

Royal Brompton and Harefield Hospitals

**Briefing Report for the Health and Social Care Select Committee
September 2023**

Elective recovery

The reduction of the elective backlog resulting from the Covid pandemic has been a major priority for Brompton and Harefield Hospitals over the last 18 months. Over the last 6 months waiting times have improved, especially within diagnostics and ambulatory care.

Inpatient elective waiting lists remain longer than during pre pandemic times and an example is that there are currently 553 patients awaiting an elective cardiac surgery procedure at our hospitals. Pre-pandemic this number would have been approximately 400. The elective clearance challenge continues to be affected by the hospital's increased non-elective activity and for cardiac surgery, non elective activity is currently 104% of the activity level seen in 2019.

All elective patients on waiting lists are allocated a clinical priority with the most clinically urgent patients being prioritised. Risk of harm reviews continue to be conducted to detect any deterioration in the patient's condition whilst they are waiting for their surgery. This is then escalated to the patient's consultant for review. In addition, we have now commenced pooling of cardiac surgery referrals to even out waiting list size discrepancies between individual surgeons. This will reduce the time many patients are waiting for a procedure.

Since the merger with Guy's and St. Thomas' Hospitals, all the hospital sites are now making better use of mutual aid to increase the number of patients treated and to reduce patient cancellations. Several transformation schemes are also underway to optimize patient flow and increase elective activity.

Cardiology waiting times have greatly reduced and there are now 676 patients waiting for a cardiology procedure across Brompton and Harefield Hospitals compared with the 811 reported in April 2023. There remains longer waiting times than we would like for ablation procedures and we are currently running weekend waiting list sessions to reduce these waiting times.

With regard to long waiting patients, the national target Trusts are now working to is to eliminate all 65 week waits by March 2024. We remain confident we will meet this much earlier than the set target date of March 2024.

Transplant Activity

Transplant activity at Harefield Hospital has increased this year compared to last year as illustrated below:

Period	No. of Heart Transplants	No. of lung transplants
1/04/22 - 31/03/23 (12 months)	38	16
1/04/23 - 30/08/24 (5 months)	17	13

Heart, Lung and Critical Care Clinical Group

We continue to work closely with NHSBT and other transplant centres to improve national utilization of organs which will facilitate increased transplant activity.

Industrial Action

The industrial action over the last 8 months has hindered the elective recovery programme with strikes necessitating a reduction in elective activity to ensure patients within the hospital are kept safe whilst still delivering emergency services. The hospital has been most affected by the junior doctor strikes and there have been times when it has been very challenging to provide safe staffing levels across clinical areas, particularly at weekends and out of hours.

New Patient Electronic Record System (EPIC)

EPIC is launching on 5 October 2023 across all the Guy's and St Thomas' and King's hospital sites and will transform the way the hospitals work by replacing the historic IT and paper records. The 'Apollo' programme team have been working closely with the clinical and admin teams to configure the system and to make the necessary preparations and ensure all staff are trained prior to go live.