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A new Vascular Network will improve patient care in Cumbria

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A new Vascular Network will improve patient care in Cumbria

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A new Vascular Network is being created for Cumbria and Lancashire following the completion of the review of vascular services in the region.

The Network will see complex vascular surgery carried out in future at one of three specialist arterial centres, Cumberland Infirmary in Carlisle, Royal Preston Hospital and Royal Blackburn Hospital. Evidence shows that the best patient outcomes are achieved by performing these procedures at fewer centres that carry out larger numbers of operations.

The new Cumbria and Lancashire Vascular Network will work closely with the NHS National Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening Programme (NAAASP) which is set to go live, with the first patients being screened in January 2013.



Dr Hugh Reeve

The Cumbria and Lancashire programme will cover the populations of Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Central Lancashire, Cumbria, East Lancashire and North Lancashire; a total of approximately 2.1 million people. Men are more likely to suffer from an abdominal aortic aneurysm and therefore each year approximately 13,500 men aged 65 will be invited for abdominal aortic aneurysm screening at community venues across the region. It is expected that men who are found to require treatment for an abdominal aortic aneurysm will be referred into the Vascular Network and if major surgery is required, this will take place in one of the Network's three Arterial Centres at The Cumberland Infirmary, Royal Preston Hospital and Royal Blackburn Hospital. Programme Director for Lancashire & Cumbria, and Consultant Vascular Surgeon, Mr Simon Hardy will be leading the screening team across the region. Mr Hardy said: "The new Screening Programme will greatly reduce the number of deaths across Cumbria and Lancashire through early detection, monitoring and treatment of abdominal aortic aneurysms. Patients will not need to travel to a hospital as they can be screened locally in the community, including in rural areas. Along with the Vascular Network this is an excellent opportunity to deliver improved, safer services with better patient outcomes across Cumbria and Lancashire. The benefits to patients of the Screening Programme and the Vascular Network include the lowest possible mortality rates, quicker and trouble-free rehabilitation and recovery, and improved independence and quality of life".

Dr Jim Gardner, Lancaster GP and Medical Director for NHS Lancashire who has been leading the commissioning of the new Vascular Network for services of the veins and arteries said: "The Vascular Network aims to deliver improved and consistent pathways for patients with vascular disease, and the majority of services, such as screening, outpatient clinics, day case surgery, diagnostic tests and rehabilitation services will be enhanced and continue to be delivered locally.

Patients will be supported in the community to manage their condition and to prevent the development of more serious disease. These patient-centred services will be delivered across the whole of Cumbria and Lancashire, including rural areas. However if patients have more serious arterial problems, the aim will be to refer them to their GP, local hospital, or to one of the three specialist Arterial Centres. The specialist centres will allow Vascular Teams to collaborate across the region to provide patients with the best possible care using the latest surgical advances and technology. Patients in Lancashire, particularly in North Lancashire can be reassured that the Vascular Network will provide a safe and effective service for their vascular needs".

Dr Hugh Reeve, South Cumbria GP and Cumbria Clinical Commissioning Group Chair continues to give his full support for the implementation of the Vascular Network and said "this is an exciting new service that focuses on keeping patients well, as well as giving them access to a wider range of services - some closer to home and others situated in centres of real expertise. I am confident that the implementation of the Vascular Network will be extremely beneficial to patients in Cumbria".



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