



# Cleft Surgical Services Proposal for NHS Scotland

---

*We proposed to merge cleft surgical services in Scotland into a single site in Glasgow.*

---

## Background

Scotland had two surgical centres for performing primary cleft surgery. There was one in Glasgow's Royal Hospital for Children (RHC) and another in Edinburgh's Royal Hospital for Sick Children (RHSC).

The service was vulnerable to busy periods, and wasn't sustainable or resilient. There was risk of it breaking down in the future.

## Options Appraisal Exercise

Before making changes to the service, there was an options appraisal exercise in October 2015.

The exercise concluded that having a single surgical service located on one site was the optimal solution.

It further concluded that the best option was using the surgical service in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. This was based on the paediatric surgical service at the RHC, and the adult service at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital (QEUEH).

## Proposed Change

Patients who required specialist cleft surgery would have their procedures at the RHC and QEUEH. But the majority of care would be provided locally at outpatient services across NHS Scotland.

This outpatient care could be accessed through visits to:

- Paediatric dentists

- Orthodontists
- Psychosocial support
- Speech therapy.

There would therefore be no central base for outpatient services.

## Benefits of the Proposal

- The surgeons would support each other, share learning and develop as a team. This would help them to build on existing skills and improve outcomes for patients
- Enhanced communication between the surgical team by being located within the same base
- Deliver efficient care to ensure all patients received surgery when clinically required
- The adult and paediatric service being located on the QEUH campus.

## What This Meant for Patients

The proposed changes would mean some patients had to travel further for their surgery:

- Patients living in Highland, Grampian and Tayside already had a need to travel for cleft surgery. They would have a relatively small difference in the travel times
- Patients from the Borders, Fife, East Lothian and around Edinburgh would have marginally longer travelling times
- Similarly, patients from West Lothian would have a marginal change in journey times.

Patients and parents that were able to claim travel expenses would still be able to do so.

Additionally, NHSGGC had new parent and patient accommodation on the hospital site. The hospital could accommodate 1 parent staying in hospital for as long as the child stays.

## Public Consultation

We consulted with patients, families, carers and the public from February to May 2016. Your comments helped inform the National Specialist Services Committee's decision on the proposal.

We asked you to share your feedback via email, post or attending our public events.

We also consulted with NHS staff and other staff involved in cleft care across Scotland.

## Public Consultation Events

We hosted three open meetings for the public to find out more and give comments on the proposal.

The meetings were on:

- 10th March 2016 in Perth

- 16th March 2016 in Edinburgh
- 17th March 2016 in Glasgow.

## Updates

### 9th June 2016

The Nationalist Specialist Services Committee (NSSC) officially endorsed the proposal. They produced a [document](#) outlining their recommendations and the reasoning behind them.

### 17th June 2016

NHS National Services Scotland produced a [full report](#) on the public consultation for the proposal. It concludes that they recommended a move to a single site in Glasgow.

They also produced a [question and answers sheet](#). This responds to issues that were raised during the public consultation.

### 21st June 2016

NHS Board Chiefs approve the NSSC's recommendation to centralise the cleft surgical services in Glasgow.

### 20th December 2016

The Scottish Government decide to centralise the majority of cleft surgical services to one site in Glasgow. Other cleft services in Scotland wouldn't be affected.

## Additional Resources

- [Summary report about the proposal and public consultation](#)
- [Scottish Government's recommendation](#)