Children’s Hospitals Network

Providing a sustainable Clinical Network
Delivering healthcare to patients requiring Specialist Services
Introduction

The Children’s Hospitals Network formed in 2012 following a review of national specialist services, linking Oxford University Hospital NHS Trust and University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust, to form a regional Network focusing on Children’s Specialist Services. The Network currently encompasses Cardiac, Neurosciences and Critical Care services.

As a Network we are focused on delivering best quality compassionate care to our patients in an appropriate location so that family representatives and our colleagues working in district general hospitals can be involved in both planning and delivery as we develop the services.

We are excited about the opportunities and developments that can be achieved by working together, and are committed to delivering world class clinical outcomes comparable with the best (nationally and internationally) for patients and their families and look forward to continuing to work closely with stakeholders.
Teams across the region have been working collaboratively prior and post National Safe and Sustainable processes. Becoming a defined Network has and will continue to improve children’s services by utilising multidisciplinary specialist teams to ensure that the best care possible is available to patients.

**Network Board Members**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role and Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alison Sims</td>
<td>Children’s Network Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matthew Ayres</td>
<td>Child Health Operations Director, UHS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tony McDonald</td>
<td>Divisional General Manager, OUH</td>
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*See page 13 for full details of Network and Specialty Board Members*
Since December 2012 we have implemented a clear communication structure that includes a Governing Network Board, consisting of Clinical Directors and Managers from both Trusts. In conjunction to this, Specialty Board Meetings have been established which link into the Network Board. This has enabled clear leadership, governance and ensures that an efficient cascade of relevant information is distributed to all stakeholders.

The map below demonstrates the area covered by the Network, which includes Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Wiltshire, West Sussex, part of Northamptonshire, Hampshire, Isle of White, Channel Islands.

**Network Board**
Tony McDonald
Matt Ayres
Anne Thomson
Peter Wilson
Alison O’Donnell
Alison Sims

**Cardiac**
**Neurosciences**
**Critical Care Services**

Information will cascade through the Network and Specialty Boards and will be disseminated to Network Teams, DGHs and Host Trusts.
Since children’s heart surgery stopped in Oxford in 2010 the service has been led by Southampton. This has provided an opportunity to utilise specialist skills and knowledge and an improved patient pathway. Children continue to receive their cardiology care in Oxford, while surgery and interventional procedures are carried out at Southampton.

A single clinical team works between both centres to ensure that children receive the benefits of the concentration of expertise that complex surgery requires, whilst at the same time maintaining the maximum possible range of services and expertise locally.

The partnership provides services to children from a wide geographical area and receives referrals from 23 district general hospitals stretching as far north as Northamptonshire and as far south as Cornwall and the Channel Islands. Both hospital Trusts are committed to ensuring that each individual child is treated in the best place for them whether that is at home, or in their local hospital at Southampton or Oxford.
Our Patients

Mollie Robinson was diagnosed with a complete Atrio Ventricular Septal defect (AVSD) at eight weeks of age and had her first surgery at Oxford’s John Radcliffe in 2007 followed by a second operation in 2008. By the time she needed a further operation invasive surgery had stopped at Oxford and was being led by Southampton. Despite this change in service, Mollie’s Mum, Vittoria said:

“Obviously we would have gone to the ends of the earth for our daughter to receive the care she needed. Travelling to a new hospital could have been a problem, but Southampton was a straightforward trip from Oxford. We were offered the opportunity to meet the surgeon and the liaison nurses spent time with us and we visited the wards and PICU, so we knew exactly what to expect.

We knew that the Oxford and Southampton teams were meeting regularly to discuss patients, so we felt really secure that Mollie’s care was understood properly. Mollie had her surgery at Southampton and was back home within a week, and any following appointments were at Oxford. Dealing with the same clinicians each time and getting to know the team so well has provided continuity during Mollie’s care and this has been really important to us. The experience has been a very positive one.”

Children’s Cardiac Board Members*

James Gnanapragasam  
Consultant Paediatric Cardiologist  
University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust

Alison Sims  
Children’s Network Manager

Nick Archer  
Consultant Paediatric Cardiologist

Gill Hart  
Cardiac Liaison Nurse

Georgie Stepney  
Cardiac Liaison Nurse

Nicola Viola  
Paediatric and Adult Cardiologist

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Since the implementation of the National Safe and Sustainable process, neuroscience teams across the Network have had more opportunity to work collaboratively. This has presented the chance to re-assess and restructure current resources to provide an improved level of service to patients and their families.

**Brain Doctors**

Team members have been working with Landmark Films, who in 2010 produced a three-part television series focusing on craniofacial and cleft lip and palate patients. The company were keen to come back and produce a three-part follow-up series, this time concentrating on neurological patients and their families at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford. This was televised on BBC 2 in March 2013 and was watched by over 5 million viewers. It was a great experience to work with the team and to see the completed project which focused on a number of adult and paediatric cases. The programmes provided a realistic story of what can happen when families are affected by neurological issues.
Some of the improvements made so far include:

- **Bringing working practices** together across the Network i.e. sharing clinical measures, in particular we have unified morbidity and mortality triggers.
- **Sharing expertise** – examples include paediatric pituitary expertise in Southampton and spasticity expertise in Oxford along with spinal and craniocervical disorders. By combining efforts we offer a service that is rich in knowledge and experience and will enable future research opportunities to improve patient care.
- **Including interdependent specialties** – we have recently agreed to move towards sharing teleconferenced multidisciplinary team meetings across the Network, including oncology services.

The future

Work is underway to expand resources required to improve Neuromuscular services. This is an area that requires input from a number of interdependent specialties. This has also provided the opportunity to discuss the patient cohort that requires varying levels of complex rehabilitation care. Plans are in place to develop this service over the coming year.

*We are keen to continue improving the clinical Network and look forward to working with the teams involved.*
The Southampton Oxford Retrieval Team (SORT) is a collaborative partnership between two paediatric intensive care units (PICUs). It delivers expert paediatric critical care to hospitals throughout the south of England and is part of the Children’s Hospitals Network.

Referral calls are made to the SORT hotline. Depending on the clinical need the team will provide advice or arrange retrieval. If there is no bed in Southampton or Oxford then SORT will find a bed in the nearest PICU and transfer the patient.

SORT co-ordinate specialist advice for complex patients and if the patient is known to a particular centre we will endeavour to transfer to that hospital.

The retrieval team consists of a doctor, specialised retrieval nurse and either a medical technician or a St John’s ambulance driver. A PICU consultant is available at all times for advice if not part of the team.

Children’s Critical Care Service

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Iain Macintosh
Consultant, Paediatric Intensive Care Unit
University Hospital Southampton
NHS Foundation Trust

Alison Sims
Children’s Network Manager

Carol Purcell
PICU Matron

Tariq Ali
Consultant – Paediatric Intensive Care and Anaesthesia

Sharon Buchanan
Matron, Critical Care

Gareth Jones
PIC Anaesthetist

Jill Thistlethwaite
Senior Sister and Retrieval Coordinator

*See page 13 for full details of Network and Specialty Board Members

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Our Patients

The Dyson twins attended PICU due to bronchial problems. Ayden became unwell and was admitted to Stoke Mandeville Hospital. Two days later Holly became ill and was admitted to Southampton. Ayden then deteriorated and was moved to Oxford, by then a bed had become available so that Holly was able to join him just a few hours later. The twins health improved and they were eventually discharged.

Mrs Dyson said:

"Although it was a very stressful time for us, particularly when Holly and Ayden were separated, the teams were really helpful and kept in communication at all times. In Oxford there was a designated person watching Holly continuously, which boosted our confidence when we were travelling between the Hospitals."
Our successes

Some of the improvements that have been made across the Children’s Hospitals Network so far...

- **Implementation of Communication Structure** – providing leadership and mutual service objectives and vision.

- **Introduction of regular teleconference meetings** – combining clinical teams to facilitate joint decisions for the care and treatment of shared patients.

- **Cross centre working** – consultants working across sites provides an arena for shared learning.

- **Relocation of cardiac catheterisation** at Southampton to provide a safe and sustainable service provided by clinicians across the Network.

- **Workplan** – an agreed plan of priority actions for the coming year.
The Children’s Hospitals Network will concentrate on a number of priority areas including:

- **Rehabilitation** – develop plan for children’s rehabilitation services.

- **Patient and Public Involvement** – involving patients and their families in the ongoing development of services.

- **Data validation/IT Networking** – short term solution to ensure robust timely data. Long term solution to connect individual software packages used within the Network.

- **Quality Governance** – Improve and develop quality governance across the Network.
Conclusion

The Children’s Hospitals Network has made significant strides but is still evolving; this report presents a short introduction on developments to date.

An Annual Report will be produced in 2014 which will include outcome data and progress reports on services included within the Network.

Contact details:

For further information, please contact:

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Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust &
University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust

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### Network and Specialty Board Members

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<td>Tariq Ali</td>
<td>Consultant of PICU and Anaesthetics</td>
<td>OUH</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nick Archer</td>
<td>Consultant Paediatric Cardiologist</td>
<td>OUH</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matthew Ayres</td>
<td>Director of Operations, Child Health</td>
<td>UHS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sharon Buchanan</td>
<td>Matron, Paediatrics and Neonatal Services</td>
<td>OUH</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aabir Chakroborty</td>
<td>Consultant Paediatric Neurosurgean</td>
<td>UHS</td>
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<tr>
<td>James Gnapanpragasam</td>
<td>Clinical Director Cardiac Network and Consultant Paediatric Cardiologist</td>
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<td>Charlotte Hammerton</td>
<td>Ward Sister, Robin’s Ward</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jay Jayamohan</td>
<td>Clinical Director, Children’s Neurosciences Network and Consultant Paediatric Neurosurgeon</td>
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<td>Fenella Kirkham</td>
<td>Consultant Neurologist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dorothy Lang</td>
<td>Lead for Paediatric Neurosurgery</td>
<td>UHS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iain Macintosh</td>
<td>Clinical Director, Children’s Critical Care Network and Consultant PICU</td>
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**UHS = University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust**
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