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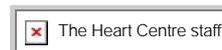
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The Heart Centre goes 24/7

Posted on Monday 8th July 2013

The Heart Centre at the Cumberland Infirmary goes 24/7 from today, Monday 8 July, with the launch of Cumbria's first Primary PCI service.



The Heart Centre staff

Since The Heart Centre opened in November 2011, hundreds of patients with heart disease have benefitted from much quicker diagnosis and treatment than was previously available.

Patients who are currently treated with clot buster drug therapy when having an immediately life-threatening heart attack will instead receive emergency percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) or angioplasty treatment.

Work to extend The Heart Centre has been ongoing to prepare for the expansion of the service. From today, ambulances will take patients from across north Cumbria, including West Cumbria, directly to The Heart Centre for assessment and treatment.

Roger Moore, Clinical Director for Cardiology, explains the benefits of the treatment: "The benefits of Primary PCI include reducing the patients' length of stay by up to two days, reducing mortality from life-threatening heart attacks by up to 50% and producing a better long-term outcome for the general health of the patient."

Since the establishment of The Heart Centre, hundreds of patients who previously had to travel out of the county for treatment have been treated closer to home in Cumbria by specialist interventional cardiologists, appointed by North Cumbria University Hospitals.

A number of new members of staff have been recruited ahead of the move to 24/7 operation, including healthcare assistants, registered nurses, cardiac physiologists, radiographers, registrars and two consultants. A training programme has been underway in preparation for the expanded service and there are two additional monitored beds on Willow C/D ward. In addition, a Primary PCI Co-ordinator role has been introduced in order to manage patient pathways.

In 2012/13, 1,266 angiograms were carried out and 660 PCIs/pressure wires. An angiogram is a procedure to look inside the coronary arteries and find out where and how severe any narrowed areas are. Angioplasty, or PCI, is the procedure whereby a deflated balloon or other device is inserted into an artery then inflated to open up a blockage in the heart.

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