



Treating elective patients in a timely way

Our patients are waiting too long for elective surgery. We have put in place a recovery plan to clear the backlog of patients who have been waiting longer than 18 weeks. We are making good progress and will resume reporting next year when we have more accurate data to reflect our performance.

The Issue

Following the introduction of a new reporting system in December last year, we identified in April a number of operational issues with our Referral to Treatment reporting. This process has identified a large number of patients who have waited over 18 weeks for treatment. This accounts for approximately 50 per cent of the current waiting list. This is not an acceptable position for our patients and we are taking action to improve the situation.

What is Referral to Treatment (RTT)?

Referral to treatment is the common term used for the time it takes between when your GP, dentist, optician or other clinician refers you for hospital treatment and when you get that treatment. Measurement of the time you wait starts from the point you book your first appointment or when your referral letter is received by the hospital. The NHS Choices website www.nhs.uk has a [Guide to NHS waiting times](#) that provides a helpful explanation.

Putting our patients first

We have now concluded an internal investigation which we discussed at our Trust Board in September. We also discussed our recovery plan to address these issues and to get back on track, treating patients in line with the NHS Constitution of no patient waiting longer than 18 weeks. We need to be honest about where we are and work effectively with our partners across the region to fix these long standing issues to ensure that our patients get treatment at the right time. We will check to ensure that patients have not been harmed due to their wait by conducting harm reviews.

Our recovery plan

There are three key actions in our recovery plan:

- checking no long waiters have experienced any harm as a result of the delay in their treatment
- completing the improvements to our data quality programme
- treating more patients, more quickly to clear the backlog.

This plan, and our performance against it, is reviewed by the CCG, NHS Trust Development Authority and NHS England weekly and monthly to provide assurance that we are on

track to improve our patients' experience of elective surgery.

Our aim is to treat all our patients in line with the national standard by mid-2015.

What is a harm review?

Ensuring that our patients are safe in our care is our highest priority. We are reviewing cases of patients who have waited over 18 weeks to see if anyone has suffered due to delays in their treatment. These harm reviews are being overseen by our Medical Director.

To find out more

- NHS Choices www.nhs.uk has a [Guide to NHS waiting times](#)
- NHS England has published [Consultant-led Referral to Treatment Waiting Times Rules and Guidance](#)
- You can read our full recovery plan on our website at www.bhrhospitals.nhs.uk

If you have a concern, compliment or query about your treatment at either Queen's or King George Hospital please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on **01708 435 454** or PALS@bhrhospitals.nhs.uk. If you are a GP with a specific query, please email 18weeksRTT@bhrhospitals.nhs.uk

