

**LEEDS TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS TRUST****Future Commissioning Arrangements for Congenital Heart Disease (CHD) Patients: response to the NHS England (NHSE) Board decision on 30 November**

At its meeting on 30 November NHSE Board confirmed the future commissioning arrangements for CHD services in England following a period of public consultation.

**The Level 1 Surgical Centre in Leeds**

In terms of the service provided by Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust (LTHT) NHSE was satisfied in July 2016 that LTHT was meeting the majority of the national standards and service specifications, or had robust plans in place to meet them within the prescribed timescales. The consultation which was launched in February 2017 was focused primarily on four Level 1 Centres, which had been assessed as unlikely to meet the standards. In effect the meeting on 30 November was the final formal ratification that NHSE would continue to commission CHD services from LTHT.

It has been a challenging nine years for patients, families, staff and supporters of the CHD service in Leeds since NHSE launched the Safe and Sustainable Review of Children's CHD services in England in 2008. We are very grateful for the unwavering support we have received from so many quarters during this period, and it is appropriate to acknowledge the role played by the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC), Children's Heart Surgery Fund (CHSF) and numerous elected representatives from across Yorkshire and the Humber in securing the future of the centre in Leeds. Our staff have been outstanding and have continued to provide world class treatment and care for our patients throughout this period, as demonstrated by our excellent clinical outcomes and feedback both formally and informally from our patients and their families.

**Focusing on the future**

Our focus is now very much on the future and there are a number of exciting developments underway. Work has started in November on the children's theatre complex at Leeds General Infirmary, to create a new cardiac operating theatre with state of the art hybrid operating facilities. This will enable surgeons and interventional cardiologists to operate together on the most complex of cases and we are grateful to the Leeds Teaching Hospital Charitable Foundation and CHSF for funding this development.

We have also invested in key personnel to enable us to strengthen our CHD Network across the Yorkshire and Humber. We provide services in partnership with 17 Local Cardiology Centres across

the Yorkshire and Humber, and our aim is to provide care as close to home as possible and to ensure equitable and timely access to the highest quality CHD care for all our patients. Within the last six months we have appointed a Lead Clinician, General Manager and Lead Nurse to take forward this important work across our Network.

We are busy increasing our research and teaching portfolio. We are involved in the training of nursing and medical staff at a national and international level, and our staff are regularly invited to lecture at conferences. In 2017 we organised our first CHD nursing conference and this is to be repeated in 2018.

### **The decisions relating to other Level 1 Centres**

The focus of the decision on 30 November was on the 4 Level 1 centres which were assessed as being unable to meet the standards. These decisions are relevant to LTHT as three out of the four centres border on our own Yorkshire and Humber Network. The decisions were as follows

- To commission Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital NHS Foundation Trust to provide Level 1 adult CHD Services in the North West CHD Network.
- To continue to commission University Hospital Leicester NHS Trust to provide Level 1 CHD services conditional on achieving full compliance with the standards in line with their own plan to do so
- To continue to commission Level 1 CHD services from Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust until at least 2021. In the meantime NHSE will give further consideration to the commissioning of its advanced heart failure and transplant service and its Level 1 CHD service
- To back the Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS Foundation Trust's ambitious new outline proposal to work with Guy's and St Thomas' hospitals to provide co-located adults and children's CHD services as part of St Thomas' Westminster Bridge Campus

In terms of the situation in the North West, the adult CHD (ACHD) service in Manchester was suspended by the trust in June due to consultant workforce shortages. Since then interim arrangements have been put in place for patients who would normally be seen by the Manchester team to be seen by the clinical teams in Leeds, Newcastle and Birmingham. It is not clear how long it will take for the North West Network to establish its new ACHD arrangements and how long these interim plans will be required. We are in regular dialogue with NHSE about the impacts on the service in Leeds and will keep the situation under review.

Newcastle is one of the smallest providers in England and does not believe it will have enough activity to support a team of four surgeons each performing 125 operations a year as required by the standards from April 2021. There are only two hospitals that do heart transplants on children and it is the main hospital in England for adult transplants, and obviously these services would be lost if Newcastle was decommissioned as a Level 1 Centre. NHSE is therefore taking further time to consider the commissioning position in respect of Newcastle beyond 2021. Again this leaves a degree of uncertainty about the final configuration of CHD services in the north of England.

### **In summary**

In summary we are pleased that the status of the CHD service in Yorkshire and the Humber has been confirmed with the NHSE decision to continue to commission services from the Level 1 Centre in Leeds. We can now focus exclusively on the future and ensuring that we continue to provide world class services for children and adults with CHD across the Yorkshire and Humber for years to come. We are looking forward to working with our partner Trusts across the Network, with CHSF, and our patients and their families to make sure that our services are as responsive as possible. There is still the possibility of further changes in the circumstances of Level 1 Centres around us, which may have relevance for our services in Yorkshire and the Humber, and we obviously need to monitor these and respond appropriately.

### **Leeds Teaching Hospitals**

**December 2017**