

**Update on proposals to provide some planned care services at Cannock Chase
Hospital for Wolverhampton patients**

The case for change

Over the past few years, a continual rise in the number of urgent and emergency care admissions at New Cross Hospital has led to an increase in the cancellation of more planned operations.

As The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust is now responsible for the management of Cannock Chase Hospital, it provides us with an opportunity to separate planned care from the pressures of emergency care by carrying out more planned treatment at Cannock. We believe this will benefit the people of Wolverhampton, as cancelling operations causes a huge amount of unnecessary stress and inconvenience for patients and their families.

We are therefore planning to provide some routine day case surgery, day case investigations and treatment, and inpatient surgery for adults at Cannock Chase Hospital. We also plan to provide outpatient and pre-operative assessment appointments on both the New Cross and Cannock Chase Hospital sites. As a result, around 10,000 patients from Wolverhampton could have their surgery or treatment provided at Cannock Chase Hospital as a day case or an inpatient stay.

Patients needing complex surgery or who have conditions that need specialist support will still be treated at New Cross Hospital. All urgent and emergency care services will remain at New Cross Hospital.

For more details about what these proposed changes mean for patients, please see The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust website at www.royalwolverhamptonhospitals.nhs.uk.

Patient survey

We carried out an extensive consultation from July to October 2014 to give as many people as possible the opportunity to have their say on the proposals to transfer some planned care to Cannock Chase Hospital. This included sending a survey to patient groups, Wolverhampton City Council, Healthwatch and other interested groups, holding four round table events, issuing news releases, arranging radio interviews (including a campaign on Signal Radio), circulating information to GP practices, hospital waiting areas and other community venues, and holding a pop-up shop in the Mander Centre.

In the survey, we asked patients to tell us whether they were concerned about the proposals and why. We received 664 responses and are very grateful to everyone who took the time to give us their views.

Over the past two months, we have analysed the responses in detail. We have listened carefully to what patients have told us and are implementing a number of additional measures as a result.

A summary of our action plan to address the main issues of concern follows below.

Travel

What patients told us

The main concern highlighted in the consultation responses was the extra travel involved in getting to Cannock Chase Hospital, with 59 per cent of respondents highlighting this. Patients said they were worried about the distance and time taken, and how they would reach the hospital if they didn't have access to a car. In particular, they were concerned about using public transport to reach the hospital in time for an early appointment and going home on a bus after an operation.

Our response

We are working with Arriva to finalise the bus route and timetable to ensure that patients will get to hospital in good time for their appointment, and that people who are entitled to free transport from Wolverhampton will still receive this. We will review the bus service every three months and amend the timings if needed, and we will ensure that information about transport options is provided in outpatient areas and at preoperative assessments. The transport will be suitable for older people and those with mobility issues.

The welfare of our patients is paramount and hospital staff will only discharge people when arrangements are in place for them to go home safely, as has always been the case. We would never expect patients to travel unaccompanied on a bus after having a general anaesthetic.

We are continuing to work with Cannock Chase Council to provide more car parking spaces on and near the hospital site.

Quality of care

What patients told us

Eleven per cent of respondents told us they wanted assurance that the quality of care at Cannock would be the same as New Cross Hospital. The main concern was about the lack of specialist facilities, with people wanting to know what would happen if there were complications and the patient needed emergency care.

Some connected the hospital with the poor standard of care that people reported at Stafford Hospital. Others were concerned that patient records would not be available at both Cannock Chase and New Cross Hospitals and that they would not have access to the same consultant.

Our response

As the two hospitals are now part of one trust, the standard of care patients receive at Cannock Chase Hospital will be the same at New Cross. We expect their experience to improve, as they won't need to worry about cancellation of their planned operation or procedure. The same level of training will be given to staff across the two sites to ensure that everyone works to the same standards, so that patients will receive consistently high quality treatment at either hospital. As happens now, one consultant will be in charge of each patient's care and different healthcare professionals may be involved at different stages.

The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust is currently finishing an extensive building and refurbishment programme at Cannock Chase Hospital, which will enable patients to benefit from new facilities and operating theatres. All facilities will be fully accessible for people with mobility issues.

The medical and nursing teams will assess all patients being treated at Cannock, using internationally agreed clinical criteria, to ensure they don't have any conditions that may require complex or specialist support. Any patient whose consultant thinks they are at risk of developing complications will be treated at New Cross, which will provide all emergency care. Medical staff at both hospitals will have access to their patients' records.

In the highly unlikely event of a patient in Cannock Chase Hospital needing emergency treatment, an ambulance will take them to New Cross.

Communication

We are committed to publicising any proposed changes as widely as possible so that patients understand how they could be affected and what we are doing to support them.

We are providing regular updates on our websites, via social media and through patient groups, GP practices, Wolverhampton City Council and the voluntary sector. In particular, we will be publishing details of the bus route together with the bus timetable.

Local media are being kept informed about our plans through news releases and radio interviews and campaigns.

We will arrange 'mystery shopper' phone calls to GP practices to check that information is readily available for their patients.

We are meeting regularly with the city's Health Scrutiny Panel, the Health and Wellbeing Board and Healthwatch to discuss any issues or concerns that they may have.

We are preparing to produce more detailed information on our plans for Cannock Chase Hospital and the timetable of the transfer of some planned care early in 2015.

Next steps

We recognise that our plans represent a change for the residents of Wolverhampton and have committed to continuing public engagement. We have taken our proposals and outcomes of the consultation to the Health Scrutiny Panel, along with an action plan responding to the feedback received.

Detailed plans to implement the changes that we are proposing will be developed over the coming months. We will keep patients informed at every stage, so that they understand what the changes mean for them.

Commissioning and delivering high quality health services for the people of Wolverhampton remains our top priority. We will continue to work closely with our patients, healthcare providers, Wolverhampton City Council, MPs, voluntary organisations and all other interested groups to deliver the best possible service for the city.