

Sickle cell changes: GP communications

Improvements to NWL sickle cell pathways

London North West University Healthcare is making some changes to sickle cell services across north west London in partnership with Imperial College Healthcare.

These changes are based on feedback received by the Trust at patient engagement events over recent years and through the recent national haemoglobinopathy peer review.

Inpatient and emergency care services for patients living with sickle cell in Brent, Ealing and Harrow will be provided by the renal and haematology triage unit (RHTU) at Hammersmith Hospital from 15 September.

The new pathway offers patients access to the dedicated unit, and means they will call its specialist team for advice before having to come to hospital. Doctors from LNUH will join the on-call rota at Hammersmith Hospital, forming part of a wider team that will work in partnership to offer patients joined-up care.

Patients will receive a detailed information leaflet explaining the new pathway, as well as a letter thanking the patient community for working with the Trust on its development.

The change is one of several being introduced based on feedback from service users about how the existing sickle cell service can be improved.

Patients will continue to receive outpatient care at Central Middlesex Hospital and will see an increase to both the availability and variety of treatments on offer in coming months. Improvements will include:

- Expanding outpatient services to include all north west London
- Offering red cell exchange and day pain relief to more patients by increasing the number of spaces available for treatment
- Greater focus on individual need and annual health reviews, with teams gathering patients' medical information in advance of appointments so consultations can be more personalised and effective.
- Better access to psychosocial support along with a new social prescriber who can advise on issues including benefits and housing.

The local engagement group, **Strength in Sickle**, has played an important role in driving these improvements: patients who wish to join the group can contact LNWH's patient experience team on lnwh-tr-patientexperience@nhs.net.