

## **Briefing: Gynaecology outpatient wait**

### **March 2019**

Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (OUH) has capacity challenges in gynaecology. Limited theatre capacity and difficulties recruiting appropriate staff have led to a build-up of the waiting list over the last two years.

Every effort is being made by the Trust to improve this situation. Progress has been made in reducing the number of women waiting long periods for surgery but outpatient appointment waiting times are still a significant challenge. Women are experiencing waiting times for gynaecology appointments of 40-plus weeks. This is unacceptable in terms of care and patient experience.

Having investigated all alternative options fully, OUH has proposed to divert referrals for certain conditions to other out-of-county hospitals and independent providers for three months, starting on 1 April until 30 June 2019. These include patients being referred for general gynaecology, urogynaecology, endometriosis, menopause, pelvic pain. It is hoped this short term action will bring outpatient waits down as much as possible and allow women to be seen more quickly.

**OUH will continue to accept** referrals for:

- Suspected cancer two week waits
- Recurrent miscarriage
- Fertility

Oxfordshire GPs are being asked to refer **all other conditions** to other providers:

- Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS FT
- Great Western Hospitals NHS FT
- Royal Berkshire Hospital NHS FT
- South Warwickshire NHS FT
- Milton Keynes University Hospital
- Independent hospitals providing gynaecology services such as the Foscote in Oxfordshire.

Some of these Trusts hold clinics in community settings e.g. the Royal Berkshire Hospital offers outpatient appointments in Henley and Newbury, which will be convenient for some Oxfordshire patients.

Patients will be advised that they may be eligible for help with transport or reimbursement of travel costs <https://www.oxfordshireccg.nhs.uk/your-health/choose-the-right-service/patient-transport.htm>

This diversion of referrals is expected to affect approximately 1,300 women during the three month period.

GPs have been asked to support these measures to offer their patients the care they need within a reasonable timescale. They have been asked to ensure all practice clinical and administrative staff are aware of the OUH referral diversion so they do not send patients with one of the restricted conditions to OUH, which would result in a delay to those patients.

The providers listed above have been made aware they may experience an increase in referrals.

NHS England's regional team is aware of this difficult situation and has supported the need for Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning group and OUH to engage regional providers to provide this additional capacity as a one-off initiative.

If you would like to discuss any issues arising from this, please contact 01865 334638 or email [OCCG.talking.health@nhs.net](mailto:OCCG.talking.health@nhs.net)