

Date: 16 March 2021

1	Summary
	<p>The Hearing and Balance Centre provides general and specialist hearing loss services to adult and paediatric patients. Due to the potential for noise from demolition and construction works relating to the new hospital building programme Hospitals of the Future to adversely affect the clinical effectiveness of the service it is necessary to relocate the service to Seacroft Hospital. A process of patient engagement has informed this decision with patients' feedback taken on board in developing the new unit. The Trust is investing £1.7m in the new unit which will provide an improved environment for the service until the completion of the new hospitals at Leeds General Infirmary.</p>
2	Current Service
	<p>The Hearing & Balance Centre at Leeds Teaching Hospitals offer hearing loss services and specialist secondary and tertiary care to both Audiology patients and other related specialities in the hospital such as ENT, Neurology, Oncology and Paediatrics. The service currently has its hub at Brotherton Wing, Leeds General Infirmary with a spoke site at Wharfedale Hospital. LTHT runs a number of community repair clinics at community sites across the city. More recently the service has developed non-face-to-face clinical pathways and offers a postal repair service. Prior to the pandemic the department was delivering 23,000 appointments per year.</p> <p>The Hearing & Balance Centre in Brotherton Wing, LGI has been in a very poor state of repair which has worsened in recent years. The condition of the estate offers a poor patient experience and has been included on the Trust risk register. Despite this, the service has consistently had positive feedback from patients with 94% of service users recommending the service in our latest FFT survey results.</p>
3	The proposal and its impact on our patients
	<p>The Trust intends to accommodate the Hearing and Balance Centre within the new hospital build Hospitals of the Future at the Leeds General Infirmary from 2026 onwards. During the period of demolition and construction relating to the new hospitals, there will be significant potential for service disruption due to increased noise and therefore the Trust has explored options to temporarily relocate the service. The preference of the Trust during development works was to maintain the delivery of this service on the LGI site, and several different options were reviewed to this end. However, following specialist structural and acoustic assessments this was deemed unfeasible and it was therefore necessary to explore moving the location of the service. Seacroft Hospital, as well as a range of commercial sites across the city, were explored by the service.</p>

A patient engagement event was organised to seek the views of patients regarding any potential impact of relocation, and to find out what was important to patients when considering any options.

The engagement event was held in the Hearing and Balance Centre on 29 September and 1 October 2020 supported by the Trust Patient Carer and Public Involvement team. Letters were handed to patients who attended across the week, with the option of emailing in their views if they were not scheduled to attend a clinic on the dates given. The event was also shared via social media on Twitter with 33 patients contributing their views. (Further details are available if required). It was acknowledged that a large face to face engagement event could not be held due to Covid restrictions.

The feedback we received from patients demonstrated that many of them travel by car, so parking was a key concern. Those using public transport expressed some concerns but acknowledged that their visits are infrequent. The patients recommended we consider the following points which will be incorporated into the plans for the relocation to Seacroft:

- Consider accessible parking when choosing a new venue.
- Consider efficient sign posting for the new venue.
- Consider how patients with disabilities may feel about navigating to a new location.
- Consider providing sufficient information and directions to the new venue, prior to the appointment.
- Consider promoting the British Red Cross transport service for those who feel the venue might be too far away for them.
- Consider a service at Wharfedale Hospital for patients living in North Leeds - this already exists, and the team are checking to ensure appropriate patients are offered appointments at Wharfedale wherever possible.

Following this patient engagement, it was agreed to invest in a building on the Seacroft Hospital site which provides adequate space for the specialist testing equipment as well as on-site parking and access by bus and road.

The Trust will be making a significant investment of around £1.75m in the move to Seacroft Hospital which will offer modern clinic areas with new audiology testing booths and provision for paediatric cases as well as adults. The booths will no longer have hessian lined walls but new wipeable and soundproof material that will conform to the newer standards for infection prevention and control.

Most patients attend the department very infrequently - usually once a year or more commonly every 3-5 years. The service is currently supported by the Red Cross in transporting those patients who have difficulties in accessing services to clinics and home again. This service will continue after relocation.

On considering the options for relocation it was recognised that some elements of the service would need to be maintained at the LGI as the ENT service is co-dependent on the adjacencies for efficiency and patient experience. Splitting the hearing aid service from the balance and ENT dependent services was deemed the best option.

	<p>Additionally, the St. James’s Hospital service, which predominantly offers repairs and batteries, would relocate to Seacroft as well. The walk-in service at St. James’s has been suspended during the Covid outbreak, with patients provided with either community access or the postal service described later. This appears to have had little impact on patients who have mostly been reluctant to attend hospital outpatients, and in particular St. James’s, during the pandemic.</p> <p>Letters have now gone out to patients advising them of the move and no PALS or formal concerns have been received.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Service location overview</p>
	<p>Services moving to Seacroft will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Hearing test and hearing aid fittings – for new and follow-up patients • All paediatric services. <p>A new location could not be agreed in the Leeds Children’s Hospital due to work across the LGI site which could impact on the hearing services. Additionally, due to the weight of the soundproof rooms, relocation in any other appropriate location at the LGI was not possible.</p> <p>Services remaining where they are will be:</p> <p>Balance testing which will remain on the LGI site - moving into the ENT outpatients’ department in Brotherton Wing. Inpatient paediatric/newborn hearing care and assessments will be provided in Leeds Children’s Hospital at the LGI. Involvement in surgical procedures for adults and children will continue to be provided.</p> <p>Audiology Services at Wharfedale Hospital will remain unchanged</p> <p>Repairs clinics for batteries, tubing and everyday problems with hearing aids will continue to be run in multiple sites across the city, including libraries, community hubs etc. to ensure there is access closer to home and access to these services remains unchanged. We are supported in providing some of these services by BIDS.</p> <p>As part of the work to reduce the need to visit clinics and community hubs we do offer some telephone appointments and provide some postal services for standard hearing aid repairs, tubing and batteries. Patients can contact us on leedsth-tr.hearingandbalance@nhs.net at any time or call 0113 3922484 if they feel it is urgent.</p> <p>Some face to face repairs are also being offered at our outreach clinics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorpe Park • Armley

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pudsey• Yeadon• Wetherby
5	Conclusion
	<p>Due to the demolition and construction works associated with the new hospital building programme Hospitals of the Future it is necessary to relocate the Hearing and Balance Centre to Seacroft Hospital until 2026. Although change can create challenges for patients and staff, we considered that remaining at the LGI during the building work was not possible and would compromise the clinical effectiveness and patient experience of the service.</p> <p>The move to Seacroft Hospital will create a modern, well equipped, fit for purpose environment enabling the high-quality care provided by the service. The new unit at Seacroft Hospital is expected to complete in April 2021 at which time the service will move to its new location.</p>

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