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Pwyllgor Gwasanaethau Iechyd
Arbenigol Cymru (PGIAC)
Welsh Health Specialised
Services Committee (WHSSC)

Your ref/eich cyf:
Our ref/ein cyf: SL.DD
Date/dyddiad: 28th August, 2020.
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Ms Janet Finch-Saunders AM,
Chair,
National Assembly for Wales,
Cardiff Bay,
Cardiff,
CF99 1NA

Dear Ms. Finch-Saunders,

Re: Petition P-05-910 Make Thrombectomy available 24-7 for Welsh Patients

Thank you for your letter dated 20th November, 2019 requesting information on Thrombectomy.

It has been estimated that Mechanical Thrombectomy a treatment undertaken by Interventional Neuro-radiologists is an appropriate treatment for around 10% of patients with Ischaemic Stroke. This equates to around 500 interventions each year in Wales. As the numbers and model of delivery fall within the definition of a Specialised Service, it was agreed by the Board of Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee (WHSSC) known as the Joint Committee that we would commission Mechanical Thrombectomy Services for NHS Wales from April 2019.

Throughout 2019 the WHSS Team has been working to secure access to capacity from Services in NHS England whilst provision is being made to develop the Service in Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (C&VUHB) in 2020-21 to serve the population of Mid and South Wales. The team are working in collaboration with the Welsh Government's Stroke Implement Group (SIG) and Local Health Boards on the pathways required to both access Thrombectomy treatment and repatriate to a patient's local hospital following treatment. Collaborative working is ongoing with C&VUHB and English Trusts as the providers and potential providers of the service, Welsh Ambulance Services

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Chair/Cadeirydd: *Professor Vivienne Harpwood*
Managing Director of Specialised and Tertiary Services Commissioning/Rheolwr Gyfarwyddwr Comisiynu Gwasanaethau Arbenigol a Thrydyddol: *Dr Sian Lewis*

Trust as the transport provider and Health Boards to ensure appropriate referral and discharge processes are in place.

To ensure that the patients who can best benefit from the treatment we have developed a Thrombectomy Commissioning Policy. This was circulated for consultation to Stakeholders on 19th February 2020 and the six week consultation period ended on 1st April 2020. Stakeholder comments have been reviewed and the document has been amended to reflect the comments made. A final version of this Commissioning policy will be presented to the WHSSC Policy Group for approval in September 2020. Unfortunately this process has been slower than we would have liked due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Please be assured that this has not prevented patients from accessing the Service and each of the stroke units have been notified regarding the referral processes for patients.

Currently, WHSSC commissions Thrombectomy Services from three centres in England details of which are provided in the Commissioning Policy. Patients in South Wales currently access the Service from the North Bristol NHS Trust which is available from Monday to Friday 08.00-20.00. The team in Bristol have indicated that they intend to expand their operation to weekends later this year and will advise WHSSC when this is the case, enabling patients from South Wales to access this service 7 days per week. WHSST are still in discussions with the Cardiff centre about the development of a Thrombectomy centre in Cardiff and the requirements for this.

The population of North Wales have access to Thrombectomy Services from the Walton Centre NHS Foundation Trust, Liverpool which in January 2020 was increased from 5 days to 7 days per week. The Walton are in the process of extending this to a 24 hour service 7 days per week. It was anticipated that this Service would be operational from the Autumn of 2020 but this has been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Patients from Powys are able to access Thrombectomy Services from Royal Stoke University Hospitals, North Midlands NHS Trust which is offering the Service 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There are only two centres in the UK that offer a 24/7 Service at the moment.

In response to your specific questions and your request for details on the following;

- the development of a Service Specification for Thrombectomy;
- the timescales for running a consultation exercise on this;
- the anticipated next steps following the consultation

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Currently the NHS England centres which provide Thrombectomy Services for patients from Wales are commissioned against the NHS England Service Specification. WHSSC does however anticipate developing its own Service Specification following publication of the Commissioning Policy. Consultation exercises typically last 6 weeks. The steps following the consultation process depend on whether there is a budget impact to commissioning of the new Service Specification. If there is a budget impact then this will need to be taken through the WHSSC Integrated Commissioning Planning process whereby the budget for WHSSC is agreed.

If you wish to discuss the content of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Sian Lewis
Managing Director

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