EXCEPTION REPORT - Cancelled Operations

Target / Core Standard: When a patient's operation is cancelled by the hospital on the day of admission, or later, for non-clinical reasons, the hospital will have to offer another binding date to treat the patient within a maximum of 28 days or fund the patient's treatment at the time and hospital of the patient's choice. Both the number of cancellations (as a proportion of total elective activity) and readmissions within 28-days are monitored. Both need to be achieved to meet the target.

The Issue
- Although the Trust is meeting its commitment to offer any patients who do have their operation ‘cancelled on the day’ another binding date within 28 days, the total number of elective operations cancelled for non-clinical reasons is greater than target.
- Analysis of 08/09 cancellations shows 32% due to bed availability, 20% due to lack of theatre time (list over runs, emergency taking priority etc), 8% due to missing notes, 8% due to theatre not being available (e.g. emergencies taking priority), 7% due to appropriate surgeon unavailable / delayed. The lack of theatre time will also in part be due to late starts arising from bed availability issues, but is also be due to constraints on emergency theatre time.

Actions Taken
- Weekly review of cancelled operations and subsequent rebooking dates takes place at APMG (Access Performance Management Group)
- Cancelled operations report circulated to ensure that there is robust management in place to manage re-booking within twenty eight days
- Wherever possible patients offered new date at time of cancellation
- Reinforced escalation process for potential cancellations to Theatre Managers and specialty General managers. General Managers tasked with taking action to avoid breaches in cases arising from missing notes / unavailable beds. All cancellations on the day require authorisation by a General Manager within the Surgical Division
- Review of operating lists and bed capacity in advance to minimise “last minute” cancellations
- Target figures established to incentivise reduction in cancellation numbers and to be managed through the Performance Review process
- Review of clerking procedures of patients being added to the waiting list to ensure that correct preoperative instructions are being issued
- Checking of all equipment on site pre-admission where possible.
- Tracking processes have been improved to enable earlier management intervention to give new dates to cancelled patients in a more timely manner
- Review of Theatre efficiency to improve throughput and reduce cancellations from Theatre overruns, is showing improvements. Princes Wing utilisation has risen from 80%-85% in the last six months

Next Steps
- The predominant cause of cancellations has been bed availability. Both Surgical and Medical Divisions are engaged in reducing length of stay which will alleviate bed pressures. Additional bed management staff are being recruited to further improve patients flow and bed availability
- The case for a temporary mobile theatre is being developed to alleviate the overall pressure on theatres
- Improved bed planning process to both reduce the likelihood of cancellations due to bed pressures and increase the ability to predict the need for cancellations in advance.

LEAD DIRECTOR – Neil Dardis