

197 surgical procedures

83% CNS visit within 24 hrs

2223 MDT appointments

424 virtual MDT contacts

1450+ contacts SpeechTherapy

270 Clinical Audit reviews

# The Spires Cleft Centre Annual Report 2021

## Summary of multidisciplinary care for children and adults with cleft & non-cleft VPD, in the Spires region, Jan-Dec 2021

The Spires Cleft Centre is an NHS England Specialist Commissioned regional network based around two sites, Salisbury and Oxford. The host Trusts are Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust & Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. 2021 was challenging, but we largely managed to avoid delays to primary surgery in infants whilst providing more clinics, visits and treatments. Older children and adults are facing long waits for surgical treatment and many UK services are in the same position with staffing a significant factor. As a network we remain committed to tackling the challenges, working closely with Trust managers, the children's surgery network and Commissioners.

CLINICAL	
<b>Cleft Surgery</b>	<p><b>PROGRESS:</b> 197 surgeries completed compared to 131 in 2020                      Combined waiting list of most urgent/time sensitive cases                      Appointment of extra part time surgeon to Salisbury for 2022</p> <p><b>CONCERN:</b> Primary surgery timing close to limit of ideal timing                      Secondary surgery waiting list remains largely unaddressed</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start of 2021, reduced theatre capacity in Oxford (1/3 pre-covid). Weekly theatre list in Salisbury</li> <li>Greatest impact on older children waiting for alveolar bone graft (ABG), speech surgery &amp; adult surgery</li> <li>April, increase in Oxford sessions available (extra 1 per week + weekend lists) to tackle backlog</li> <li>By June, progress with primary lip and palate catch up. Throughout year, waiting list pressure still larger than theatre capacity in Salisbury (2 sessions a week). Salisbury lists not fully utilised due to reduced surgeon sessions and consistent cover not available</li> <li>Ongoing prioritisation to identify highest impact cases for ABG, speech surgery &amp; adult surgery</li> </ul>
<b>Specialist Nursing (CNS)</b>	<p><b>PROGRESS:</b> Regular clinical prioritisation meetings with surgeon colleagues                      Interim Lead CNS appointed internally from Jan 2022 for 6 months</p> <p><b>CONCERN:</b> Reduced workforce/experience within small team</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retirement of experienced specialist nurses in Oxford (x1) and Salisbury (x2, including Lead CNS). Successful recruitment to vacant posts but impacted by maternity leave from Sept 2021-July 2022</li> <li>Prioritised and provided clinical and feeding support to neonates and infants in line with standards</li> <li>1 day per week B6 nurse seconded from children's ward in Salisbury to support sole CNS</li> <li>Regular specialist teaching to student &amp; ward nurses, Foetal Medicine Unit &amp; other network colleagues</li> </ul>
<b>Speech &amp; Lang Therapy (SLT)</b>	<p><b>PROGRESS:</b> Use of virtual platforms for clinics, liaison and training across region                      Enhanced service for parents of infants waiting for surgery</p> <p><b>CONCERN:</b> Long waits for speech surgery in school age children and adults                      Lack of community SLT provision – variable across network</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hybrid service delivery – face to face and video appointments, reducing need for travel, time out of school &amp; work. Positive feedback from parents &amp; patients.</li> <li>Network training to community SLTs delivered virtually</li> </ul>
<b>Clinical Psychology</b>	<p><b>PROGRESS:</b> Involvement of Honorary Assistant Psychologists on both sites                      Recruitment &amp; increased hours in Salisbury (start March 22)</p> <p><b>CONCERN:</b> High demand for psychological input prior to surgery                      Impact of maternity leave &amp; vacancies on small team</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start of 2021, mainly remote outpatient appointments. Growing waiting lists but manageable.</li> <li>April, outpatient activity combination of face to face &amp; virtual.</li> <li>Dec, wait for contact outside of MDT clinic approximately 5 months, increasing face to face contacts</li> </ul>
<b>ENT &amp; Audiology</b>	<p><b>PROGRESS:</b> Good liaison between centre and network ENT &amp; audiology</p> <p><b>CONCERN:</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular joint working in MDT &amp; audit clinics</li> <li>86% of all 5 year old children have had their hearing assessed</li> </ul>

Oxford: Aylesbury, Basingstoke, Milton Keynes, Reading, Slough, Swindon, Frimley Park  
 Salisbury: Chichester, Guernsey, Isle of Wight, Winchester, Portsmouth, Southampton, Poole/Bournemouth, Dorchester

<b>Orthodontics</b>	<p>PROGRESS: Caught up with outpatient backlog in Salisbury Audit/clinical review clinics resumed</p> <p>CONCERN: Optimum timing for successful ABG &amp; orthognathic surgery</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start of 2021, Audit clinics stopped. Orthodontic/dental assessment not feasible remotely</li> <li>April, document published by Orthodontic Clinical Excellence Network highlights risks of delayed ABG 70% children had joint review with surgeon &amp; orthodontist between age 7-9 years</li> </ul>
<b>Oral &amp; Maxillofacial Surgery</b>	<p>PROGRESS: Orthognathic (jaw) surgery resumed for patients across region Regular dental implant clinic at Salisbury</p> <p>CONCERN: Impact on young adults of delayed treatment &amp; time in braces Oxford/Bucks patient access to routine dentoalveolar surgery</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All jaw surgery completed at Salisbury; joint working with Oxford &amp; Salisbury Orthodontists &amp; MDT</li> <li>Oral surgeon input to surgical planning for ABG, with cleft consultant, orthodontist &amp; MDT, including dental extractions. Support for oral health advice</li> </ul>
<b>Restorative Dentistry</b>	<p>PROGRESS: Presentations at large national conference with Cleft theme (virtual) MDT working for speech prosthetics and adult reviews</p> <p>CONCERN: Working with severely compromised Dental Lab in Oxford all year Lack of consultant restorative dentist sessions in Salisbury Lack of specialist paediatric dentist across both sites</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start of 2021, no outpatient activity unless emergency. Telephone consultations and triage only</li> <li>April, clinics partially resumed but limited clinic room availability. Resolved by September</li> </ul>

<b>GOVERNANCE</b>	
<p><b>Patient safety</b></p> <p>Network Board –6 x per year service oversight</p> <p>Trust &amp; MDT specialty governance systems</p> <p>National Cleft Development Group (CDG)</p> <p><b>Audit</b></p> <p>Established programme of MDT audit data submitted to national cleft database CRANE and Specialised Services Quality Dashboard</p> <p>Treble Cleft Quality Improvement Group with SW (Bristol), South Wales &amp; West Midlands</p>	<p><b>Patient experience</b></p> <p>Patient/ Public representative on Network Board</p> <p>CLAPA champions from team</p> <p>Regular patient feedback &amp; co-production</p> <p><b>Research</b></p> <p>SLUMBRS II – Sleeping position of infants with cleft</p> <p>Cleft Collective – gene bank, cohort &amp; SLT studies</p> <p>CLEFT-Q Computerised Adaptive Testing</p> <p>Centre for Appearance Research, impact of Covid-19</p> <p>Abstracts submitted for Cleft 2022 Congress, Edinburgh</p>

For further information visit:

SPIRES website	<a href="https://www.spirecentre.nhs.uk">https://www.spirecentre.nhs.uk</a>
CRANE	<a href="https://www.crane-database.org.uk/reports/crane-database-2021-annual-report/">https://www.crane-database.org.uk/reports/crane-database-2021-annual-report/</a>
NHS England	<a href="https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/metric-definitions-cleft-lip-services-including-non-cleft-vpd-all-ages-2122.pdf">https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/metric-definitions-cleft-lip-services-including-non-cleft-vpd-all-ages-2122.pdf</a>
CLAPA	<a href="https://www.clapa.com/">https://www.clapa.com/</a>
Cleft Collective	<a href="http://www.bristol.ac.uk/dental/cleft-collective/">http://www.bristol.ac.uk/dental/cleft-collective/</a>

## **PRIORITIES FOR 2022**

1. Appointment of new Clinical Director and succession planning in key specialties.
2. Meet with Commissioners, Trust managers and children's surgery network (ODN) for detailed review of surgery waiting lists and service provision in Salisbury and Oxford.
3. Aim for optimal timing for lip & palate surgery in infants: lip at 3-6 months, palate at 9 months.
4. Reduce backlog of patients waiting for ABG, speech surgery, jaw surgery, rhinoplasty or lip revision.
5. Maintain commitment to research, clinical audit and quality improvement; focus on data completeness, patient feedback, development of outcome measures and evidence base.

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