable way in the long-term. This isn't about what is right or easy for us. And it's not only about what is good for our communities today. This is a long-term plan which is about providing the best care for our children and our children's children. The SOC is a further step forwards towards the development of better health services for Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and mid Wales.

I have seen at first-hand the benefits that consolidating services can bring. In emergency surgery – which was consolidated on the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital site in 2012 - for instance we now have a team of 11 surgeons who specialise in abdominal surgery. There is always one consultant free from all other activities to provide emergency care for our patients. The result has been a thriving large department of surgery with improved outcomes.

I believe that by co-locating key services in an Emergency Centre, we will be able to provide safer, better care for patients who are seriously ill or injured. Developing a separate Diagnostic and Treatment Centre will allow us to provide better care for patients having planned surgery with an improved patient experience and a reduced chance of cancellations. There is much more work to do as we refine our thinking and further develop these plans; I feel it is a positive start that will help to provide the best care possible for our patients whilst resolving some of the issues we face.

The easiest thing in the world would be to do nothing. That would be dangerous. These plans are about ensuring patients now and in the future have the best access to the best medical staff in the best place when they need it, and I fully support that move."



**Dr Kevin Eardley**  
*Consultant Renal Physician and  
Unscheduled Care Group Medical Director*

"The SOC describes options that will improve current hospital services ensuring that the sickest of our patients have access to better Emergency, Urgent and Critical Care services. This requires a single Emergency Centre at either the Royal Shrewsbury or Princess Royal.

The reconfiguration of health services between hospitals has been observed locally already for the benefit of patients. Patients from our region who have sustained major traumatic injuries currently travel to Major Trauma Centres in Stoke or Birmingham. Patients who have serious or life-threatening heart attacks already go directly to Stoke or Wolverhampton.

In recent years at SaTH we have already made successful changes - children with severe illnesses are cared for at the Princess Royal Hospital and patients with major surgical illnesses are cared for at the Royal Shrewsbury. The driver for these changes has been to improve access to the very best possible care and therefore improve the chances of a full and quick recovery.

Improving access to specialist services requires clinical pathways that direct patients to the most appropriate service where they will be cared for by specialist teams made up of a workforce who have come together, grown their expertise, and are therefore better able to deliver the very best possible care for generations to come. The SOC describes what further consolidation of hospital services is needed to do this.

Work is also ongoing in parallel to the SOC about how we will support community teams who care for patients with chronic conditions that need access to specialist opinions or tests.

Both pieces of work are part of the NHS Future Fit programme. In combination I believe that they will result in a joined up healthcare system that will help patients access the very best specialist care."

## Notes for Editors:

- The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust is the main provider of acute hospital care for almost 500,000 people from Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and mid Wales. Patients come to us from Telford, Shrewsbury, Ludlow, Oswestry, Bridgnorth, Whitchurch, Newtown and Welshpool in Powys.
- The Trust continues to work with its partners in health and social care in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and mid Wales to develop patient-focused services that meet the needs of our communities.

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