

Update to Bolton CCG Board

Resolution of Immediate Urology Weekend On Call Issue across Bolton FT and Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh FT

Urology was selected as one of the key specialities for consideration of working in partnership across Bolton, Salford and Wigan due to the resilience issues being experienced by the services, predominantly at Bolton FT and Wrightington, Wigan & Leigh FT (WWL). Discussions have been ongoing between commissioners and providers to look at medium to long term options to achieve a sustainable service that meets quality standards.

In the meantime, an urgent issue with the immediate short term resilience of the weekend on call service at Bolton FT and WWL has arisen which has necessitated a rapid commissioning decision. A combination of an ongoing shortage of consultants and sickness left the weekend on call rotas at both Bolton and WWL FTs standing at 1:4, with further exacerbation meaning that the weekend at the end of January (as the rota currently stands) would see a Bolton Consultant on call for 19 consecutive days which is unsafe and unsustainable.

Therefore Bolton CCG Executive (and Wigan CCG) has approved that, from this weekend (27th January 2018), the weekend on call rota can be merged across Bolton and WWL Trusts, meaning moving to a 1:8 cover arrangement. The agreed model entails one of the inpatient sites being covered by a middle grade and consultant on call. This 2 doctor cover model will enable one clinician to be free to visit the other inpatient site as required to deal with any elective patients who remain as inpatients, or in the rare emergency case of paediatric torsion testes (which would not require transfer of the patient).

This arrangement will mean that a small number of patients attending Bolton or WWL as an emergency for urology treatment at the weekend may be transferred to the site where the rota cover is being provided. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and Quality Impact Assessment (QIA) have been completed. The potential negative impact identified on patients and their families being transferred from the presenting site to the receiving site (circa 7 people each weekend) is mitigated as patient transport between BFT and WWL is good with regular buses and trains running at weekends. Journey times between the two sites are within the benchmark set by Healthier Together when considering patient travel.

The model was previously piloted (over two weekends in November and December 2017). Over the 2 weekends, an average of 7 patients each weekend required transfer between the 2 sites, with the majority of presenting patients being clinically managed at the presenting site.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) have been produced and approved for both Trusts to ensure the pathways is clear for the clinical treatment of major presenting pathways, as well as arrangements for NWS inter-hospital transfers and the management of non urgent cases at the presenting site.

Summary to Board members

This is a proportionate response to unsafe Consultant rotas at Bolton FT and WWL in the short term, which maintains services operating from both sites as usual on weekdays with a joint rota at weekends.

The longer term organisation of the urology services is now being progressed, to be led by Bolton CCG. This will be taken forward alongside Greater Manchester work to identify the best solutions to workforce issues in urology services.

An update will be provided to the Board on the progress of options for their consideration.

Su Long
Chief Officer
Bolton CCG