

# Fetal Medicine Service Briefing

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# Background

- Fetal medicine is a service for pregnant women provided by highly skilled, specialist doctors that offer diagnosis and treatment of complications which may arise in unborn babies
- SaTH provides a Level 2 Fetal Medicine Service. Babies identified with potentially more significant complications are already referred to a Level 3 unit
- To date, SaTH has been fortunate enough to have had three Obstetricians who specialise in fetal medicine. Through a combination of recent retirements and unavailability, from the end of July 2023, we will not be able to provide this service until we are able to recruit to fill these posts
- There is a national shortage of Doctors who specialise in fetal medicine, we are however committed to try to fully restore the service and on this basis we have been working to develop an attractive recruitment plan in an effort to fill our vacancies



# Background

- Approximately 500 patients were seen as part of this service in the last financial year
- The service covers the whole of Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, including referrals from Powys
- There is no waiting list due to the standards set out in the NHS Fetal Anomaly Screening Programme (FASP)
- National and local workforce challenges due to uptake in fetal medicine training
- Due to a combination of recent retirements and unavailability, the current service needs to be closed temporarily while we look to recruit replacement consultants



# Proposal

- As a consequence of our workforce challenges, the fetal medicine service ran by SaTH will pause from 27<sup>th</sup> July 2023
- We will ensure that women continue to receive fetal medicine input albeit in a different provider location
- We have put in extra resource to monitor referrals and liaise between SaTH and the different providers to ensure there is no drop in attendance or engagement of women



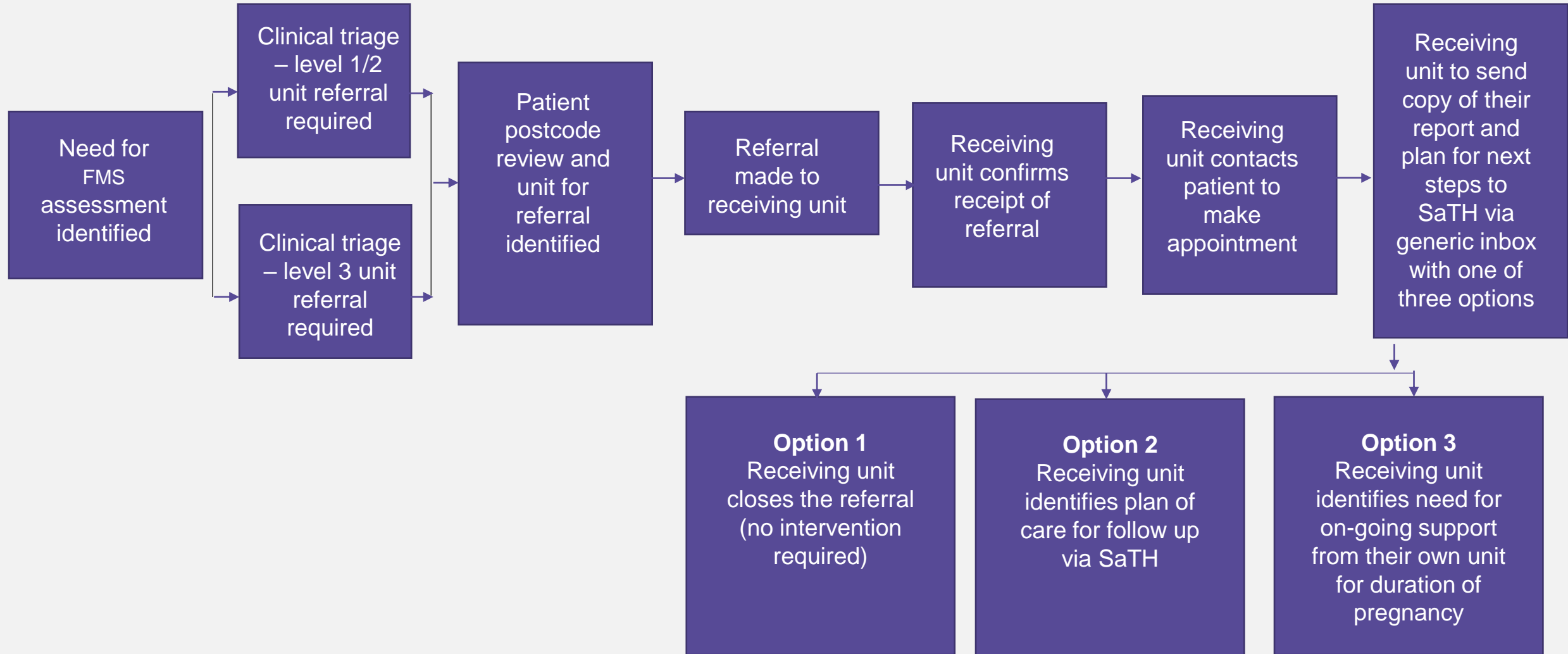


# Proposal

- The temporary closure and the agreed service pathways will enable women to access fetal medicine services via other providers, but continue to receive their follow up care at SaTH
- Some women will be negatively affected by the service change, which is evidenced in the EHIA which has already been shared with you
- All other services remain unchanged
- The temporary change will be implemented on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2023 and will need to remain in place until we recruit substantively to the vacant posts. This is likely to take a minimum of 9 months



# Revised fetal medicine patient pathway



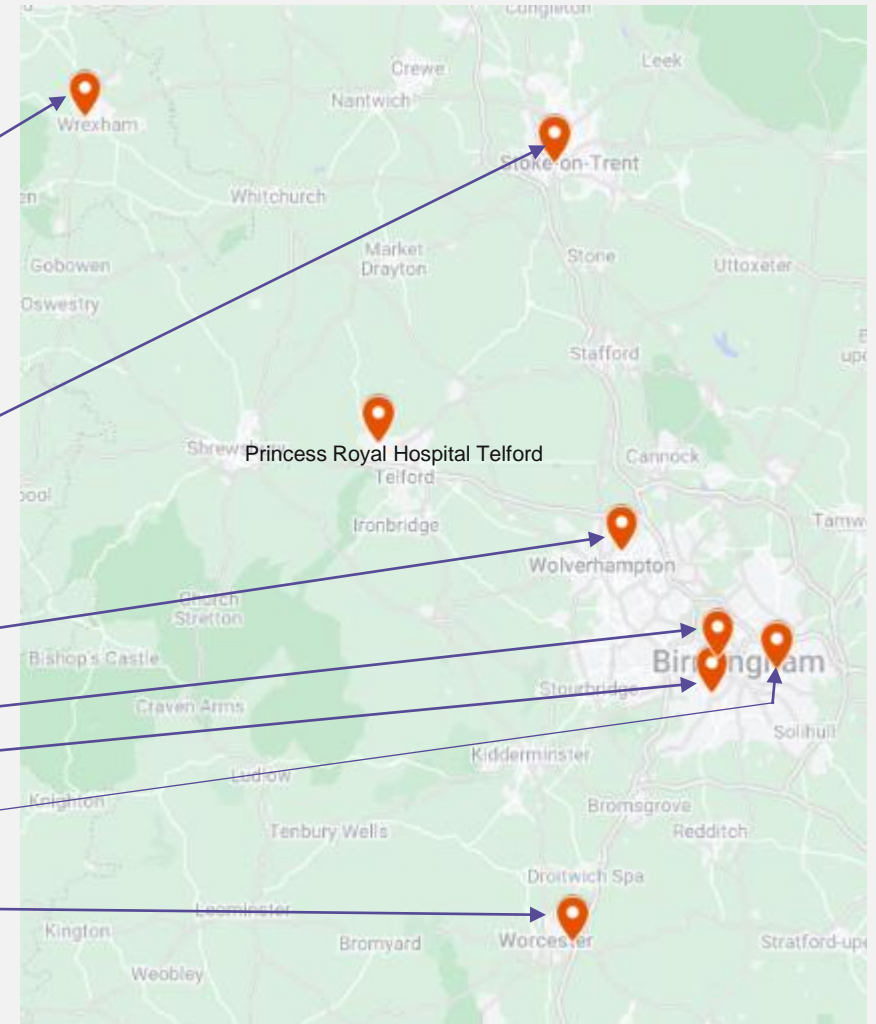
# Proposed service change – location planning

The temporary service closure requires patients to travel to different providers across the region, to the following providers:

Women who are from Powys are to be referred to Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

Women from Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin will be referred to one of the following providers:

- University Hospitals North Midlands (Stoke)
- Royal Wolverhampton Hospitals (New Cross Hospital)
- Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals (City Hospital)
- Birmingham Women's and Children's Hospital
- University Hospital Birmingham (Heartlands Hospital)
- Worcester Acute Hospital



# Patient transport access

The Trust recognise that patients may be adversely affected by additional travel costs associated with the fetal medicine temporary service closure.

- Hospital transport services are available for those eligible
- The link and QR code are provided for easy access

<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/help-with-health-costs/>





# Summary

- As a consequence of significant workforce challenges, there is no option other than to temporarily suspend the fetal medicine service provided by SaTH
- The situation will be reviewed at regular intervals in line with the scheduled recruitment plans with a view to opening the service again as soon as possible
- A draft EHIA has been developed and shared with you for comment today
- We have notified our commissioners and the Trust Board
- A regular update regarding this service change will be provided to our Public Assurance Forum
- Please contact [sath.womenandchildrensadmin@nhs.net](mailto:sath.womenandchildrensadmin@nhs.net) for any further information



# Thank you

# Any questions?