

Outpatient Echocardiography Service (Temporary Service Change)

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Section 242 – Echocardiography (outpatients)

- Echocardiography (an ultrasound on your heart) is a diagnostic test within Cardiology
- The main cardiology inpatient service is currently centralised at PRH
- The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust (SaTH) currently provides echocardiography services for outpatients and inpatients on both sites (Royal Shrewsbury Hospital and the Princess Royal Hospital) for residents of Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Powys.
- The current outpatient service:
 - Operates 9am-5pm Monday to Friday.
 - 13,686 patients access the service annually as outpatients (approximately 263 patients per week).



Background (2)

Until May 2022, we were meeting the 6 week national access target and upheld as a national example of good practice.

Currently there is an 11 week wait for this outpatient service

- This is due to staffing issues within the cardiorespiratory team which include:
 - one full time vacancy
 - staff sickness
 - one full time member of staff commencing Scientist Training Programme
- Recruitment is complete and awaiting a start date in the new year, which will require a period of induction
- Sickness is being actively managed

Reasons for change

Echocardiography is a diagnostic test that has a national target of 6 weeks from referral to completion of the test.

The current wait for the outpatient Echocardiography service is 11 weeks

- This will be a temporary change until end of April 2023, which will allow us to deal with the waiting list backlog await new staff starting, completing their induction and manage sickness and facilitate staff return to work.
- The cardiology speciality service is located on the PRH site, with a smaller cardiorespiratory department at RSH. The Trust's cardiac catheterisation lab is also only located at PRH
- The Hospital Transformation Programme (HTP) proposal maintains the outpatient echocardiography service on both sites, therefore this is a temporary change.



Options

The cardiology service has reviewed the current position and due to the current backlog to see new patients which is currently at 11 weeks and growing due to staff shortages is proposing the following temporary changes to restore the 6 week waiting list for echocardiography.

The service has developed 3 potential options:

- Option 1:** Keep services as they currently are across both sites (do nothing)
- Option 2:** Temporarily (until end of April 2023) move all outpatient echocardiography to the Royal Shrewsbury site
- Option 3:** Temporarily (until end of April 2023) move all outpatient echocardiography (except Powys) to the Princess Royal Hospital (preferred option)



Option 1

Continue the current service across both sites (Do nothing).

- This would mean that the current service would continue to have an 11 week wait, and this would be likely to increase
- Current service provides 228 appointments per week. The current vacancies and sickness would leave a shortfall of 2,286 appointments per year
- Inability to be able to use the workforce flexibly, particular in times of last minute sickness resulting in cancellations of appointments



Option 2

Temporarily (until end of April 2023) move all outpatient echocardiography to the Royal Shrewsbury site

- Transfer all outpatient echocardiography to the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital
- Continue to provide a inpatient echocardiography service at the Princess Royal Hospital
- As the majority of cardiology staff, diagnostic equipment and inpatient services are currently located at the Princess Royal Hospital, this option would reduce the number of additional patients we can see weekly (approximately 11 patients less per week)
- We do not have the physical capacity to hold additional clinics at RSH



Option 3 – Our preferred option

2. Temporarily (until end of April 2023) move all outpatient echocardiography (except Powys) to the Princess Royal Hospital (preferred option)
- Transfer all outpatient echocardiography to the Princess Royal Hospital where the majority of cardiorespiratory services are already provided and where the cardiology specialist service is provided and the Trust's only cardiac catheterisation lab
 - Continue to provide a daily inpatient echocardiography service at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital (no change to current service provision)
 - Offer dedicated appointments to Welsh patients at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital until backlog is cleared, initially weekly and then fortnightly.



Implications of implementing Option 3

The temporary move of outpatient echocardiography services to PRH will:

- Create additional appointments through the use of staff flexibly and additional resource on site at PRH. We will convert an office in PRH to a clinic room to create additional capacity (35 per week).
- We will also have two clinic rooms at PRH and this will enable a double list with staggered appointments (an additional patient will be scanned whilst another technician is reporting on previous scan). Each room currently scans 11 patients a day (22 through two rooms) and therefore will enable an additional 55 patients/week and reduce the waiting times
- This will enable us to get back to the 6 week target by end of March/April 2023, when the service will return to being provided on both hospital sites. The positive impact will result in patients waiting less time to be seen over the next four months.
- This temporary change will impact on 1500 patients who for geographical reasons would normally access the Shrewsbury service (a clinic will be put on fortnightly for Powys patients)
- Facilitate flexibility in the workforce to maintain all echocardiography services and reduce the possibility of cancelled appointments as a result of staffing issues until new staff are recruited, inducted and in place

Key benefits and issues (1)

The temporary move to provide all outpatient echocardiography on the Princess Royal Hospital will:

- Ensure patient waiting times are reduced from the current 11 to 6 weeks by April 2023 (based on a December start)
- We have the physical space to accommodate this temporary move
- Will remove the backlog of 300 patients who are currently waiting over 6 weeks
- Powys patients will be unaffected as clinics will be provided at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital with 24 slots per week.
- Inpatients in all specialties on both the Shrewsbury and Telford sites will be unaffected



Key benefits and issues (2)

The temporary move will:

- Enable staff to work together as a centralised team to deal with the backlog and manage capacity.
- Pool the echocardiography team temporarily together to allow a flexible approach to service delivery and allow patients quicker access to the service
- Increase support and mentoring of new and training staff
- Enable recruitment to vacancies to be implemented



What next - Timescales

The service would need to be temporarily relocated in January to minimise the impact and ensure a return to a 6 week service offer on both sites by April 2023

The cardiorespiratory service is currently recruiting to vacancies with a start date January 2023

There was a patient and public engagement event on this proposed service change on 9th December 2022, via MS Teams

The proposal will go to:

- Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Public Assurance Forum
- Any other requested groups

If you would like to be further involved with this project or would like to provide any feedback please email: ruth.horner@nhs.net