



The Royal Wolverhampton
NHS Trust

Health Scrutiny Panel 10 February 2022

Report title	To provide an update on the merger of Urology Services at The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust and Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust
Report of:	Jane McKiernan Senior Programme Manager – Strategy The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Health Scrutiny Panel is recommended to:

NOTE the update to progress of the merger of Urology services previously presented at this meeting.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust presented the case to merge the urology services at RWT and Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust (WHT) at a HOSC meeting July 2021.

1.2 The aim of the merger of services is to ensure more responsive, safer and quicker urology care provision for the residents of Wolverhampton and Walsall with Urology Consultants, specialist nurses and associated management staff working as one team across both sites.

1.3 The proposed merged service model between RWT and WHT will facilitate:

- An increase in the number of elective cases that each consultant in the newly merged team undertakes each year, resulting in a shorter waiting time for elective surgery for patients. This is against the background of Wolverhampton having some of the longest and largest, waiting times for urology patients in the country.
- A focus on high volume, low complexity urology procedures (day case) being undertaken at one site (Walsall Manor Hospital), thus freeing up capacity and theatre space at The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust's hospital sites for more specialist/complex cases.
- Sustainable urology emergency services for the patients in Walsall
- Opportunities to drive continuous improvement in outcomes, for instance greater opportunities for participation in research, and for combined investment in service developments.
- Maintaining elective throughput to highest possible levels throughout the pressurised periods by creating facilities and pathways that are as protected as possible from both COVID 19 and other urgent and emergency care pressures on beds, staff, and theatres.

1.4 The expectation was that emergency services would transfer from Walsall from October 2021 and elective services transfer between sites from January 2022.

These timescales were based on a number of assumptions, including:

- Building work at RWT to facilitate the additional urological emergency and inpatients is completed.
- The impact of the Covid pandemic on NHS elective and emergency services would start to recede by Winter 2021/22 allowing appropriately detailed implementation planning.

- 1.5 Supply chain difficulties and continuing staffing and patient care pressures caused by the pandemic in 2021 has resulted in delays to the building work at RWT and planning processes. The decision has taken by the two trusts to delay the transfer of services between Walsall and Wolverhampton until Quarter 1 of the 2022/23 financial year (April – June).
- 1.6 In the meantime, both trusts are continuing to work through the merger proposals, which have not been altered.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Following the July meeting the Health Scrutiny Panel resolved to accept the report with recommendations.
- 2.2 The table below provides an update on progress against each item.

Recommendation	Progress
An information pack is sent to Wolverhampton residents who are sent for Urology Treatment at Walsall Manor Hospital.	This document is in process of being developed and will include the contact number for Healthwatch for follow up comment if required.
Healthwatch Wolverhampton to assess the impact of any changes to Urology Services on Wolverhampton residents, to make sure that the changes are operating as they should and to see whether any improvements could be made.	RWT and Healthwatch have agreed that once the service changes have been made, that Healthwatch will attend outpatient settings to observe and engage with patients to gain views and make recommendations for continual improvement as appropriate.
In the future the Panel receives some performance data on the Urology service to ensure that the Urology Service is performing as projected and its expected performance further into the future.	Performance continues to be monitored. The continuing COVID pandemic has had a further adverse effect on waiting list numbers at Wolverhampton. The change in capacity levels after the merger will provide additional resources for both Wolverhampton and Walsall patients and an expected positive impact on numbers treated.
The Panel receives a report in six months' time with an update on the Urology Service and to see the impact of any changes that have been made by that point	No changes yet made, therefore no impact

A site visit takes place by the Panel to Urology Services at Walsall Manor Hospital at an appropriate time, by invitation of the Chief Executive of the Trust.	An invitation will be extended once infection prevention guidelines allow for such.
The Panel wishes to scrutinise The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust's Hospital Transport Service, including transport links to Walsall Manor Hospital, at a meeting in the future.	RWT will be pleased to meet with the panel once the scope and remit of the work is defined.

3.0 Schedule of Background Papers

3.1 Further detail relating to this report can be provided by contacting the report writer:

Jane McKiernan
Senior Programme Manager-Strategy
The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust

janemckiernan@nhs.net