

# **CLEFT SURGICAL SERVICES IN SCOTLAND: MAY 2017 CURRENT SERVICE PROVISION & TRANSITION TO A SINGLE SURGICAL SITE**

## **Background**

Further to the communication sent to all stakeholders in March/April 2017 regarding the Transition to a single surgical service, the Transition Oversight Group, which is overseeing the move, agreed to send further updates to keep people informed of what is happening. This communication is intended to provide you with information as to what is being provided at present and further details of the plans for the future.

## **Current Service Provision**

Since the announcement by the Cabinet Secretary to approve the move to a single surgical service model on December 23<sup>rd</sup>, the two current providers, NHS GG&C and NHS Lothian have been working closely together to maintain a service across NHS Scotland and plan for the new single service to start on 23 June 2017.

During the current transition period since December we have only had 2 out of the 3 surgeons available to deliver clinics and surgery.

Having only 2 surgeons available shows the fragility of the current service model, where there is a single handed surgical service on the East Coast, not the new service model which is a planned 3 surgeon team for the whole of Scotland.

Whilst the service has been able to provide consultant led clinics, across Scotland, these have not been at the frequency that would be provided when all three surgeons are available.

The good news is that from January to middle of May, the Service has been able to hold 9 outreach clinics on the East Coast, including in Lothian, Grampian and Tayside. Up to the middle of May, 100 patients had been assessed in these clinics and there are a number of other clinics scheduled in all three Boards. Of these patients 25 paediatric patients have already been operated on in Glasgow and this has included the surgeons working weekends. Another 15 patients have dates for surgery whilst another 33 have dates to be confirmed. All other patients are not yet ready for surgery. We would like to assure you that all these patients are being managed according to surgical need to make sure they receive their care at the appropriate time.

In order to continue to manage the current surgeon availability issue the service will continue to run clinics in Edinburgh twice monthly for Lothian, Borders and Fife; once a month in Aberdeen for Grampian, Highland, Orkney and Shetland, and; once a month in Tayside up until all the surgeons are available.

The present situation has only been managed through the hard work and commitment from the existing cleft surgery staff who have responded very positively to this difficult period. They have increased their work-load to meet the needs of patients across NHS Scotland, including weekend working where necessary. The

Transition Oversight Group would like to thank all the staff across Scotland for their commitment during this period.

It is encouraging the service has received very positive feedback from those patients and families that have been assessed by the team and had surgery in Glasgow to date.

### **Future Service Provision**

Despite the current difficulties with the current service model, work is still progressing to plan for the move to the new service for the 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2017.

The Transition Oversight Group (TOG) has now agreed the Transition Implementation Plan, which describes the actions required to establish the new service in June 2017 and this is available on the NSD website at <http://www.nsd.scot.nhs.uk/news/index.html> . If you require a printed copy of this Transition Implementation Plan please e-mail at [NSS.nsd-enquiries@nhs.net](mailto:NSS.nsd-enquiries@nhs.net) or phone 0131 314 1523.

In summary the plan sets out what has been done and what needs to be done to set up the 3 surgeon team in the Queen Elizabeth University Hospitals and Royal Children's Hospital in Glasgow, that will support the outreach clinics across Scotland and manage the cleft surgical requirements for Scotland.

We believe that once the 3 surgeon team is up and running, we can deliver a stronger and better service for all cleft patients in Scotland no matter where they live.

In the meantime, if anyone has queries about their own child's care/ their own care, these should be directed in the first instance to the appropriate local cleft clinicians or to the Cleft Nurse Specialists so these can be addressed promptly.