

Western Eye Hospital and ophthalmology services

Report from Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust to the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham Health and Adult Social Care Policy and Accountability Committee

1. Introduction

This report to the Health and Social Care Policy and Accountability Committee from Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust ('the Trust') provides an update on Western Eye Hospital and ophthalmology services. A major £9m building project is planned at the Western Eye Hospital. It will allow the Trust to reopen the hospital fully next spring 2023, with additional operating capacity to help tackle the waiting list backlog created by the Covid-19 pandemic.

2. Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust overview

At Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust we provide acute and specialist healthcare to over one million people a year. Formed in 2007, we are one of the largest NHS trusts in the country, with more than 14,500 staff.

Our five hospitals in central and west London – Charing Cross, Hammersmith, Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea, St Mary's and the Western Eye – have a long track record in research and education, influencing care and treatment nationally and worldwide.

We continue to develop a growing range of integrated and digital care services and offer private healthcare in dedicated facilities on all our sites.

We provide care from five hospitals on four sites:

Charing Cross Hospital: providing a range of acute and specialist services including cancer care and a 24/7 accident and emergency department (A&E). It also hosts a hyper-acute stroke unit and is an important hub for integrated care in partnership with local GPs and community providers.

Hammersmith Hospital: a specialist hospital renowned for its strong research connections, it offers a range of services, including renal, haematology, cancer and cardiology care, and provides a specialist heart attack centre. As well as being a major base for Imperial College London, the site also hosts Medical Research Council's London Institute of Medical Sciences.

Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea Hospital: a maternity, women's and neonatal care hospital, also with strong research links. It has a midwife-led birth centre as well as specialist services for complex pregnancies, fetal and neonatal care.

St Mary's Hospital: the major acute hospital for north west London as well as a maternity centre with consultant and midwife-led services. The hospital provides care across a wide range of specialties and runs one of four major trauma centres in London in addition to its 24/7 A&E department.

Western Eye Hospital: a specialist eye hospital with an A&E department and outpatients, inpatients, day case and inpatient surgery services.

We run eight renal satellite units.

With our partners – Imperial College London; The Institute of Cancer Research, London; The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust; and Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust – we form the Imperial College Academic Health Science Centre (AHSC). We are one of eight academic health science centres in England, working to improve health and care through the rapid translation of discoveries from early scientific research into benefits for patients.

The CQC is the independent regulator of health and adult social care in England. The CQC monitors NHS trust services using five quality domains: safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led. Additionally, the CQC uses a well-led framework specifically for NHS trust executive teams and boards, which it developed and uses in conjunction with NHS England / Improvement. Monitoring includes inspections, after which the CQC awards performance ratings for each domain overall, as well as the Trust overall. During 2021/22, routine activity for NHS trusts was limited to certain monitoring activities, with no routine inspections being undertaken and, as a result, the Trust has not been inspected and its overall ratings remain as they were in July 2019, after its last inspection:

- The Trust is currently rated overall as 'requires improvement'
- It is rated overall as 'good' for the caring and effective domains, 'good' for well-led, and 'requires improvement' for the safe and responsive domains
- Eight core services were inspected in February 2019 and the CQC increased its ratings for six of them; all of them were rated as 'good' or 'outstanding' and the overall rating for Queen Charlotte's and Chelsea Hospital was increased to 'outstanding'.

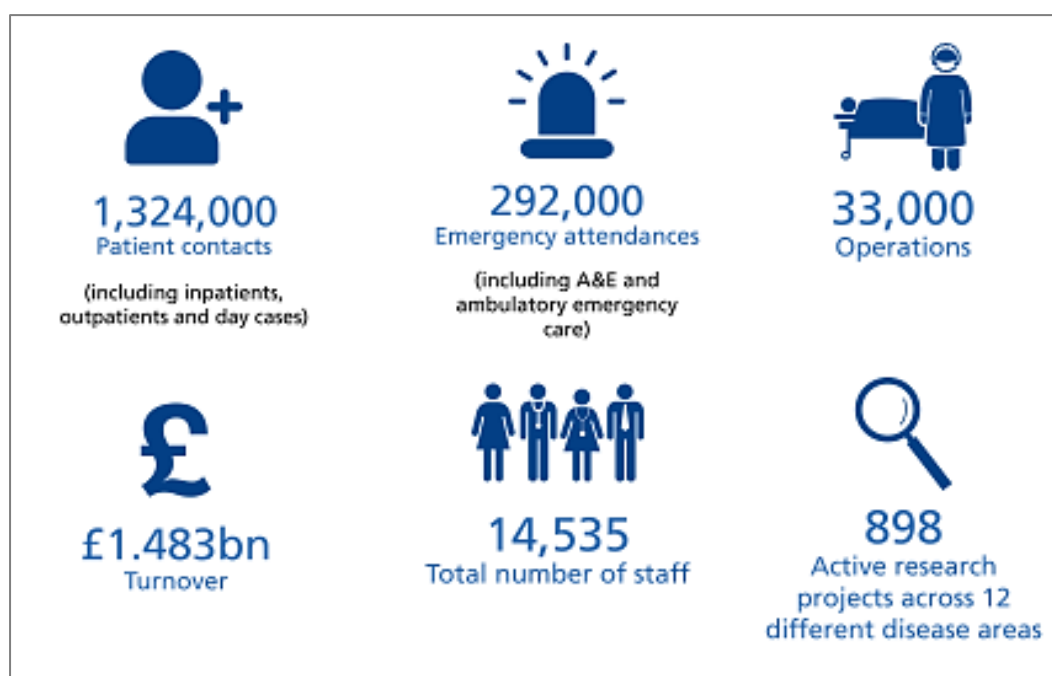


Figure 1 – Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust size and scale 2021/22

Building on the partnership working that was central to our response to the Covid-19 pandemic, in 2022 we came together with the other three acute NHS trusts in north west London — Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust to form the north west London acute provider collaborative.

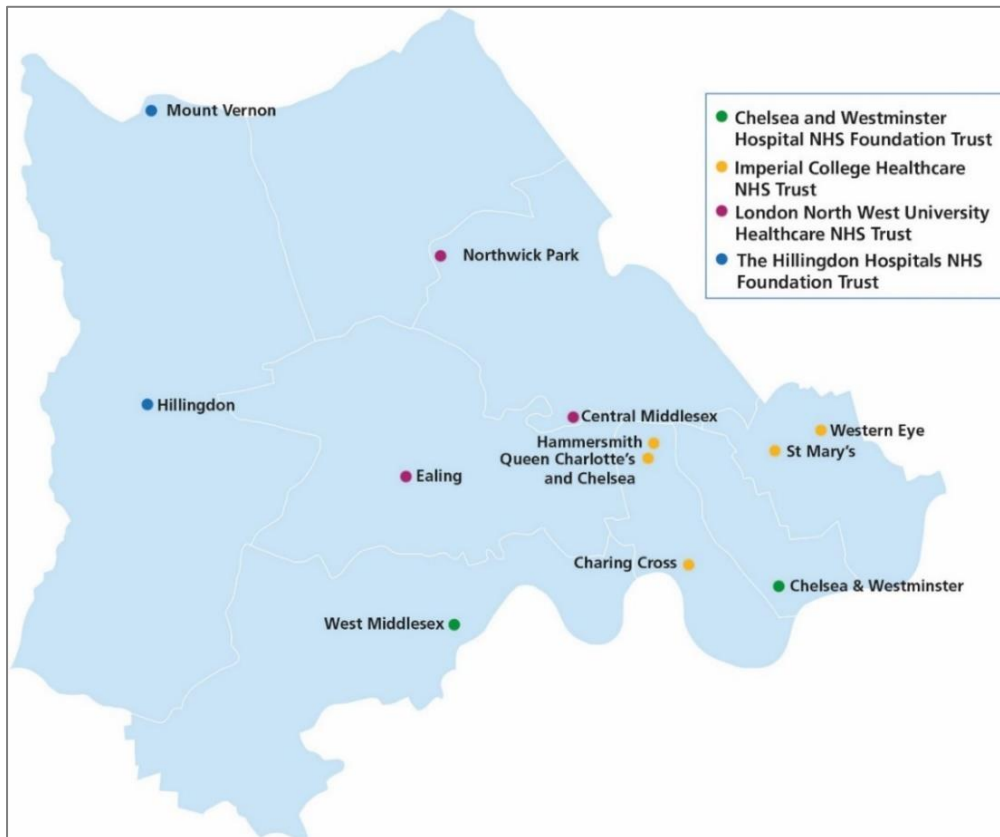


Figure 2 – North west London four acute NHS Trusts and hospitals

3. Western Eye Hospital overview

Since 1856 Western Eye Hospital has been based at a number of different sites before finally moving to 153-173 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5QH adjacent to the former Samaritan Hospital for Women.



Figure 3 – Main entrance to Western Eye Hospital

Western Eye is a specialist eye hospital with an accident & emergency (A&E) department based on the ground floor that is open from 08.00 to 20.30 (between 20:30 to 08:00 overnight acute ophthalmic emergency care is provided via the emergency departments at Charing Cross and St Mary's hospitals). Facilities include outpatients, inpatients, day case and inpatient surgery. The A&E department is the only service of its kind in West London exclusively providing emergency eye treatment for both adults and children.

The Western Eye and Charing Cross hospitals also serve as tertiary referral centres for the whole of west London and beyond.

The adjacent Samaritan Hospital for women and children was closed in 1997, with services relocated to the nearby St Mary's Hospital. We have been working to relocate the Western Eye's 'standalone' services too – to bring them together with other services including wider A&E services – as part of a much needed redevelopment of our whole estate. All three of our main hospitals – St Mary's, Charing Cross and Hammersmith – are included in the Government's New Hospital Programme.

The Samaritan and the Western Eye buildings are expected eventually to be sold together to support the Trust's overall redevelopment programme. This will take several years as it requires us first to be able to permanently relocate the Western Eye services in purpose-designed facilities on another of our sites.

It would also be disproportionately expensive to bring the Samaritan building back into use. Instead, we constantly maintain the Western Eye building and we have made the Samaritan building as weather tight and secure as possible, with water, drainage, electricity and heating systems disconnected.

4. Ophthalmology conditions and treatments

Age related macular degeneration (ARMD) and medical retina service (Macula Suite)

We have specialised facilities that are dedicated to the care of these patients including a minor surgery suite where patients receive their ARMD eye injections.

Other treatments include:

- retinal laser treatment
- photodynamic therapy
- intravitreal drug therapy
- close working with the vitreoretinal service for patients requiring surgical retina input
- patients referred with wet macular degeneration are now seen, diagnosed and treated within two weeks of GP or direct optometrist referral via our dedicated online referral pathways

Surgical retina and uveitis service

The sub-specialty retinal service covers most if not all pathology related to the retina and vitreous. There are dedicated retinal clinics as well as specific uveitis clinics and vitreoretinal clinics. The surgical vitreoretinal service is the tertiary referral centre for retinal detachments and other retinal conditions requiring surgery for the whole of west London.

Diabetic retinopathy service

As part of the medical retina service, the diagnosis, management and treatment of diabetic retinopathy is also carried out at Charing Cross and Western Eye hospitals.

Glaucoma

The glaucoma service at the Western Eye Hospital is a tertiary referral centre and offers sub-specialty glaucoma clinics with state-of-the-art imaging facilities able to assess and monitor patients in detail.

It offers the most recent innovative surgical treatments including trabecular bypass microstents and endoscopic laser, an innovative way of treating patients who are not adequately controlled with medical treatment alone.

Integration with the Imperial College Ophthalmic Research Group means patients in the service have access to the latest clinical trials and translational research projects.

Cataract surgery

We are the largest provider of cataract surgery in north west London offering routine 'low complexity, high volume' as well as complex cataract procedures.

Cornea and anterior segment

Our cornea and anterior segment service provides sub-specialist clinics and tailored surgical solutions for all problems related to the cornea (front window of the eye), iris and lens. Contemporary surgical techniques including partial thickness corneal transplantation are performed at the Western Eye Hospital.

The corneal service is one of only two centres in London offering modern excimer laser treatment and is a tertiary referral centre for the whole of west London and beyond.

Oculoplastics

Our oculoplastic service provides sub-specialty clinics and surgical management for the whole spectrum of eyelid, tear duct orbital related disorders in both adults and children.

The department pioneered the use of endoscopic endonasal dacryocystorhinostomy (DCR), a minimally invasive surgical technique for symptomatic patients with blocked tear ducts.

Neuro-ophthalmology and ocular motility

Neuro-ophthalmology and adult strabismus clinics are run at both Charing Cross and Western Eye hospitals, working closely with our neurology and neuro-surgical colleagues.

Paediatrics and strabismus

Paediatric ophthalmology clinics and surgery are currently provided at the St Mary's Hospital campus. Our paediatric ophthalmologists and surgical retina teams provide the retinopathy of prematurity service supporting premature babies and their families at St Mary's and Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea hospitals. We are one of the few services who treat premature babies with blinding eye disease in the neonatal units.

5. Western Eye Hospital site and services update

In late November 2021, following an expert review of fire safety at the vacant Samaritan Hospital, adjacent to the Western Eye Hospital, we took the precaution of immediately relocating some services from the Western Eye while more detailed investigations took place.

The concern identified was that if a fire broke out in the Samaritan building, there is potential for it to take hold in parts of the adjoining Western Eye building before being detected.

Following receipt of the review, we closed the two areas most at risk and increased our security checks around the Western Eye/Samaritan buildings. As an additional precaution,

we closed the whole of the lower ground, second and third floors and relocated services from those floors in alternative locations. This included operating theatres, the day care unit, pre-assessment clinic and some outpatient services.

Having taken these measures we were confident that, with the addition of a team of 24/7 fire wardens being put in place, we could safely continue services on the ground and first floors. This includes our specialist A&E service and specialist outpatient services.

The majority of services displaced from Western Eye Hospital were temporarily relocated to Charing Cross Hospital, which already provides some specialist ophthalmology care.

In the meantime, we undertook detailed building investigations to determine next steps. These investigations concluded earlier this year and showed that it would be possible to make the site safe again within a reasonable budget and timescale.

In September 2022, we announced the go ahead to a major £9m building project at the Western Eye Hospital which will allow us to reopen the hospital fully next spring 2023, with additional operating capacity to help tackle the waiting list backlog created by the Covid-19 pandemic.

As well as remedial works to address the fire safety issues that led us to take the precautionary step of closing some parts of the hospital last year, the project will deliver:

- an additional operating theatre, bringing the total to three
- refurbished pre-assessment areas
- refurbished pre and post operation areas.

It means the Western Eye will be able to continue to provide its range of acute and specialist eye care in an improved environment.

Services currently provided in the Western Eye building will continue to be provided there during the works. And services that have been relocated temporarily to Charing Cross - including in a mobile operating theatre - will continue there until the works are completed and the Western Eye fully reopens.

We are extremely grateful to all our staff who have worked so hard to ensure high quality care for patients at all times, and to all our patients and partners for their understanding and support.