

Developing services for patients at the Friarage

There has been lots of speculation – and general anxiety – among patients and the wider public that the Friarage Hospital will close.

Much of this has stemmed from genuine clinical concerns around the safety and future sustainability of children's and maternity services ...

The truth is the Friarage is a vital part of our trust, and working with GPs – and staff across both acute hospital sites – we have been able to bring in many new skills and services in recent years, which offer more locally delivered care for many people.

We thought it might be useful to share some of these developments with you:

Caring for heart patients

Two cardiologists – Dr Richard Graham and Dr Andy Turley – are based at the Friarage while another consultant from James Cook runs a once weekly clinic there.

All clinicians and many Friarage cardiology staff work across sites so there are excellent links between the two hospitals.

There are five consultant outpatient clinics a week, in addition to weekly pacemaker clinics (run by cardiac physiologists), two rapid access chest pain clinic (run by a specialist nurse), a heart failure clinic (community specialist heart failure nurse) and a fortnightly arrhythmia clinic (run by specialist cardiac rhythm management nurses).

The latter two are new developments over the last year to improve patient access to cardiology care. Since October 2011, an open access echocardiography service – allowing primary care clinicians to access echocardiography directly – has been up and running with more than 200 patients using this service.

Acute oncology service for cancer patients

As well as a clinical oncologist being on site every week so many cancer treatments can be provided locally, an 'outreach' acute oncology service is run by a senior nurse – Monday to Friday – who can ensure all cancer patients admitted to the hospital get an expert opinion without delay.

Eye care

In ophthalmology, all the sub-specialist services provided at James Cook are now also here, including cataract surgery for the elderly (previously only done in Middlesbrough or Darlington), a retinal screening service and specialist services for children.



Ear, nose and throat services

ENT surgeons now provide not only general outpatient services but specialist children's clinics and paediatric audiology services at the Friarage.

Urology

Endo-urologists (consultants providing treatment for kidney and bladder stones) have developed a specialist centre which treats North Yorkshire and Teesside patients (and farther afield). The urology team is also developing specialist laser treatments for prostate cancer exclusively at the hospital (thanks to the generous help from the Friends of the Friarage).

Enhanced pain services

The acute pain team now supports consultant-led weekly ward rounds, while the chronic pain team do more procedures to support local availability of the service.

Orthodontics – dental treatment

The Friarage delivers a high proportion of the specialist orthodontic treatment carried out by the trust.

Services for women

A new birth control service providing a non-surgical alternative for women seeking sterilisation.

Orthopaedics

The Friarage was the first hospital in UK to use an OrthoScan C-arm – a digital X-ray machine – in its operating theatres, providing advanced treatment for orthopaedic patients having surgery.

Scanner Appeal

In July 2013, South Tees Hospitals Charity – in partnership with the Friends of the Friarage - launched an ambitious appeal to raise £2million for an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scanner at the Friarage Hospital.

MRI scanners are increasingly used to diagnose a wide range of health conditions and the trust carries out over 17,000 scans every year – 4,000 of which are for patients living in the Hambleton and Richmondshire area.

However, as the Friarage Hospital does not have an MRI scanner, North Yorkshire patients currently travel to Middlesbrough or Darlington for these important imaging tests.

Not only will a new machine cut waiting times, it will enable clinicians to diagnose conditions more quickly, hopefully leading to better health outcomes for local patients.

For more information visit the appeal website at www.friaragescannerappeal.org.uk

