

Stakeholder briefing Planned care waiting list management

2 March 2023

Summary

There are approximately 533,000 people waiting for planned hospital care (elective care) in Greater Manchester. This equates roughly to 1 in 6 people living in the region. Reducing the waiting list backlogs remains a priority for the health and care system in Greater Manchester.

The last few months have been difficult for health and care services across the country, experiencing the impact of winter pressures and industrial action. Staff across services continue to work hard to maintain the delivery of planned hospital care.

Hospitals across Greater Manchester are in the process of contacting patients to check if they still need to be on the waiting list. Contact is being made in different ways by different services, telephone calls, texts or letters. It is important for patients to respond as soon as possible to let the hospital know if they still need to be seen. More on this work below.

While You Wait is designed to support people waiting for planned hospital care. On the website you will find information and advice plus answers to common questions such as how waiting lists are prioritised. [Click here](http://www.whileyouwait.org.uk) to visit While You Wait. [www.whileyouwait.org.uk]

Introduction

This briefing is designed to update stakeholders across Greater Manchester on the work being done to manage waiting list backlogs and to support people while they wait. There have been five previous briefings, you can read the last one from November 2022 [here](#).

In this briefing you will find an update on the current position of our planned hospital services and the size of the waiting lists. We also give some information about Greater Manchester and locality-based initiatives that are helping to manage the backlogs.

1. Current position

The number of people on the total waiting list has slightly decreased and currently stands at approximately 533,000, as of 12 February 2023. The three specialties with the largest waiting lists are Gynaecology, Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) and Trauma and Orthopaedics.

Reducing the number of people waiting for planned treatment continues to be a key focus for us in Greater Manchester. The NHS and partners across the region are working together to treat people as quickly as possible, particularly those who have waited the longest.

The next significant milestone for the NHS to meet within the national elective recovery plan is

to eliminate waits of over 18 months by the end of March 2023. Hospitals across Greater Manchester, including Independent Sector Providers, are working together to find the capacity to treat people who have been waiting 18 months or more.

NHS England has also set up a national mutual aid process, where patients can be offered the opportunity to be treated outside Greater Manchester if they are willing and able to travel. Local hospitals are working as hard as possible to see people within Greater Manchester but may need to use the national process for a small number of patients if necessary.

Any patients who have been waiting 18 months or more will be contacted by the hospital soon, if they haven't already, to discuss the options for their treatment. We'd encourage patients to take up the offer of being treated sooner elsewhere if they can. However, it's important to note that patients can choose to decline to be treated sooner at a different hospital if they prefer.

2. Greater Manchester wide initiatives

Help us to manage hospital waiting lists

People missing appointments is a common problem across the NHS and Greater Manchester has one of the highest levels of Did Not Attends (DNAs) in the country. This is something we would like to work with local people to improve.

There are many legitimate reasons why someone may not be able to attend their appointment. It would be extremely helpful to local hospitals if patients contact them with as much notice as possible so they can offer the appointment to someone else. This will help ensure more people can be seen.

NHS England has asked all hospitals to check their waiting lists. When hospitals contact patients on the waiting list, in a small number of cases they find that patients have either improved or had their treatment at another hospital. Hospitals have started to contact patients using a combination of text messages, letters and telephone calls to ask if they still need to be on the waiting list. Patients are also being asked if they would be willing or able to be treated elsewhere if the opportunity arises.

If contacted, we would ask patients to please respond as soon as possible to let the hospital know if they still need to be on the waiting list. We'd be keen to hear from any patients with feedback about how this process has worked for them. You can complete a short anonymous feedback form [here](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/GMelective). [www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/GMelective]

Support for people to get to/from hospital appointments

Access to transport can be a barrier which prevents some people being able to access healthcare, particularly if they are offered the opportunity to be treated sooner at a different hospital.

A web page has been set up which lists all the services and support available to help people get to and from hospital. It's important to note that the services listed have different eligibility

criteria, some are free, and some incur a cost. It's important to check directly with any of the services listed. [Click here](#) to visit the page. [www.gmintegratedcare.org.uk/transport].

If you know of any other services offering this support please don't hesitate to contact Rachel Richardson, Strategic Communications Lead, rachel.richardson23@nhs.net.

Investment in scopes

Greater Manchester has been successful in securing £395,000 investment to introduce computer-aided detection technology for colonoscopy procedures. There are currently approximately 5,000 people waiting for this procedure in Greater Manchester, so this is great news for our efforts to reduce the waiting list.

A colonoscopy is a test that checks the inside of the bowels, using a thin, flexible tube with a camera on the end. Clinicians check the colon for any small growths, called polyps, that could turn into bowel cancer.

The money will be used to purchase new technology that incorporates computer-aided detection which automatically identifies and marks abnormalities that are consistent with polyps. This technology is much more effective at identifying polyps that may not otherwise be detected by standard high-definition colonoscopy alone. It's also quicker which means services will be able to complete more colonoscopy procedures.

Have your say - seeking feedback from people and communities

NHS organisations across Greater Manchester are working hard to see and treat people as soon as possible. To address the backlogs, services will need to work differently, and people may be asked to access their care in a different way or place.

We have launched a survey to get views on our plans to address waiting list backlogs in Greater Manchester. Anyone can answer this survey, whether you are on a waiting list or not. Please do help spread the word about this work, we want to hear from as many people as possible.

For more information [click here](#) to visit our webpage.

Or [Click here](#) to complete our survey. [www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/PlannedCareGM]



While You Wait – supporting people waiting for hospital care

While You Wait is a website designed to support people waiting for planned hospital care. People can find information and advice on how to manage their physical and mental health. One patient for example visited While You Wait and signed up for support to lose weight before their

surgery, something that will help them to improve their health and reduce the risk of any complications.

Over the last few months, we have worked with patients and staff to review the website and will be making improvements to ensure we can better support people. [Click here](#) to visit While You Wait. [www.whileyouwait.org.uk]

One of the most common questions is about waiting times. The list of people waiting changes daily and it is very hard to tell people how long they will have to wait exactly. One way people can look up the approximate waiting time at their hospital is by visiting [My Planned Care](#). There you can find an average waiting time for the specialty at the hospital, but it should be noted that waiting times for different procedures within that specialty will differ.

3. Greater Manchester locality and hospital initiatives

New home monitoring service for cardiac surgery patients

Patients awaiting cardiac surgery in Greater Manchester will be given additional peace of mind thanks to a new home monitoring service.

Those being supported by the new service will be given equipment, including a device where they can input daily information such as their blood pressure. They will have a direct link to a team of clinicians who will help them to manage their condition at home while at the same time allowing them to get on with their lives.

The service is now available to people waiting for specialist cardiac surgery, coronary artery bypass grafts or valve replacement which takes place at Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust.

[Click here](#) to read more about this new service.

Multi-million pound investment to improve services in Bolton

Bolton NHS Foundation Trust has been successful with its bid for £19.6 million funding to significantly increase its theatre capacity.

The funding will be used to build four modular theatres, as well as the creation of a bespoke day case paediatrics theatre hub by refurbishing Royal Bolton Hospital's existing day case theatres.

The theatres will provide enhanced capacity for both Bolton and Greater Manchester and help to drive down waiting lists in the city-region. [Click here](#) to read more.

4. Regional bulletin

NHS England has published issue 4 of their North West regional recovery bulletin. Read it [here](#).

5. Further information

For any further information, please contact Vicky Sharrock, Programme Director Greater Manchester Elective Care Recovery and Reform Programme, Vicky.Sharrock@mft.nhs.uk.