

Update about NHS England review into children's and adult's congenital cardiac services

NHS England has today announced action to deliver consistent and high quality services now and for the future to the CHD community.

ECHO have supported the NHS England review of children's and adults congenital cardiac services over the past four years and welcome the NHS England set of standards for congenital heart surgery.

We have been reassured that children from across England will be given access to the very best possible surgical treatment and care. We are also encouraged that this will follow them into adulthood as the standards include transition services, giving children, young people and adults truly joined up care.

ECHO will continue to represent the views of parents, carers and young people, both at national and local meetings and events, and will continue to work with the medical professionals who deliver outstanding services at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust while they continue to develop their plans to ensure the standards are fully met and maintained.

Whilst we welcome the news that occasional practice will stop and procedures and surgery will only take place in hospitals that can meet the standards, we appreciate that families, parents, patients and staff at units who may not be offering surgery in the future will be affected by the announcement. We urge all those people to seek any support required, both medical and emotional, over the coming months.

Today's announcement will be challenging and come as a surprise to many families, but in the future, children, young people and parents can expect every unit in England offering surgery to meet the standards or to demonstrate how they will meet them. It would be wrong for us to encourage units unable to meet the standards to continue providing surgical procedures.

The announcement and implementation of the standards will not stop the units offering excellent cardiology or outpatient care.

We have had calls, emails and private Facebook messages from parents looking for reassurance about waiting lists and capacity, but want to reassure families that nothing will change overnight and that we will work with NHS England and other organisations to ensure patients, parents and carers have access to relevant and up to date information.

NHS England recommendations: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2016/07/chd-future/>

Congenital heart disease standards and specifications: www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/spec-services/npc-crg/chd/

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Evelina London Children's Hospital and the Trust's Adult Congenital Heart Disease services have been assessed as meeting or being on track to meet the standards within the timescales required and NHS England has confirmed that they will continue to commission the services of the Trust. Services will continue as usual whilst we await the next stages of the national process.

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