

NHS England decision on Congenital Heart Disease Services in the North West

Your questions answered

1. What is the reason for this decision by NHS England on this new network approach in the North West?

The decision has been taken to ensure that congenital heart disease services across the country meet new clinical standards so that patients receive consistently high quality services wherever they live. The network approach in the North West is designed to meet the national standards in terms of critical mass – at least three heart surgeons, each carrying out a minimum of 125 operations a year. It will also ensure that adult and paediatric congenital heart disease surgery is co-located.

2. When will the new network be up and running?

The new network will take some time to establish. It is expected to be in place in early 2019. In the meantime, the current interim arrangements that Manchester has in place with Leeds and Newcastle will continue.

3. What services will Manchester provide under the new network arrangements?

Manchester will continue to provide outpatient clinics, specialist maternity care, and some cardiac interventional procedures for adult congenital heart disease patients. Adult and paediatric patients who require surgery and complex cardiac interventional procedures will have these undertaken at Liverpool.

4. Does this decision mean that the Manchester congenital heart disease service is of a lower standard?

The national standards require a specialist congenital heart disease centre to have at least three heart surgeons, each carrying out a minimum of 125 operations a year. The standards also require adult and paediatric congenital heart disease surgery to be co-located.

With a single adult congenital heart disease surgeon and no paediatric CHD surgery on site, Manchester did not meet these new requirements.

The Manchester adult and paediatric congenital heart disease service is provided by a dedicated and expert team of consultants and specialist nurses whose priority is to provide a high quality, safe service to all their patients. This will continue both in the interim and once the new network arrangements are in place.

5. What will happen to adult congenital heart disease patients who need non-cardiac surgery?

Any Manchester ACHD patients who need non-cardiac surgery will be seen, clinically assessed and treated appropriately and safely.

6. What new posts will be recruited to and where will they be based?

Recruitment is currently underway for the following positions in the adult congenital heart disease (ACHD) service: a locum consultant cardiologist with an interest in ACHD, a clinical fellow, a specialist nurse, and an administration manager.

Two specialist nurses are currently seconded to the Manchester ACHD team to provide additional support, and a further member of staff is supporting the multi-disciplinary team arrangements.

There will be a need for further recruitment to the new North West ACHD network – this will include a specialist ACHD surgeon and additional cardiologists. The exact nature of this recruitment and the timescales for this will be developed by the operational group that will oversee the establishment of the new arrangements.

7. I am a Manchester patient with a condition that is not terribly complex. Will I still see the same team in Manchester?

Manchester will continue to provide outpatient clinics, specialist maternity care, and some cardiac interventional procedures for adult congenital heart disease patients so it is likely that you will continue to see the same team in Manchester. Under the new network arrangements, you would only need to go to Liverpool for surgery or a complex interventional procedure.

8. Will patients be contacted about the service changes?

There will be no service changes in the immediate future. The interim partnership arrangements between Manchester and Leeds and Newcastle will continue until the new network is in place. This could take 12 months or so. Patients will be notified of any major service changes that will affect them.

9. What about future communications with patients and carers?

Communications and engagement with patients and carers will be a key part of the development phase of the new network arrangements. Patient representatives have already made a positive contribution to the discussions about the future of the North West ACHD service. They have a vital role to play in helping ensure that patients and carers across the region are kept updated on the new network arrangements.

10. Who now leads the establishment and delivery of the new North West network?

NHS England will be working with all the provider organisations in the new network to ensure that the appropriate arrangements are in place and are working to the required standards. The lead provider will be Liverpool, with Manchester providing a

strong clinical support centre, and Blackpool and Wrexham providing outpatient clinics.

11. Where can I get further information on the announcement?

Further information is available on the NHS England website as follows:

NHS England Board papers: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/nhs-england-board-meeting-papers-30-november-2017/>

NHS England statement: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2017/11/nhs-england-outlines-future-of-congenital-heart-disease-services/>.

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