

BREAST CARE SERVICES

NHS Southport and Formby Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and NHS West Lancashire CCG want to hear the views and experiences of breast care patients, carers, support groups and others interested in how these services might be provided in the future.

It comes after Southport & Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust closed its breast care service to new patients on 1 September 2014. This was because it was unable to recruit the appropriate clinical staff and consequently could no longer provide the service safely.

Patients have always been able to choose breast care services from a number of local and regional hospitals. This included Southport & Ormskirk but this service did not provide all aspects of breast care and some patients needed to travel to other hospitals for parts of their care.

Whilst it may not be possible to re-introduce all parts of the breast service that Southport & Ormskirk previously offered, both CCGs are examining which aspects of breast care might again be provided locally in the future.

The CCGs will be speaking with their local communities and patients from mid January - mid February 2015 to help them understand what matters most about breast care services. This will also help the CCGs to refine services at all the different hospitals that new patients can choose from.

You can find more information and details about how you can get involved in helping to shape future breast care services within this leaflet.

Why did the service at Southport & Ormskirk Hospital close?

Around 40-50 patients every week chose to be referred by their GP to the breast care service at Southport & Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust. Under 140 of these patients were diagnosed with breast cancer each year. The service included initial assessment and breast surgery. While the results of breast cancer treatment at Southport & Ormskirk were always good, some aspects of breast care, like reconstruction, isotope injections - which are part of lymph node testing - and radiotherapy were carried out elsewhere. This was a smaller service than those provided at other local hospitals.

A multi disciplinary team of healthcare professionals - bringing together breast radiologist, surgeons, nurses and oncologists - worked together to assess, treat and care for all of these patients.

When one of the breast care radiologists retired, the hospital was unable to recruit a replacement due to a national shortage of these specialist consultants. The hospital took the difficult decision to close the service because it could not be safely run without a specialist breast radiologist - essential in every step of a patient's care from assessment through to surgery.

Southport & Ormskirk provided a high quality breast care service for its patients. Smaller services can and do operate effectively. However larger services with links to the breast screening programme see more patients and can find it easier to keep up to date with the latest advances in this highly specialist and continually evolving area of healthcare, which has achieved significant progress in recent years.

How do breast care services work?

These are complex and specialist services. Whilst the majority of patients referred to these services will not be diagnosed with cancer, for those identified who do, their care plans will all look very different. Each element will be adjusted to match the requirements of individual patients. So, one person may need radiotherapy after surgery, whilst another may not. For some, a combination of chemotherapy and radiotherapy may be needed after surgery but the number of sessions is likely to vary and be calculated specifically for different patients.

What has this meant for patients?

Southport & Ormskirk Hospital has been able to continue the care of all patients referred to them up until 1 September 2014.

Since this time the CCGs' priority has been to work with the hospital and other local trusts to ensure continued high quality, safe and timely breast care for all new and existing patients.

Many new patients from Southport, Formby and West Lancashire have chosen to be seen at Aintree and Wigan.

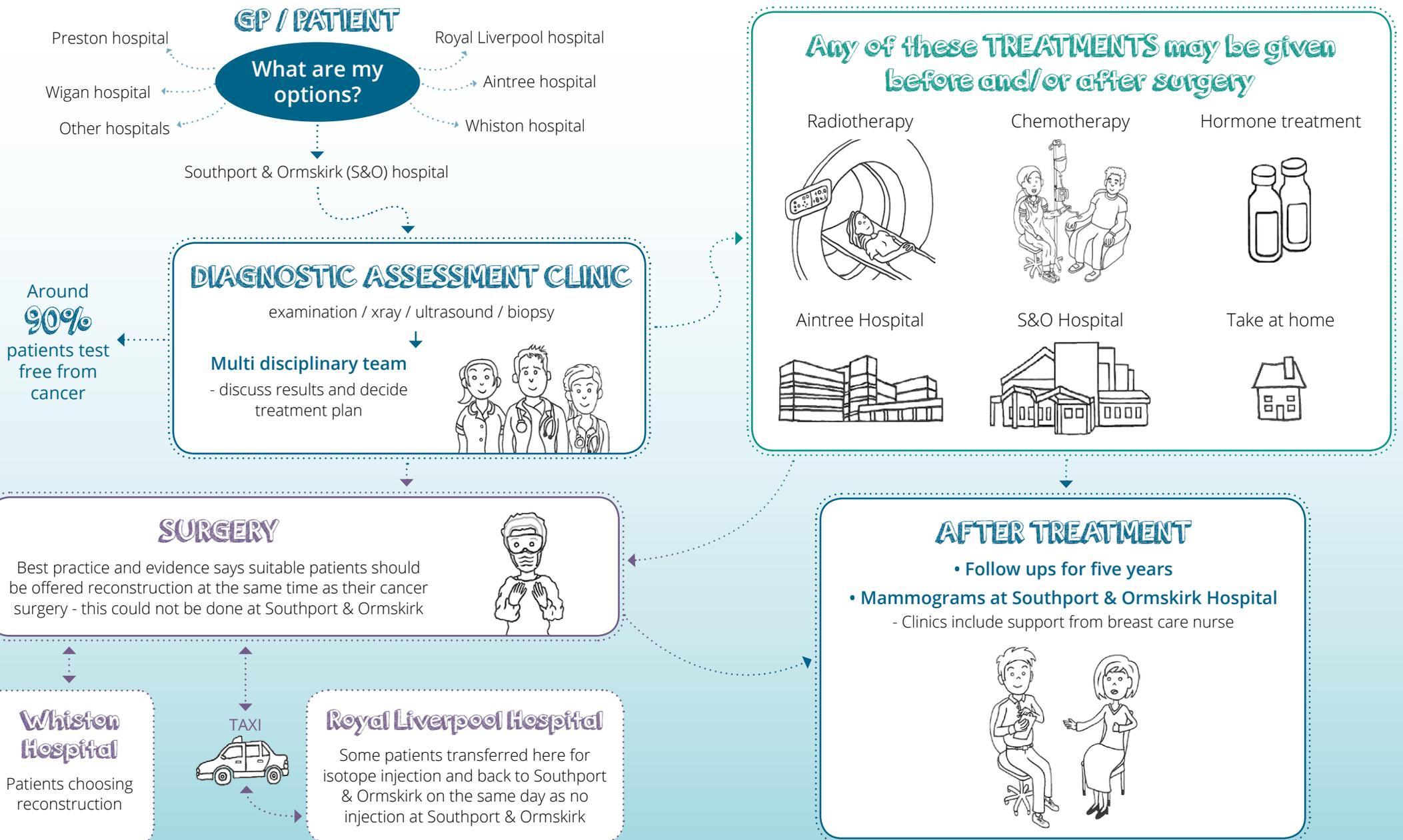
Looking ahead, the CCGs are working together to consider which aspects of breast care might be provided safely at the Southport & Ormskirk sites. There have been great advancements in the treatment of breast cancer in recent years, so the CCGs need to ensure that all future breast care services offer patients the best possible results by using the latest techniques and medical evidence in this fast moving area of healthcare.

Because Southport & Ormskirk closed its service for safety reasons, the CCGs are not required to hold a formal public consultation. They are, however, keen to involve patients and local people as they look towards the future.

The national breast screening service remains unaffected by this change - the majority of patients needing a follow up as a result of being routinely screened have always had their treatment at the Royal Liverpool or Aintree hospitals if they are from Southport and Formby, or Wigan hospital if they are from West Lancashire.

On the next page there is an overview of what this meant for patients choosing to be referred to Southport & Ormskirk by their GP before 1 September 2014. This illustrates how complex breast services are.

This is how the service at Southport & Ormskirk worked before the changes



This is what has been happening to people needing breast care since Southport & Ormskirk closed its service to new patients

GP / PATIENT

Aintree, Royal Liverpool, Whiston and Wigan hospitals, or other hospitals

DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT CLINIC

examination / xray / ultrasound / biopsy

Multi disciplinary team

- discuss results and decide treatment plan



IMPROVEMENT

A wide range of the latest surgical procedures in one place including the majority of breast reconstructions and isotope injections



IMPROVEMENT

Single specialist team which stays with patients throughout their assessment and surgery
More patients benefitting from same day examination, assessment and diagnosis



NO CHANGE

Any of these TREATMENTS may be given before and/or after surgery

Radiotherapy



Aintree Hospital



Chemotherapy



S&O Hospital



Hormone treatment



Take at home



CURRENTLY NO CHANGE FOR SOUTHPORT & ORMSKIRK PATIENTS

AFTER TREATMENT

- Follow ups for five years

- Mammograms at Southport & Ormskirk Hospital

- Clinics include support from breast care nurse



What should you expect from a breast care service?

Patients choosing breast care from hospitals like Aintree, the Royal Liverpool, Wigan, and St Helens and Knowsley can expect the following:

Same day assessment and diagnosis for more patients, eliminating an often worrying wait to hear what their test results may show.

Modern, up to date services comprised only of breast care specialists and using the latest advancements and all the skills and experience that is required to deliver a much more specific service.

Complete breast care services so patients do not have to travel to a different hospital for some parts of their treatment as they did with Southport & Ormskirk's service, unless they choose to do so. It also means that patients remain in the care of a single medical team that gets to know them well from assessment through to surgery.

Because these services deal with high numbers of patients they have dedicated diagnostic areas and wards, so patients will be with other breast care patients.

Patients experience a shorter stay in hospital after surgery, so they can get back to their normal daily patterns as quickly as possible.

On request this leaflet can be provided in different formats, such as large print, audio or Braille versions and in other languages by calling 0800 218 2333

What happens next?

We believe all breast care patients should be able to choose from services that are accessible, modern, offer them the best rates of recovery, are sensitive to their local needs and which use the latest advancements based on sound medical evidence.

Because not all aspects of the breast care service can safely return to Southport & Ormskirk, we are concentrating on gaining people's views about those elements that may be provided safely and more locally in the future.

We especially want to hear from new and existing patients about their views and experiences of breast care services – what they have valued most and which aspects of their care could be improved, which could include:

1. After treatment support – how and where could they be provided and what do they need to include, such as lifestyle and emotional support?
2. Access to breast care clinics – are they held at the right times etc?
3. General experiences of using these services – what was good and could be better in the future?

We also want to hear from other individuals and groups who are interested in achieving the best care for our patients.

How can I get involved?

We will be attending a range of meetings and events in Southport, Formby and West Lancashire during January and February, speaking to new and existing patients. People will also be able to contact us directly with their comments in the following ways:

- By visiting our websites to complete a questionnaire - www.southportandformbyccg.nhs.uk or www.westlancashireccg.nhs.uk
- By contacting our Patient Experience Team via **0800 218 2333** or cmcsu.PALS@nhs.uk

A list of the meetings we will be attending is available on our websites, or by contacting the Patient Experience Team.

We will also ask for a few details about yourself. This is important in helping us to make sure our services offer fair and equitable access for all.