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Executive Summary of Service Development
Proposal to Expand Specialised Services for
Morbid Obesity (Bariatric Surgery) for Torbay
Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Torbay Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Executive Summary of the Service Development Proposal to Expand Specialised Services for Morbid Obesity (Bariatric Surgery) in Five Zones across the South West

April 2009

Prepared by: The South West Specialised Commissioning Team

Executive Summary

Obesity is increasing at an alarming rate. As a treatment of last resort, the safest and most successful long-term option for many patients is to undergo bariatric surgery (commonly known as gastric bypass and gastric banding). Bariatric surgery is the specialised service for treating morbid obesity.

Currently, there are only two NHS providers of Bariatric Surgery within the boundary of the South West Specialised Commissioning Group. These are located in Taunton and Bristol. Only Taunton has a team that is experienced in providing the full range of surgical techniques used to treat obesity. National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidance shows that this is not enough to meet current and future demand.

In order to address this shortfall, some patients are referred to providers outside the South West, travelling long distances to Birmingham and Chichester for surgery, and some patients who are able to do so, pay privately for treatment. These arrangements are not providing adequate access to services for all of the patients who need them, leading to health inequalities between different populations across the South West depending on where you live and your financial means to pay for private treatment.

Patient safety is critically important. The process of designation provides a method of quality assurance that a provider meets all the necessary NICE and International Federation for the Surgery of Obesity and Metabolic Disorders (IFSO) quality standards. Therefore, the South West Specialised Commissioning Group (SWSCG) is asking the 16 Overview and Scrutiny Committees in the South West to support its plans for expanding this service in a managed way.

Our plans involve applying the model of care and referral pathway recommended by NICE. The lead centre that most closely meets NICE and IFSO standards will be designated in June 2009. Within a year the service will be expanded to six centres working collaboratively. These designated centres will receive referrals from specialist weight management clinics that ensure that only appropriate patients are referred for surgery.

To ensure patient safety, designated centres that are new to the provision of NHS bariatric surgery will be assessed against the IFSO guidelines. They will be expected to develop their service to achieve full compliance during the first one to two years. Whilst services are establishing themselves and building up experience the centres will not carry out surgery on complex patients unless this is agreed with, and overseen by, the team at the designated lead centre. Newly designated units will be able to proceed to the higher service levels, treating more complex cases, without needing to re-apply for designation status, as soon as they become sufficiently experienced, following approval by the SWSCG.

To ensure equity of access to clinically safe, quality services as well as reducing the need for residents to travel out of the area, the SWSCG will designate at least one provider in five zones across the South West. Bristol already has a service provided

by North Bristol NHS Trust and this provider will be recommended for designation. This means that there is no change to current services, although the SWSCG will work with the service provider to extend the range of procedures offered and enable complex patients to be treated locally, over time.

Implementation of this proposal will:

- Ensure high quality, safe services
- Reduce health inequalities
- Improve health outcomes and the patient experience
- Expand the service to better meet growing demand whilst avoiding over-provision
- Develop and extend skills and expertise available within the region
- Reduce pressure on services that diagnose and treat other conditions associated with obesity
- Reduce future demand
- Improve access to services
- Reduce travel out of area.

One main challenge to this proposal will be ensuring that new providers of the service have sufficiently robust processes in place to be able to deliver the service as quickly as the region needs. Another concerns the lack of specialist weight management clinics that are a key component of a patient's care pathway both before and after surgery.

Of the possible providers which tendered for this service, the SWSCT recommend that the highest scoring applicants in the tendering process for the population of Torbay, Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust and Taunton and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust, be recommended for designation.

Accordingly Torbay patients will have access to improved local provision in Plymouth and Taunton. Level 3 obesity services are currently being developed by the local PCT; these will build on the Level 3 services currently in place. Patients' progress will be monitored as part of the performance management role carried out by SWSCG commissioners.

Torbay Care Trust has indicated its support for this proposal.

Similarly, this proposal has the support of many clinicians, patients, national support groups and members of the public who were involved in helping the SWSCG develop and select the preferred option that is presented here.

Local Impact Assessment

As a first step, the SWSCG are in a position to designate six providers within our boundaries.

Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust and Taunton and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust are two of the providers that are being recommended for designation, which represents a change in the location of Torbay's current provider. Torbay residents will now have the choice of two providers. Moreover, as the model of service being proposed here will support the further development of the service at Plymouth and Taunton, patients should benefit, over time, from an improved service.

The table below shows the number of operations planned to be commissioned by Torbay Care Trust over the next five years. The SWSCG expects waiting time for surgery to reduce as the service develops and expands to better meet local need.

Table 1: Estimated travel times from each relevant town or OSC headquarters to designated providers (Source of data: <http://www.transportdirect.info/web2/> and <http://www.theaa.com/route-planner/index.jsp>)

Hospital →	Musgrove Park, Taunton TA1 5DA			Derriford, Plymouth PL6 8DH		
	Miles	Time Travelling by Car	Time Travelling by Public Transport	Miles	Time Travelling by Car	Time Travelling by Public Transport
OSC Headquarters ↓						
Torbay, Castle Circus, Torquay, TQ1 3DS	51.3	1 hr 9	1 hr 39	34	49 min	1 hr 53

Table 1

Table 2: Expected number of procedures over the next five years (based on Torbay Care Trust's commissioning intentions on 1st March 2009).

Year	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
PCT	Expected number of procedures	Expected number of procedures	Expected number of procedures	Expected number of procedures	Expected number of procedures
Torbay	53	58	63	68	73

Table 2

The response from Torbay Care Trust suggests that Torbay patients will be in a good position by having two designated providers within easy travelling distance. This means patients will have greater choice as well as less distance to travel.

The development of bariatric surgery will be complementary to other service developments in both provider Trusts, and capacity will be available to accommodate anticipated increases in patient numbers. Level 3 clinics are currently being planned and funding is in place for Level 1 and Level 2 services.

Recommendation

The Torbay Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- Note the results of the review of specialised services for bariatric surgery
- Note the strong support from patients, clinicians and the public for improving services for morbid obesity

- Support the implementation of the proposed designation programme and the associated service developments
- Support the designation of Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust and Taunton and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust as the providers of this specialised service for the people of Torbay.

South West Specialised Commissioning Group – April 2009