

**David Allison**  
**Chief Executive**

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Kathy Doran  
Chief Executive  
NHS Cheshire, Warrington & Wirral PCT Cluster  
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20 August 2012

Dear Kathy

**Re: Vascular Decision**

As you know we have been seeking to navigate a pathway with regard to vascular services which on the one hand delivers the benefits of critical mass sought by the vascular society and specialist commissioners and on the other hand recognises that we must ensure the sustainability of our broader portfolio and maximise the provision of services to local people. Having established the South Mersey Arterial Vascular network we have made excellent progress in the last few weeks in shaping an appropriate solution.

I am pleased to report that at the meeting of the South Mersey Arterial Network Board on 16 August 2012 Wirral, Warrington and Chester NHS Foundation Trusts were able to fully endorse the so-called 'Option 3' model which I believe best protects the interests of the spoke hospitals whilst recognising the benefits of a vascular centre (hub) based at Chester. In essence 'Option 3' describes a model where all aortic and carotic surgery goes to the centre at Chester but with amputations, upper and lower limbs surgery, diabetic feet and others (eg: ulcers) remaining at the Spoke Units. Day case and all outpatients will stay at the local sites. Complex lower limb bypass surgery and all emergency or urgent admissions with an acute problem will transfer to Chester for treatment.

Clearly there is still considerable work to be done on practical implementation. One of the key points will be that of Interventional Radiology support across the network, but with the decision today we have a real opportunity to ensure a network approach on all of Interventional Radiology across the 3 hospitals of Wirral, Chester and Warrington. To assist in the implementation we have established two sub-groups of SMART, one leading on IR and the other on Finance so that issues of income, cost and risk sharing can be fully addressed.

With regard to communication we are in the process of pulling together a common SMART script which each of the three constituent Foundation Trusts can use and tailor for their specific communication needs but ensures a consistent message. Mrs Sue Green is leading this exercise on our behalf.

This is an extremely good outcome. I can confirm that from a Wirral University Teaching Hospital perspective that this has the support of the Trust Board, Executive Team, Hospital Management Board and the majority of our Vascular surgeons. On this basis the South Mersey Arterial Network has an agreed way forward with a target implementation date of April 2013.

I believe that this is a pragmatic, positive outcome for all concerned and on this basis am happy, along with the Wirral University Teaching Hospital Vascular Surgeon representation, to fully participate in whatever stakeholder engagement you feel may be appropriate.

With best regards



David Allison  
**Chief Executive**

cc: P Herring – Chief Executive – Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust  
M Pickup – Chief Executive – Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust  
M Carr – Chairman – Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust  
S Green – Director of HR / OD – Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust  
G Doherty – Chief Operating Officer – Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust  
E Moore – Acting Medical Director – Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust