

E&NH0444

Changes to QEII's adult and children's A&E services from 16 January

Welwyn Garden City, UK – 9 January 2012 – Following the transfer of the vast majority of the Trust's emergency surgical services, as well as all inpatient stroke, cardiac and neonatal care, to the Lister by October 2011, changes now need to be made to A&E services at the QEII, especially overnight. From Monday, 16 January 2012, the changes below will be made at the hospital.

Adult emergency services

- Adults can continue to use the current A&E service between 8.00am and 8.00pm daily, but overnight the service will treat minor injuries only. Adults with minor illnesses should contact their GP or the GP out-of-hours service (03000 333 333);
- People who develop serious or life-threatening conditions overnight should go to the Lister's emergency department or call 999 for an ambulance, which will take them to the nearest appropriate hospital – normally the Lister;
- Those who are taken or go to the QEII overnight who have, or develop, a serious condition will be stabilised before being transferred to the Lister;
- Those unsure of where to seek help should contact NHS Direct (0845 46 47) or visit Hertfordshire's new online service – www.wheredoigo.org.uk.

Children's emergency services

- Children aged over 12 months can be treated 24 hours a day at A&E for minor injuries only at the QEII. Parents/guardians of children with minor illnesses should contact their GP or the GP out-of-hours service (03000 333 333);
- Children aged under 12 months who need to be taken to hospital should go to the 24/7 specialist children's emergency department at the nearest appropriate hospital – normally the Lister);
- Children who develop serious or life-threatening conditions at any time should be taken to the Lister's emergency department or call 999 for an ambulance, which will take them to the nearest appropriate hospital – normally the Lister;

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Children's emergency services (contd.)

- Those children over 12 months who are taken or go to the QEII overnight who have, or develop a serious condition, will be stabilised before being transferred to the Lister;
- Parents/carers unsure of where to seek help should contact NHS Direct (0845 46 47) or visit Hertfordshire's new online service – www.wheredoigo.org.uk.

Commenting on these important service changes, the Trust's medical director and consultant ENT surgeon, James Quinn, said:

“We're now at the half-way stage in transforming, through the investment of around £150 million, the Lister into the main hospital for emergency and inpatient services for all of east and north Hertfordshire, as well as parts of Bedfordshire. A major step in this process was taken in October 2011, when all of the Trust's general, trauma and gynaecological emergency surgery was brought together at the Lister. This followed similar changes made to the Trust's inpatient stroke, cardiac and neonatal services, which are also now based at the Lister.

“Although better for patients in terms of improved clinical outcomes, we also knew that these changes would have implications for the QEII's A&E services. With fewer surgeons and other specialist doctors based at the hospital, especially overnight, this presented us with a clinical risk that needed to be addressed in advance of the 'Local A&E' service that the PCT will develop at the QEII in 2014. This is why we have reorganised our services, so that from 16 January 2012 the Trust's main emergency department is based at the Lister, with the QEII offering the current adult A&E service between 8.00am and 8.00pm daily; overnight, it will treat minor injuries only.

“Equally the children's A&E service at the QEII, which up until now had been open only during the day, is also changing from 16 January 2012. From this point onwards, the QEII will be able to treat children aged over 12 months with minor injuries 24/7, although all those with serious or life-threatening conditions will now be seen at the Lister. All children aged under 12 months who need to be taken to hospital, should be taken straight to the Lister's 24/7 specialist children's emergency department, or one at a nearby hospital if that is closer. ”

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Dr Hari Pathmanathan, Welwyn GP and board member of the East and North Herts Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) said:

“The CCG has been working with doctors and nurses at the hospital trust to make sure that the right service is put in place during this interim period whilst the New QEII and its ‘Local A&E’ service is being developed. In 2014, the new ‘Local A&E’ will be able to treat the vast majority of people who need the current A&E service.”

The Trust's chief executive, Nick Carver, said:

“We're very much aware that these changes need to be communicated carefully and thoroughly. To help alert the general public to the new arrangements, this week sees the launch of a local radio advertising campaign, supported by information carried by local newspapers. We will also be launching a new online service for Hertfordshire – www.wheredoigo.org.uk from 16 January 2011 that, along with the NHS Direct service (0845 46 47) can provide people with information about which service they should use – covering everything from self-care, through minor conditions to full emergency department services.”

The new A&E service arrangements for adults and children at the QEII will be supported by the following changes from 16 January 2012:

- Staff working in the QEII's A&E will undergo additional training, including the resuscitation of newborn babies;
- Staff will work on rotation across both the Lister and QEII medical assessment units that are used to support patients needing further observation and/or provide treatment other than that available in an emergency department alone;
- Due to the on-going shifts in emergency surgical workload at the QEII, 14 beds on the hospital's Knebworth ward will be closed, leaving it with 15 beds open principally for diabetic inpatient care;
- In the event of a major incident being declared by the police, the QEII would continue to be used but only in accordance with the services available at the time.

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Alongside the formal staff consultation held between 1 September and 30 November 2011, the Trust also ran an intensive programme of engagement with key external groups and individuals. Over the same time period, 17 formal briefing sessions were held, along with contact with a further 14 organisations representing those most likely to be affected – i.e. carers and people with chronic conditions. Briefing papers were shared with local GPs, MPs and Hertfordshire county council's health scrutiny committee. Feedback from this engagement activity has been used to inform the Trust's communications on the changes being implemented.

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Notes to editors

- 1) Since the Trust's acute stroke, cardiology and emergency surgery services were all centralised at the Lister by October 2011, on average around 40 patients attend the QEII's A&E daily between 8.00pm and 8.00am, of whom 13-14 will be admitted.
- 2) Of these admissions, several will be surgical emergencies that since October 2011 are now being taken directly to the Lister. Adjusting for this and other related factors, it is expected that just four to five additional patients will need to be admitted on average to the Lister every night;
- 3) Of the 40 patients attending the QEII's A&E overnight, some 26 will be for minor conditions that will continue to be treated at the hospital once the changes are made. The remaining patients will either be taken straight to the Lister by ambulance, or go there themselves. Those who do attend the QEII will be stabilised and transferred to the Lister as necessary;
- 4) Additional capacity has been made at the Lister to deal with the extra numbers attending its 24/7 emergency department overnight, including admissions;
- 5) The children's A&E service at the QEII, which will now treat children aged over 12 months with minor injuries 24/7, is expected to see around 25 cases on average a day, with a further 14 children being taken to the Lister's emergency department daily;
- 6) All children aged under 12 months who need to be taken to hospital should go straight to the Lister's 24/7 specialist children's emergency department (or that of a nearby hospital if it is closer). On average, this will affect around 3-4 such children every day;
- 7) As well as supporting the Trust in delivering its *Our changing hospitals* programme, which will see £150 million being invested by 2014 in transforming the Lister in to the main acute hospital for inpatient and emergency care locally, these changes to emergency department services will also bring clinical benefits for patients;
- 8) Whilst allowing the majority of people who do not need to attend a full emergency department to continue receiving their care at the QEII's A&E overnight, the new arrangements will help ensure that those who are admitted have a quicker recovery – evidence from across the NHS shows that this approach is better for people's short and longer term recovery, as well as reducing their exposure to clinical risks such as healthcare-acquired infections;

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Notes to editors (contd.)

- 9) Patients with minor illnesses should contact their GP or the GP out-of-hours service (03000 333 333). Anyone needing advice about an illness or injury, especially if they are not sure which service to use locally can check out a new website – www.wheredoigo.org.uk or call NHS Direct on 0845 46 47.
- 10) Treatments offered at the QEII A&E service overnight for patients (for children over 12 months through to adults):
- Sprains and strains
 - Broken bones
 - Infected wounds
 - Minor burns and scalds
 - Minor head injuries
 - Bites and stings
 - Minor eye injuries
 - Stitching of cuts
 - Removing *foreign bodies* from ears, noses, etc
 - Removal of splinters
 - Dressing of minor wounds, cuts and grazes
 - Application of Plaster of Paris
 - X-rays
- 11) The new overnight adult A&E service, as well as the 24/7 children's service, at the QEII should not be used to treat those with potentially for more serious conditions such as:
- Chest pain
 - Breathing difficulties
 - Major injuries
 - Stomach pain
 - Pregnancy problems
 - Allergic reactions
 - Overdoses
 - Alcohol-related problems
 - Mental health conditions
 - Conditions that are likely to need hospital admission
 - Hip injuries

For more information, please call Peter Gibson, associate director for public affairs on: 01438 781522 (direct line) or Sue Thaw, communications manager on: 01438 781736 (direct line); for out-of-hours calls, please page the duty press officer on 07659 103839.

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