



SEVEN DAY SERVICES CASE STUDY

SEPT 2015

Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust

Seven day access to imaging: Strategies to sustain improvements

AT A GLANCE:

- Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust (SFT) has sustained provision of seven day imaging services since implementation in 2011.
- Changing job plans and working arrangements for radiologists, radiographers and support staff enabled improved access to urgent on-site CT, MRI and ultrasound services seven days a week. Elective MR is available on Saturday and Sunday.
- Increasing capacity by outsourcing overnight CT reporting and investment in additional scanners, including the use of mobile imaging facilities.
- As a result, waiting times have been sustained at four to six weeks, despite increasing demands, and 90% compliance with timely access to imaging for patients with Transient Ischaemic Attack (TIA) and stroke.

Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust has been providing seven day imaging services for CT, MRI and ultrasound since 2011 including some elective outpatient work at weekends.

There have been increased staff costs, including an additional radiographer and an additional two radiologists (increase from 10 whole time equivalents (WTE), outsourcing of out of hours CT/MRI reporting and cost of an additional CT scanner to meet the rise in demand - up by 20% over the last five years.

The change in service delivery was in response to reported delays in access to urgent diagnostics, access to radiologist opinion, delays in reporting turnaround to assist with senior clinical decision making and reported delays in discharge and use of in-patient beds. The trust has now continued to sustain improved access to urgent imaging and same day reporting.

How the improvements were made

- Consultant radiologists provide an extended service which includes evening and weekend working. This was achieved by increasing the consultant radiology workforce from 10 WTE to 12 WTE from internal resources and, as a result of freeing up radiologist working capacity, by outsourcing overnight CT reporting (approximate cost £30,000 per annum). This is an activity based contract with 0-6 reports undertaken per night.

- All staff job plans were reviewed and staff agreed to new working patterns which includes weekends (with the exception of reporting radiographers).
- Additional capacity was also provided through a second on-site CT (supported through hospital and by increasing income) and visiting MR van up to four times per month as required.
- An additional radiographer staff member was recruited to allow MRI radiographers to extend normal working hours to weekends.
- The trust has agreed formal internal patient referral pathways for urgent CT imaging of head, stroke/TIA, trauma and cervical spine to reduce turn around times in and out of hours.
- Formal networks for out of hours and weekend interventional radiology are being reviewed, Salisbury currently have two interventional radiologists and are part of the Bournemouth and Poole rota. There are formal networks for patients requiring stroke and TIA imaging. Radiology specialist advice is sought informally from Southampton Hospital.
- A network with Bournemouth and Poole for interventional radiology has been implemented (the service is provided at Bournemouth at weekends and evenings). Plans are being developed for an interventional centre for the region, which would include post holders at SFT to be included into the consultant rota.
- A network with Bournemouth and Poole for TIA has been implemented, with each trust having one in three weekends responsibility for patient management (including imaging).
- Improved access to on-site radiologists seven days a week for advice and reporting. Radiologists are now available routinely until 8pm and between 9.30am 12.30pm on Saturday and Sunday, with additional on-call for major trauma and ultrasound.

What was achieved

- Routine inpatient CT scans are now provided on Saturday and Sunday mornings by the on-site MRI radiographers, who are all trained in both imaging modalities. Previously an on-call system was used. This also includes some elective work on Saturday and Sunday.
- MRI service hours have been expanded from 9am to 5pm to a 12 hour service (8am to 8pm) seven days a week, to replace the on-call system.

What was the impact

- The trust has now sustained improved access to imaging seven days a week, and more responsive reporting times, which has also supported management of elective demand and wait times in a cost effective way (although some investment was required).
- Waiting times for elective work remain at four weeks for routine, and two weeks for urgent outpatient work. These have been maintained despite an increase in workload of 20%

TOP TIPS

- Engage with stakeholders across the trust to develop plans to meet needs.
- Be open to new ways of working, engage staff early in plans as this often takes the most time. Do not underestimate the time taken and include all staff - especially support staff.

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