



**CHILDREN'S
HEART SURGERY
FUND**

REPORT TO YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER JOINT HOSC MEETING 12th January 2018

Final Assurance for Future of Leeds CHD Unit

CHSF is delighted that following the latest review of Congenital Heart Disease (CHD) services by NHS England (NHSE), all aspects of the Leeds service are described as either meeting all the requirements or will meet them with further development of its plans.

This is final confirmation following the decision made in 2016 to keep commissioning CHD services from Leeds. It puts the Leeds Unit in the same category as most of the other services in England and ahead of some that need to do more to meet the standards. When the assessment was undertaken, no centres met all the standards.

This brings to a close nearly ten years of uncertainty following the launch of the Safe and Sustainable Review in 2008 which considered the future of the CHD services in England. When it reported in 2012 it recommended the closure of the Leeds Unit. The following year the outcome of the Review was scratched by the Secretary of State and a new Review started based on Units having to meet set standards over a period of time.

Over this long period CHSF, and the thousands of patients and family members on whose behalf it works, has been sustained in its campaigning to keep open the Leeds Unit by the enthusiastic support of members of the Joint HOSC along with MPs, Peers, councillors, local government officers and many others from all around Yorkshire and The Humber. This support has meant a huge amount to the charity and to all the patients and their families, as well as all the staff on the Unit and we are very grateful for it.

Potential Impact on Leeds of Outcome for Other Units

The Review confirmed the closure of the Manchester Unit, which has already ceased operating, but granted a reprieve for the one at Leicester which had been threatened with closure. Continued commissioning from Leicester depends on “convincing progress” being made around staffing and co-location. The Trust does not currently have sufficient activity to meet the 2021 staffing standard of four surgeons each performing a minimum of 125 procedures each year. Leicester’s plan is that this would be achieved by 2021. It also has a plan to ensure that paediatric CHD services are co-located with other children’s services by July 2019.

The Review re-asserted that the Newcastle Unit will stay open based on its specialist provision of paediatric heart transplants until at least March 2021, but further consideration will be given to the future of its CHD and transplant services for the longer term. It is considered that Newcastle is unlikely to meet the 2021 requirement of four surgeons each undertaking at least 125 operations per year. There is an issue with the reliance of the transplant service on one senior surgeon and what might happen after he retires. NHSE said that more information will be requested from the Trust.

The CHD provision at Liverpool is confirmed meaning that there are three centres covering the North.

With Leicester staying open, there will be less increased activity at Leeds resulting from the Review, although there will still be some from the closure of the Manchester Unit. With some level of uncertainty hanging over Newcastle, and maybe to a lesser extent, Leicester, Leeds may need to look to consider what extra numbers of patients it could take and, if required, how its capacity could be expanded in the future. This might include whether it would be in a position to take on the transplant work currently provided at Newcastle. The only other paediatric heart transplant centre in England is at Great Ormond Street.

Leeds Heart Unit Goes From Strength to Strength

The certainty given to the Leeds Unit has enabled it to focus on its own development.

In 2016/17 there were 422 surgical activities at Leeds which is down on previous years although there is always variability at all centres. Both the Unit and NHSE are confident it will be able to support a team of four surgeons each undertaking at least 125 operations a year from April 2021, which was one of the key standards.

In the table of survival rates for paediatric surgery 2012-15, Leeds had a 97.9% rate which was virtually the average for all centres.

The heart unit is looking at a bright future:

- Construction begins on a revolutionary, new children's heart theatre in January and will be finished in February 2019.
- The Unit will be working with other Local Cardiology Centres across Yorkshire and The Humber to facilitate treating patients as close to their home as possible. The aim is to have equity of access with everyone having care of the highest quality no matter how old they are and where they live.
- A pioneering new procedure is taking place as consultants at the Unit have adapted a procedure used to treat adult heart attack patients to save new born babies with congenital heart disease. The practice of using coronary stents is being used to treat a potentially life-threatening obstruction of flow of blood to the lungs in new born babies. It's now a preferred alternative to heart surgery, and represents the first time a keyhole technique has been proven to give superior results to surgery.
- Patients with more complex surgical needs who previously needed to be referred to London are now being treated at the Unit.
- New staff have been recruited in psychology, and there is an increase in specialist cardiac nurses.

The Children's Heart Surgery Fund Continues To Support the Unit

- We have approved over £400k worth of grants to the Heart Unit this year.
- We have pledged £1.25 million towards the new heart theatre under a campaign called Keeping the Beat (www.chsf.org.uk/keeping-the-beat/). Supporters have raised the majority of a further £500,000 towards equipment and infrastructure and we are almost on target.

- The charity funded one of the consultants, Dr Bentham, to undertake a fellowship year in Boston, USA where he learnt some of the techniques intrinsic to the pioneering stent procedure.
- Dickie Bird has become our most recent Ambassador. He has undertaken ward visits meeting patients, their families and staff giving them all a huge boost. On top of that, he has generously donated £30,000 of his own money towards the Keeping The Beat fund.
- Thanks to generous donations from all our supporters we will be celebrating our 30th anniversary of supporting patients and their families in the new year.

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