

Scrutiny Commission for Health Issues	Agenda Item No. 5
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Report of the Peterborough and Stamford Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

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The Future of Hyperbaric Services at Peterborough and Stamford Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to inform the committee of the planned closure of hyperbaric services at Peterborough and Stamford Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust due to falling demand. The planned closure has Commissioner support.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to

1. consider the report and ask any pertinent questions, and
2. note the closure of the service and the additional capacity being made available in Rugby.

3. BACKGROUND

What is the hyperbaric service?

The hyperbaric service works by providing increased oxygen into a patient's tissues which supports healing. This has been used to treat carbon monoxide poisoning, assist with wound healing and infection. The most common usage of the service has been for radiation injury.

Who accesses the service?

Patients are referred to the service by consultants. This is not a service that is accessed through direct access by GPs. The figures below show the numbers of patients over the last five years and their geographic spread. Referring clinicians have been contacted concerning the proposed closure and current patients also informed of the proposals; all current patients will complete their course of treatment. There have been no issues raised.

Area	2009/10 (part year)	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07	2005/06
Peterborough		2	5	5	6
Leicestershire	4	15	11	10	7
Northamptonshire		4	5	3	4
Lincolnshire	1	4	2	7	1
Cambridgeshire	1		5	4	3
Norfolk			1	2	2
Suffolk		1			
Shropshire	1				
Worcestershire				1	
Private/MoD		1	1		
Total	7	27	30	32	26

Why have numbers declined?

The cause for the reduction will be due to a number of reasons. These include:

- The opening of a new hyperbaric service at the Hospital of St Cross in Rugby. This hospital is part of the University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire and also includes diving chamber facilities.
- Commissioner concerns over the clinical evidence base for hyperbaric therapy.

Who funds the service?

The service is funded by individual Primary Care Trusts on a per patient basis. Each patient needs to go through a prior approvals process for consideration by each PCT. All the relevant PCTs have been contacted and support the cessation of the service.

The charges per patient do not cover the running costs of the service, and this currently runs at a loss.

Who staffs the service?

The service is supported by a Consultant Anaesthetist and a nursing staff. All staff can be redeployed. Specialist nursing support is required to provide the service safely. At times this is covered by staff from other areas of the Trust such as ITU or recovery as it is difficult to support staff permanently in the area because of the uncertainty of activity. There are current concerns about the level of patient and staff risk due to staffing levels.

4. CONSULTATION

As noted above the Trust's commissioners (PCTs) who fund the service and the clinicians who refer patients into the service have been contacted regarding the future of the service. Support has been given for the closure due to falling demand, lack of clinical evidence for the service and the difficulty of maintaining a safe service with the small number of patients being seen. Patients have also been consulted.

Formal consultation is only required on major service changes. Given the number of patients affected and the replacement service being offered in Rugby, this is not considered a major change. However the closure has been brought to the attention of the Committee, the Trust's Board of Governors and the Local Involvement Network through the provision of this paper.

5. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

None

6. APPENDICES

None