

Update on Cataract Surgery at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital and the Wrekin Community Clinic in Telford

Cataract surgery at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital and the Wrekin Community Clinic in Telford resumed on 3 May 2012.

This service had been temporarily suspended following a number of incidents where patients did not receive the high standards of care that we aspire to offer every time for every patient. Specifically, these patients received lenses that were of a slightly different power to that which was planned for their procedure.

We deeply regret that these events occurred. We stopped the service so that we could identify the reasons and make changes in order to prevent any further incidences. A thorough review has since been undertaken and at the beginning of May we were in a position to be able to reassure patients that the service was ready to resume with new protocols in place.

Hospital care is by definition complex. We have procedures in place in our operating theatres that are based on international best practice and that aim to deliver the best possible outcome for these patients. However, these incidents demonstrated very clearly that our procedures were not meeting our expectations every time for every patient. We decided that the best possible approach to safeguard care for patients was to temporarily suspend cataract surgery so that a thorough review could take place, with involvement from hospital clinicians, local GPs and external experts from the Royal College of Ophthalmologists.

Importantly, patients who had received a slightly different power of lens from that which was intended were also invited to participate in the review and I am delighted that some did choose to take part. We thank them for their insight and for sharing their experiences throughout the process.

We are committed to meeting the high standards of patient experience, patient safety and clinical effectiveness that our patients and our communities expect and deserve. We deeply regret these standards were not met and we have taken a range of robust steps to improve procedures in response to this. We are confident that these will address the problems identified.

As earlier mentioned, in order to enable the Trust to build on the significant steps already taken to ensure a safe system within this specific aspect of the service, cataract surgery at the ICAT and also at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital was temporarily suspended.

The service resumed on 3 May and we are working hard to re-book patients who have faced delays.

All other eye services continued unaffected as this issue specifically related to the cataract surgery service.

As well as those patients directly affected by the incidents that led to this review, we also extend our most sincere apologies to any patients who have faced a longer wait for local treatment as a result of the suspension to the service.

An oral update will be provided to the meeting by Vicky Morris, Chief Nurse and Director of Quality and Safety, The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust.

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