

Office of the Chief Executive

01268 524900
clare.panniker@btuh.nhs.uk

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Dear Colleague

We have been waiting for some time for news on the referrals that Southend and Thurrock councils made to the Secretary of State on our plans to bring some of our clinical services together.

The Secretary of State has now asked the Independent Reconfiguration Panel to give initial advice on these changes which we hope they will provide over the summer.

We have always maintained that our plans are the right thing for our patients, but recognise that there has been concern expressed by two of our local authorities. This has been frustrating for our staff who have been unable to deliver the benefits these changes will bring to our communities.

Due to the time it takes to bring about service changes, we decided at our board meeting yesterday to continue the mobilisation of our planned first phase changes for vascular, urology, radiology and orthopaedic services. We will then be in the position to implement these changes this autumn to improve care and services for our patients. The Board will then look at the detailed plan and make a final decision on implementation in September.

For example, at the moment a Southend patient needing urgent vascular care could be transferred to Harlow, Broomfield or Basildon for treatment. With a consolidated service, and a dedicated vascular ward with 24/7 consultant cover and specialist staff, they will be able to stay in mid and South Essex for expert care at Basildon Hospital.

Similarly, by creating a centre of excellence for spinal surgery on one site, we will bring all of our specialist staff and equipment together. We know that, as well as ensuring quicker access to a spinal surgeon, that will result in better outcomes for patients.

We know that these changes will simplify care across our hospitals, and enable us to dramatically improve our patients' experience. Therefore we need to be ready to move forward as soon as possible.

The services changes that we are planning to go live in autumn are:

- Consolidation of complex benign inpatient elective and all inpatient emergency patients from Basildon Hospital to Broomfield Hospital.

- Consolidation of emergency vascular surgery at Basildon Hospital from both Broomfield and Southend Hospitals.
- Transfer of spinal surgery from Basildon Hospital to Southend Hospital.
- Offering patients at Basildon and Southend hospitals waiting for a hip or knee operation the option of being treated at Braintree Community Hospital so that they can be treated more quickly.
- Emergency out of hours interventional radiology services to be consolidated at a hub based at Basildon Hospital.

We are also working with our urology teams to look at opportunities to improve the service for patients ahead of winter.

These changes mean around 2,500 patients per year will benefit from improved access to care. They will spend less time waiting for treatment and experience fewer delays in accessing specialist emergency care. In addition, we will also see improved clinical outcomes and reduced clinical risk.

Finally, the clinical reconfiguration will enable us to attract and retain more great people to our teams, providing opportunities for them to specialise, develop and network.

If you have any questions, or would like to discuss this further, please do let me know.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Clare Panniker', followed by a small dot.

Clare Panniker
Chief Executive