

**South West
Surgery in Children
Operational Delivery Network**

2021/22 Annual Report



Dr Simon Courtman - Clinical Director

Catherine Carpenter-Clawson - Network Manager

Gael Rolls - Lead Nurse

Tania Sparks - Support Manager

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Introduction from the Clinical Director

Welcome to the second Annual Report of the South West Surgery in Children Operational Delivery Network (SW SIC ODN).



The SW SIC ODN has been operational for just over 2 years and this report summarises our achievements and reflections from the period 1st April 2021 to March 2022 which, as anyone reading this report will be aware, has been another challenging time for those of us working in the NHS and wider healthcare community. We have however been able to make positive progress in the development of the SW SIC ODN and been able to begin to establish key elements of the wider network. We have developed our governance and grown our operational structures. The second year of the global pandemic continued to bring significant challenges but also enhanced the importance of bringing together colleagues from across the region to discuss both restoration of services and share opportunities to improve children's surgical services.

Despite the significant challenges faced we have been able to make progress in establishing our core infrastructure and facilitate wider network collaborations. We grew our operational structure to include three clinical working groups focused on the areas of General Surgery & Urology, Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT) and Trauma & Orthopaedics (T&O), cross speciality groups coming together to discuss restoration and pre-assessment practice and added a targeted nursing forum to facilitate the coming together of nursing colleagues from around the region. These groups have met (virtually) and begun working through regional priorities for pathway planning and development. The pandemic expedited our use of virtual meeting platforms and has enabled our network to progress in a virtual manner that may not have been considered or accepted quite so readily prior to this time.

The pandemic has created a sizeable increase in waiting lists for children's surgical procedures with the number of children waiting for both complex and relatively simple procedures increasing significantly over the last 2 years. This challenge has and will drive us to considered changes to pathways and practices and we are keen as a network to listen, learn, support and drive change across our region to support reduction in waiting lists and improvements in services.

Although it was a rather unorthodox start to establishing a network, much positive progress continues to be made and I look forward to moving beyond the pandemic and focusing our efforts on encouraging regional collaboration and driving service improvements locally, regional and nationally.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Courtman', written in a cursive style.

Dr Simon Courtman,

Clinical Director - SW SIC ODN

About Us

The South West Surgery in Children Operational Delivery Network was formally commissioned at the end of the 2019/20 financial year following recommendations made as part of the paediatric critical care and surgery in children review which reported in November 2019. The network aims to bring together clinicians, managers, commissioners, and children and their carers to work together to support improvement in children's surgical services across the South West.

The network covers a broad geographical area with 11 hospital provider organisations involved in the provision of surgical services for children across the South West region. The network is hosted by University Hospitals Bristol & Weston Trust and accountable to NHS England South West regional team.

The core network team is comprised of the Clinical Director, Network Manager, Lead Nurse and Support Manager who aim to facilitate collaboration and drive cross-regional working with colleagues across the South West:



**Simon
Courtman**
Clinical Lead



**Catherine
Carpenter-Clawson**
Network Manager



**Gael
Rolls**
Lead Nurse



**Tania
Sparks**
Support Manager

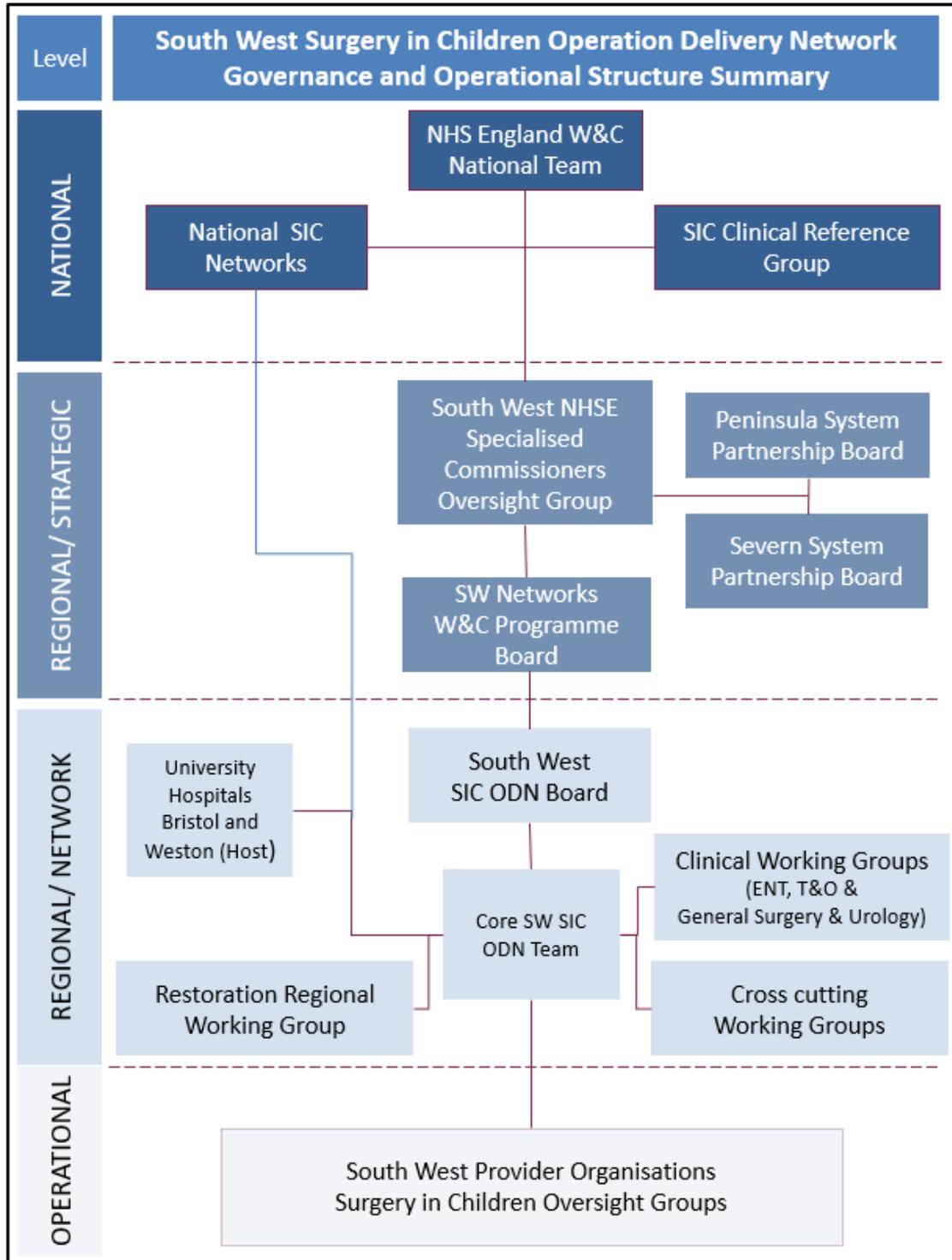
Our Objectives

The objectives for the Surgery in Children Operational Delivery Networks were outlined as part of the review of paediatric services delivered by NHS England & NHS Improvement; these were summarised as:

- Improve quality of care
 - Concentrate work appropriately
 - Improve equitable access to services
 - Ensure appropriate services are available
- Reduce variation in care
 - Network driven standards
 - Network driven clinical pathways
- Increase safe staffing
 - Consolidate skills and expertise
 - Sustainable work force
- Deliver best value for the SW and the NHS
 - Sustainable Model of service
 - Reduce unnecessary surgery in specialist centre
 - Optimise existing resources
- Reduce gaps and duplication in provision

Our Governance

The oversight of the SW SIC ODN is through the SW SIC ODN Partnership Board, with a number of agreed clinical and cross cutting working groups feeding into the priorities and planning. The operational and governance structure is illustrated through the diagram below:



Our Network in Numbers

South West Surgery in Children – Our Network in Numbers

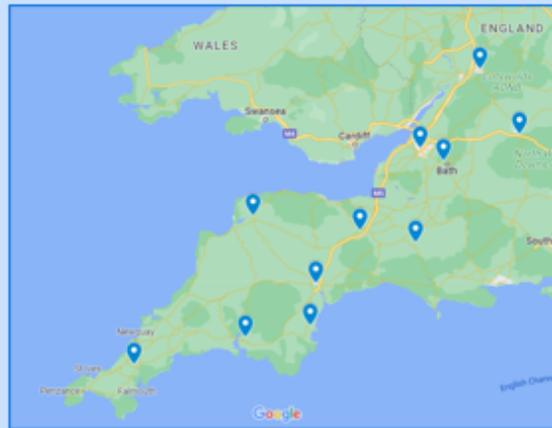
~ **1.1 Million Children**
in the South West



~**30,000 Surgical Procedures**
undertaken each year



12 Hospital Trusts
providing children’s surgical services



Our Network Engagement in 2021/22

>200 Contacts
involved in network
activities



1 Website
developed by ODN
team



2 Newsletters
circulated to network
contacts



Our Clinical Focus and Governance

5 Clinical Working Groups
established and
collaborating



3 Network Board Meetings
with cross-regional
representation



20 Engagement Opportunities
facilitated by the core
team



What We Have Achieved

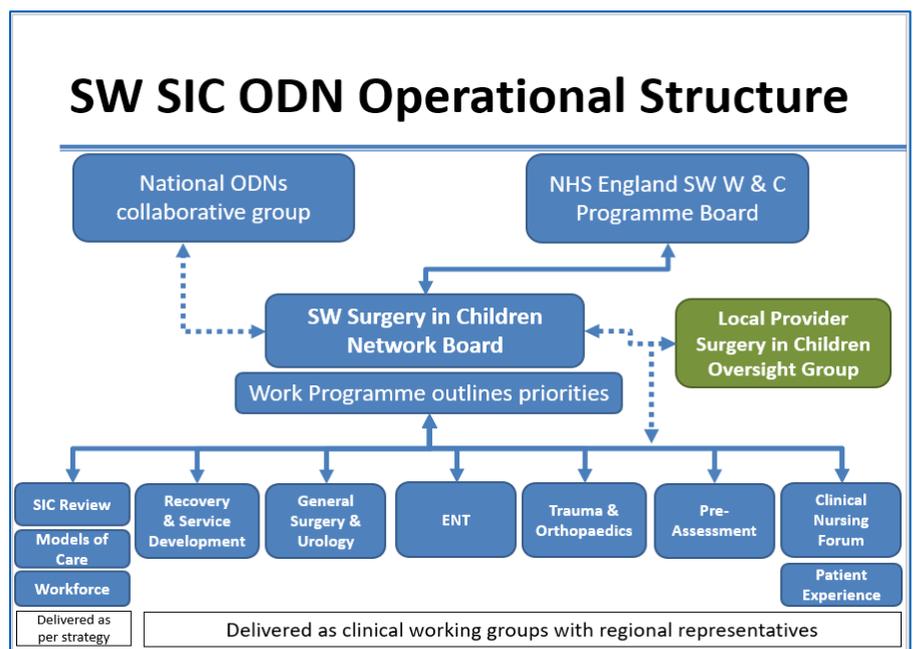
Leading the national development of ODNs

The SW SIC ODN is one of 10 networks that are currently in the process of being established across England. The leadership team of the SW SIC ODN recognise the importance of taking a national approach to both tackling certain challenges and in sharing opportunities. The core SW SIC ODN team have worked with colleagues across England to drive national collaboration and facilitate the development of the national network of ODNs over the past 12 months. This has led to national sharing of resources and the core SW SIC ODN team led the development of a collaboration platform via NHS Futures where colleagues across the country have been able to share expertise and resources. The core team have also played a key role in escalation of local challenges to national colleagues and participated in national initiatives to review guidelines and drive the development of appropriate governance to facilitate ongoing national ODN working.



Expanding our operational structure to ensure support for nursing and pre-operative assessment pathways

Following identification of the workstream priorities, an operational structure was agreed for the network at the start of 2021 consisting of three speciality specific clinical working groups and a group that was initially defined as a ‘task and finish’ group focussed on restoration and recovery. During the last 12 months the structure was reviewed, and it was agreed that the restoration and recovery group would continue and would also consider appropriate service developments. Additionally, the appointment of the core team’s lead nurse, Gael Rolls, led to the establishment of a clinical nursing forum; a priority quickly identified through the nursing forum was the need to support the development of pre-assessment pathways and so a cross speciality clinical working group was stood up focused on pre-assessment.



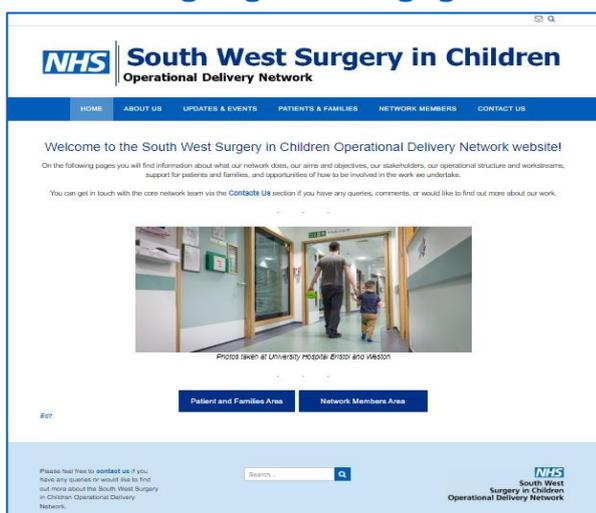
Delivering a strategy to drive regional service development and improvement

A key part of the remit of the SIC ODN is to deliver the recommendations of the [national paediatric review](#) (published in November 2019). The SW SIC ODN core team plays a role with regards to assurance and ensuring that local providers' services are delivering, as appropriate, to recommendations in national guidelines and nationally recognised reports (such as the [Getting It Right First Time reports](#)). The core team identified an opportunity to align these requirements, and facilitate sharing of regional good practice, and developed a strategy for supporting local self-assessment as part of a service review process.

A strategy document entitled "NHS England Review of Surgery in Children: Implementation Strategy" was produced outlining the proposed approach and aligning the SIC ODN work to that of other regional ODNs. The core team undertook an exercise to attempt to summarise and collate (and simplify where appropriate) a set of standards for childrens surgical services, drawing from nursing, surgical, and anaesthetists' national standards to develop a single approach to reviewing childrens surgical services within an organisation.

An engagement event, which was open to all stakeholders across the region, was held in October 2021 to support the development of the process. The self-assessment template was finalised and sent to all providers in November 2021, and all providers completed and returned the templates to the core team. To maximise the benefits of the process, it was decided that the core team would review the templates as part of face-to-face meetings at each provider organisations to provide an opportunity to discuss areas of good practice, potential challenges, and also opportunities for network support. The review meetings commenced in February 2022 and will complete in June 2022; each provider will have a report with agreed actions for themselves and for the network. A network wide recommendations report will be produced following completion of the reviews, and a comprehensive evaluation of the process is being undertaken - it is hoped learning can be shared locally and nationally where appropriate.

Promoting regional engagement and collaboration



In October 2021, the SW SIC ODN team launched our website to enhance communication and engagement with our network contact members as well as the general public:

<http://southwestsicodn.nhs.uk/>

The website was designed and developed by the core team and is used to share the latest news and updates from the ODN and clinical working groups, provide information about our background and work stream priorities, upload key documents, and signpost to resources. It also provides us with a platform to upload recordings of meetings or education sessions for colleagues from across the

region to view, such as our [Surgical Feeding Tubes Education Session](#) that we held in January 2022 as part of the General Surgery & Urology Working Group. Our website will continue to grow and expand as we develop as a network.

In Autumn 2021 SW SIC ODN shared their first newsletter with all regional network contacts. These are now published and circulated quarterly to help us share information, events, news, and surveys more efficiently across the region, and raise awareness of the ODN's work:

Updates from your Surgery in Children Network
 Focus on restoration and recovery

Simon says...
 I'm delighted to share this first update newsletter from the South West Surgery in Children Operational Delivery Network. We hope to use this newsletter to share updates with our colleagues across the region and encourage you to send us anything you think might be useful for future newsletters. This newsletter will update our regional teams on:

- Upcoming meetings and engagement events within the region
- Highlight any changes to national guidelines or policies
- Share new tools, information leaflets or other innovations that might be of interest!

I am really looking forward to continuing to work with everyone involved in the care of children undergoing surgery in the South West, and the improvements we can make working together. Please get in touch with any of the team with any ideas or suggestions for future newsletters.

Simon Courteson
 Clinical Director for the SW SIC ODN

Rejuvenating the Restoration Meeting
 Since April 2020 colleagues from across the South West Surgery in Children Operational Delivery Network have been meeting to discuss and share challenges and solutions related to the global pandemic. The 'Restoration and Recovery' meetings ran on a monthly basis for 12 months with over 100 network members on the distribution list. It was agreed at the last meeting in June 2021 that this sharing of updates, information, good practice and challenges was extremely beneficial and should continue in a more regular manner. Moving forwards, the group's focus will be sharing cross-cutting developments, maintaining some discussion on restoration.

The group will next meet on September 30th and will discuss future topics for collaboration, such as pre-operative assessment, patient experience and future models of care.

Contact us if you are interested in being part of the group and these discussions.

Save the Date!
Network Standards Engagement Event
 'Implementing the NHS review'
Wednesday 20th October at 14:00 - 15:30
 on Microsoft Teams

All regional colleagues welcome - please contact the network team if you wish to attend.

tdh@sw.sicsodn.org

More news on page 2.

Updates from your Surgery in Children Network
 Focus on delivering national standards

A message from Simon...
 In November, we contacted all of our local representatives to share our standards and strategy for our Surgery in Children self-assessment review. The core teams have been working hard to pull together standards from existing published national documents and develop a process to support local delivery of the standards and identify areas for improvement.

Patients permitting, we look forward to coming out to visit local teams at the start of 2022, and hearing about the fantastic working going on within our network.

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I know the next few months are going to be challenging so please let us know if we can help in any way, and I hope you have time to celebrate Christmas with your families and friends at the end of a tough year. Happy Christmas.

Simon Courteson - Clinical Director for the SW SIC ODN

This Year's Highlights
 This year our core team became delighted with the appointment of our Lead Nurse and Network Support Manager. Here are a few of our 2021 highlights as a network team:

- Continued networking across the region to support the response to challenges raised by the national pandemic, with over 150 individuals signed up as part of the Restoration and Recovery group.
- Proactive engagement with our three clinical working groups with regional representatives coming together to review pathways and patient experience.
- Developing a clinical nursing forum with new and old members across the South West network.
- Meeting patient experience and public involvement colleagues to scope how to include children and families in our work, and to understand their experience of care on a surgical pathway across the region - we aim to have a survey for children and parents to complete by the middle of next year.
- Supporting the development of Surgery in Children ODNs across the country and meeting colleagues from other regions to discuss areas of shared interest such as surgical line services for children, looking to standardise network usage and access for surgical lines across the South West.

National Updates RCP
 The RCPCH has published 'Standards for the restoration of all but the most urgent services' across the country. This is a key document for the restoration of services that have been interrupted since the beginning of the pandemic. It is a key document for the restoration of services that have been interrupted since the beginning of the pandemic. It is a key document for the restoration of services that have been interrupted since the beginning of the pandemic.

Website Launched
 Our South West Surgery in Children ODN website is now live! southwestsicsodn.nhs.uk

Our website will continue to develop as we progress as a network. We welcome your feedback - please contact us if you have any comments or suggestions for future updates.

Updates from your Surgery in Children Network
 Paving the way for Paediatric Pre-Assessment

A message from Simon...
 With a busy start to the new year, our Surgery in Children ODN team hope that you have kept well. Over the last few weeks our team have been busy preparing to meet with local teams and conducting service reviews. We would like to thank you all for your hospitality. It has been great to finally get back out and see the fantastic work that is being carried out across the South West in these challenging times.

A major theme from our service reviews so far has been the opportunity to provide a showcase great practice - there is a lot to share, thank you. We are also considering how we will incorporate emerging themes from these reviews into our review and sharing this with you. We welcome feedback at all stages of the process and hope that as the spring months progress we will have had the opportunity to meet with the representatives for all trusts in our region.

Simon Courteson
 Clinical Director, SW SIC ODN

Pre-Assessment
 This edition of our newsletter brings a light on paediatric pre-assessment services across our region, we are working in conjunction with colleagues in the Thames Valley & Wessex Surgery in Children Network to improve the service offered to all of our families prior to coming into hospital for a planned procedure.

New guidance supported by the Centre for Peri-Operative Care and the Royal College of Anaesthetists will be published imminently. This is the first time that standards for paediatric pre-assessment have been published - these will underpin the best practice guidance which the networks will produce in consultation with the pre-assessment working group, and shared across all trusts.

In our ongoing survey which was sent to all trusts prior to starting our monthly working group meetings, a major gap was identified in the lack of a paediatric pre-assessment nursing course. To address this gap, we are currently working in multi disciplinary groups across the region to produce course content and competencies, and are hoping to run the first course later this year.

We are also gathering data and family experience of pre-assessment across the region. Please continue to encourage all families to complete our survey after any planned procedure. Thank you to everyone who is participating with this survey, and particularly to colleagues in Tawton where we have received 42 responses from so far!

Please contact us if you would like to learn any more or are interested in joining our Pre-Assessment Working Group.

National Updates
 Paediatric Delivery have developed surgical production guidelines and an accompanying welfare check books which can be accessed via our website.

Staff Passports
 Staff passports were implemented to support staff mobilisation during the pandemic. The passport service has been extended for 12 months and the network team are keen to utilise this to support medical staff and cross regional collaboration when required. More information can be found below.

Updated COVID19 Guidance
 The RCPCH, BAPS, RCS and the APAGB have released a joint statement regarding the timing of the provision of surgery in children following an episode of COVID-19 which can be found [here](#).

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Driving pathway development through best practice recommendations

Each of the SW SIC ODN specialty-focussed clinical working groups identified priorities for service development; each group identified a particular pathway where it was felt improvements should be considered.

It was noted within the ENT Clinical Working Group that day case rates for tonsillectomy procedures varied from 35% to >90% across the region (Model Hospital data utilising Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) for Q3 2021/22); and within the General Surgery and Urology Clinical Working Group it was noted that negative appendix rates ranged from <5% to 20% (HES data 2020/21). Clinical members of these groups then began to share their practice, policies, evidence and papers supporting management approaches for day case tonsillectomies and suspected appendicitis patients. From these discussions regional best practice guidance were drafted, reviewed, and agreed through the clinical working groups, and the core network team then conducted a 'pathway audit' to ascertain if all providers currently met the recommendations. This work led to identification of further targeted improvements which are being developed and delivered both in individual organisations or through regional support.

Best Practice Recommendations
ADENOTONSILLECTOMY DAY CASE PATHWAY

SETTING FOR STAFF South West Surgery in Children Operational Delivery Network (SW SIC ODN) Staff involved in the pathways for children (under 16 years) undergoing adenotonsillectomy procedure.

PATIENTS Children who are being considered for adenotonsillectomy procedures in organisations across the SW SIC ODN region

Guidance

Summary
 It is recommended nationally that 80% of tonsillectomies in children are performed as day case procedures (1, 2). The following recommendations are designed to support centres across the South West in optimising their day case pathways to achieve this. This document is intended to provide a reference for what is considered best practice across the South West region and should be viewed alongside any locally agreed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) which should be followed at all times by local clinical teams.

Patient Selection

1. All departments must have an approved day case pathway for children undergoing tonsillectomy which meets existing published standards (2, 3)
2. All children <16kg and greater than 2 years old (including 2 year olds) and without significant comorbidity should expect to have their procedure as a day case, including those with Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (4).
3. Children, who live greater than 1 hour from the hospital delivering the procedure, may require to be admitted post-operatively, but geographical restrictions should not necessarily prevent children from being treated as a daycase (5).
4. Certain types of pre-operative sleep studies may be poorly sensitive for OSA and should only be considered in children with significant comorbidities or where there is doubt about the diagnosis of OSA (3)

Day of Surgery

5. Children undergoing tonsillectomy should be preferentially booked onto morning ENT theatre session; children could be booked on an afternoon session, ideally at or near the start of the list to facilitate day case. A post-operative stay of 4 hours is recommended for children post procedure (starting from when the child leaves theatre) (6).
6. Whilst surgical technique should not impact on day case rates, evidence suggests that coblation results in less pain in the immediate post-operative period and reduce readmissions in children undergoing tonsillectomy or tonsillectomy (3, 7, 8). (The SW SIC ODN would support surgeons wishing to develop coblation as a technique at their centre, whilst auditing their own complication rates to ensure an improved service.)

The Trauma & Orthopaedic Clinical Working Group felt that the management of Slipped Capital Femoral Epiphysis across the region was variable, and so a survey was conducted of practice. A best practice guideline was then developed with support from the wider clinical network. These best practice recommendations are due to be completed in Q2 2022 and will be published on the website as soon as appropriate approvals have been obtained.

These three pathway developments are part of the wider priorities of the clinical working groups and are all closely aligned to national recommendations in the published GIRFT reports for each speciality.

Establishing a nursing forum

In 2021 the network held its first South West surgical nurses clinical forum, this is a meeting where nurses across the region can share best practice and innovation as well as provide peer support and leadership to each other.

At these meetings the group have discussed the challenges faced locally and have shared resources and expert knowledge to facilitate improvements in those areas. Local resources such as paediatric orthopaedic and traction guidance have been shared as well as facilitating awareness of study days to (such as a clinical quality improvement event delivered in Bristol which supported knowledge of chest drain management for nurses who attended across the wider region). The group has discussed patient engagement and the challenges in understanding the surgical paediatric patient's journey in healthcare, as well as opportunities to overcome this with the agreement and acknowledgement that further work in this area is required over the upcoming year.

Prioritising paediatric pre-assessment

Paediatric pre-assessment was raised by several areas across the region as being an area where ODN involvement would be appreciated to help develop services. The network core team asked nursing and anaesthetic members of paediatric pre-assessment teams in each trust to join a working group. This working group initially conducted a survey to review experiences of existing pre-assessment services for children across the South West. This survey identified that 85% of organisations across the region provided a service however there was wide variation in the setup and delivery of children's pre-assessment. It was noted through the survey that only 13% of respondents indicated that there was a dedicated anaesthetist available for pre-assessment and 91% of nurses carrying out this role had no training in paediatric pre-assessment. Parents were also surveyed about their experience of pre-assessment across the region with 143 responses collected. A huge gap was identified in health promotion information sharing; with 60% of children and families telling us that no or insufficient information around health promotion was given at pre-assessment.

Working collaboratively with Thames Valley and Wessex ODN to achieve a service that meets the first published guidance for children being pre-assessed: [Best Practice Guidance: Preassessment Services for Children undergoing Surgery or Procedures](#), we identified the priority areas for improvement and during Q1 & Q2 will focus on the development of a paediatric pre-assessment nursing course with plans to deliver the pilot course with accompanying clinical skill and knowledge competencies for achievement in October 2022.

Financial Summary

Funding for the SW SIC ODN was allocated as part of the block contract for services in 2020/21 with total expenditure for the network being **£134,357**; this was comprised of £131,587 in staff pay and £2,660 in non-pay costs primarily associated with equipment purchasing.

Risks & Challenges

Restoring services and re-establishing priorities

The global pandemic has left healthcare services across the country facing significant challenges with increased waiting lists and waiting times. The SW SIC ODN will need to continue to balance priorities moving forwards, as a significant focus will remain on ensuring a safe and equitable restoration of surgical services. The ODN will have a key role in addressing any variation or inequity that is likely to arise as services return to more standard operational practice. There are notable areas where waiting lists are likely to present ongoing challenges for potentially years, and the ODN will need to ensure that support is provided to ensure the delivery of sustainable and equitable restoration of services; however, this work will need to be managed carefully to ensure that other priorities are appropriately considered.

Balancing the depth and breadth of opportunities within the resources of the ODN

The role, remit, and responsibility of the SW SIC ODN has once again expanded and over the past 12 months the team have been involved in discussions and activities related to many surgical specialities. Alongside the core surgical specialities, the team have played an active role in supporting plans to tackle the challenges with both the cleft and dental waiting lists; and although not being directly led by the ODN, both are significant areas of work identified as important areas of focus. The core team are keen to support delivery of all paediatric surgery related national standards and reviews (such as the [Getting It Right First Time Reports](#) (GIRFT); notably currently 5 GIRFT reports directly reference the role of the SIC ODNs in delivering their recommendations).

As the core team finalises the recommendations from the service review process, there are some important service developments that have been highlighted and should be undertaken both at a local and regional level; some of which are wider than the direct responsibility of the SIC ODN. The ODN will need to take a pathway and service-wide approach to ensure discussion is clear regarding roles, responsibilities, escalation and prioritisation of workstreams identified through this process.

The SIC ODN core team will need to review priorities to balance the expansion of their remit alongside the limitations of the resource; in order to adequately manage expectations. Consideration should be made around whether there are opportunities to expand the resources allocated to the ODN to support delivery and implementation of recommendations outlined across the region in a timely manner.

Our Future Vision

We have another exciting year ahead; recently published national reports and standards alongside our own service review programme have identified many opportunities to develop and improve services in collaboration with our colleagues across the South West and beyond.

Recovery and restoration

A core focus for the team will be ensuring sustainable and safe recovery of children's surgical services following the pandemic - the ODN team have been able to access reliable data on most aspects of paediatric surgical waiting lists (excluding dental & imaging waiting lists). Moving forward, we will need to ensure a complete picture of childrens surgical waiting lists is visible across the region, and we will continue to ensure waiting list data is routinely reviewed and acted on at a local level and regional level, escalating and actioning where necessary. We will need to continue our support to local teams in restoring and recovering their activity where appropriate, and look at opportunities for developments or changes to pathways that may positively impact regional waiting lists (such as opportunities to move towards non-GA procedures such as promoting appropriate use of awake MRI procedures). We cannot underestimate the impact the pandemic has had, not only on waiting lists and demand for services but also the wider challenges it continues to present in terms of our resources - we will look for opportunities to support local teams through these difficult times.

The pandemic forced new ways of working on us with remote teams and virtual meetings becoming a daily occurrence and an accepted part of the NHS model of operation. We will build on these new technologies and new ways of working to build our collaborations and communications strategies to maximise the benefits that virtual teams offer.

Data to drive decisions and planning

During the last 12 months the SW SIC ODN has looked to providers of national data sets, such as Model Hospital, to drive our priorities and underpin our work programme. These data sets are continuing to evolve and improve, and the network team will continue to work with providers of data to drive improvements to ensure that accurate, transparent, and timely data is available to provide benchmarking against national and regional Key Performance Indicators. We will also look to make improvements in our use of patient and carer experience data to identify opportunities and challenges.

Clinical collaborations and managing new models of care

Central to the vision of the SW SIC ODN is clinical collaboration to develop and drive new models of care that will improve clinical services for children, carers and staff across our region. We will look to implement recommendations from our service reviews at both an individual provider and regional level. We plan to support implementation of paediatric pre-operative assessment pathways and will continue to evolve our operational structure to drive forward improvements. The ODN will ensure that priorities focus on the region as a whole, and that a system-wide approach to service improvement is undertaken that is underpinned by robust governance process and positive local stakeholder engagement strategies.

If you wish to see a detailed copy of our work programme, provide your feedback on this report or simply contact the core team then please do email us: ubh-tr.swsicodn@nhs.net

Many Thanks,

The South West Surgery in Children ODN Team