C&M Imaging Network Newsletter

Edition 1 | March 2020

In this edition:

Welcome to edition 1 of the Cheshire and Merseyside Imaging Network newsletter. This edition introduces and provides an overview of the programme, the governance and the six workstreams within it, which include:

- Cancer optimal pathway
- Digital delivery
- Data analytics
- Workforce
- Procurement
- Clinical transformation

Next edition:

In our next edition, we will introduce members of the imaging network team and provide updates on progress made in each of the six workstreams.

Cheshire and Merseyside Imaging Network Programme background

The Cheshire & Merseyside Imaging Network (C&MIN) has been set up as a programme of change since 2016, working to ensure imaging services across the region are sustainable into the future. In this time, due to changes in the national strategy, it has been known as; Cheshire and Merseyside Radiology STP, Cheshire and Merseyside Radiology Forward View and now, since January 2019 with the publication of the NHS Long Term Plan, it is known as Cheshire and Merseyside Imaging Network.

The following 13 Hospital Trusts across Cheshire and Merseyside are members of the imaging network:

- Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust
- Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- East Cheshire NHS Trust
- Liverpool Heart & Chest NHS Foundation Trust
- Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust
- Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- St Helens and Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust
- Southport & Ormskirk NHS Trust
- The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre NHS Foundation Trust
- The Walton Centre NHS Foundation Trust
- Warrington & Halton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Governance of the Programme

The 13 Trusts within the C&MIN have established a transitional management team (TMT) which meets monthly to oversee the progress of the transformation programme. The overall strategic direction for the network is provided by the Cheshire and Merseyside Diagnostic executive oversight group (EoG) whose membership includes executive directors from each of the 13 Trusts.

A C&MIN memorandum of understanding (MOU) was developed and signed by all 13 Trusts. They have, via their executive teams and Trust boards, accepted that maintaining the status quo is not an option and that it is essential that we establish an imaging network across Cheshire & Merseyside. However, no decision has yet been taken on the form or function of the network beyond the desire and commitment to establish a robust approach to develop a compelling future state vision, roadmap for change and associated business case(s). This requires colleagues across the participating Trusts to engage in good faith to help shape our C&MIN future for the benefit of patients, fellow colleagues, Trusts and taxpayers.

Programme Management Office

C&MIN are in an enviable position to have received transformation funding from Cheshire and Merseyside Cancer Alliance (CMCA) and Cheshire and Merseyside Health and Care Partnership (HCP). This has meant from January 2019, a programme management office (PMO) has been recruited to and a dedicated transformation team is now in place. However the PMO acknowledges that changes will not take place without the support of the subject matter experts (SME) from each Trust, including radiology managers and radiologists. While we recognise that it can be difficult for key stakeholders to find the time from their busy day jobs to support the programme, we are lucky that engagement has been strong within all departments with a number of managers and clinical leads involved.

Programme Update:

With the publication of 'Transforming imaging services in England: a national strategy for imaging networks' in November 2019, C&MIN are now in a position to start deciding what the form or function of the network will look like. The TMT will work together with key stakeholders to develop a compelling future state vision and roadmap for change. From 2020 there will be opportunities for interested parties to be involved in the development of the C&MIN strategy.

Workstream Updates:

Cancer Optimal Pathway

The imaging network has been working with Cheshire and Merseyside Cancer Alliance to ensure that radiology services meet the challenges set by the introduction of local and national optimal diagnosis and assessment pathways for the four priority areas – lung, colorectal, prostate and upper GI.

Representative from Trusts involved in each of these pathways have joined an Imaging delivery group, each led by one or two consultant radiologists who specialise in the particular area acting as clinical leads. The groups have reviewed current practice at all the Trusts and data is being gathered to demonstrate whether imaging investigations are being performed within the timescales set in the pathways. This in itself has not been straightforward, because although a lot of the Trusts in the area use the same radiology information system, it does not support collection of data for this purpose, as

there is currently no way to flag patients on particular pathways to allow them to be identified when collecting data. In addition, Trusts have set their systems up in different ways, using different codes to identify examinations and different alert codes. Where possible, Trusts have been asked to use a specific code to identify the examinations performed on the pathways to allow easier identification when scheduling and reporting examinations and to facilitate activity and turnaround data collection.

Making sure that radiology services meet the challenges set by the introduction of local and national optimal diagnosis pathways, to improve turnaround times for the benefit of both patients and staff.

Trusts using other radiology information systems have been asked to provide equivalent data. Where Trusts are not meeting the timescales, support is being provided in the form of process review and sharing practices introduced at those Trusts with

shorter pathways.

As well as improving turnaround times, agreement has been reached on the protocols used to produce the images to ensure high quality imaging, which in turn will support diagnostic accuracy. This includes patient information, pre-scan preparation and the actual scanning parameters used for CT and MR scans. There has been good engagement by Trust representatives so far, with a high level of enthusiasm to bring about improvements. Participants in these groups have found meeting with colleagues with the same specialist interests and having the opportunity to discuss issues as well as best practice extremely beneficial.

Digital Delivery

This is an exciting time for the Trusts in Cheshire and Merseyside as the imaging network support the implementation of a shared workflow across all the Trusts Radiology departments. We are aiming to be able to share any radiology image within any Trusts in Cheshire and Merseyside so that it can be reported on by the right radiologist reporter across the STP and the outcome can be feed back to the originating Trust for clinicians to see in a timely manner. The aim is to be able to move the images around to different Trusts so that we can manage capacity and demand across the Trusts where possible. We are moving forward with embracing PACS reporting across all of the Trusts where possible to achieve the sharing of images, so that we can standardise processes and protocols. This will help reduce the waiting time for patients when they have a CT, MRI scan or X-ray and help our colleagues have access to the information they need to provide assistance in assessing the next steps for the patient. We are taking this opportunity to try and standardise system codes for the IT systems in order to provide better streamlined reporting and allow us to measure 'apples' with 'apples'.

We are also looking at pilots for AI solutions which is a very exciting time for new technology to be used within the NHS as a support tool for clinicians. The pilots are at the early stages but we are very keen to see how AI can be used within radiology to assist our clinicians. We have five different AI systems being piloted across the STP and these are: Brainomix – stroke CTA and CT perfusion, Behold – abnormalities in the lung, HeartFlow – coronary artery disease, Aidence – early stages of lung cancer and ChestEye – 75 most common findings for the chest. We have linked in with our colleagues from Healthier Lancashire and South Cumbria on some of our AI pilots as they are implementing them across Lancashire also. We hope to be able to have a joined up approach on how we monitor the benefits of the AI solutions so we can share our findings and learn from each other.

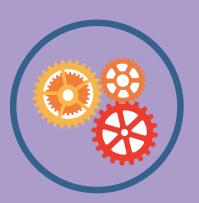The other initiative the imaging network is progressing supports all of our other Ologies departments, we want to be able to prove a central repository for all of our ologies images so they can be safely archived and are easily accessible for our staff as and when the images are required. The pilot is at very early stages and includes, Dermatology at St Helens and Knowsley, Emergency Department at Liverpool FT, Burns and Plastics at St Helens and Knowsley and Neuro Science at the Walton Centre. We will also be looking to bring the Medical Photography departments in to a central repository after the first stage of the pilot so we can have the richness of information on all our images in one central place. The key benefits are to be able to share images across all of our services within the Trusts to help provide as much up to date information to staff about our patients.

> *Ensuring staff have the ability to access the diagnostic information they need in near real time, wherever it is held, digitally on a 24x7 basis via a shared Picture Archiving and Communication System (PACS).*

Data Analytics

Data Analytics is key to ensuring that imaging services are sustainable into the future. The ever increasing role of modern imaging in clinical care has led to a relentless increase in demand, particularly for complex imaging techniques such as CT and MRI scans which has outstripped the ability of the current NHS services to cope. It will be key for C&MIN to engage with Commissioners and GPs as they traditionally act as the gate keepers to NHS services. The capacity and demand work that was commissioned Q4 2018/19 is still in progress due to delays with data extractions. There is commitment for the CT, MRI and consultant reporting data to be available Q4 2019/20.

Over the next six months, this workstream will be focusing on capacity and demand data available, development of a demand optimisation plan.

Workforce

There is plenty of documented evidence to prove that there are not enough radiologists and radiographers to handle the current and increasing demand for imaging.

The main aim of the network workforce programme is to provide a collaborative approach to work force planning, which includes agreeing with the component trusts strategies for:
- Recruitment and retention of staff
- Establishing an HR passport allowing staff to work across Trusts protected by safe and appropriate governance arrangements
- Training and development support – for radiology trainees, advanced practitioner radiographers and sonographers
- Development of assistant practitioner roles
- Standardisation of job descriptions, roles, T&Cs, payments.

Procurement

The key objective for the C&MIN procurement programme is to obtain the best pricing through economies of scale, reduce price variation and improve service delivery. We are engaging with all 13 Trusts through the imaging and procurement departments. The initial priorities are:
- Developed a fixed rate for outsources reporting payments across the region
- Collaborative procurement for capital equipment.
- Collaborative procurement for non-pay consumables.

Clinical Transformation

The clinical transformation programme is focusing on areas within radiology that are currently experiencing issues that can't be easily resolved in order to make them clinically & financially sustainable going forward, the current areas of focus are:
- Interventional Radiology review
- Development of a collaborative hub for reporting
- Paediatric Radiology review
- Breast services review.

What would you like to see in future editions?

We want you to get the most out of this C&M Imaging Network newsletter, so please get in touch with the Cheshire and Merseyside Health and Care Partnership Communications and Engagement team and let us know what you'd like to see included in future editions, or if you have any questions about the Imaging Network and the six workstreams within it, by emailing us at: **cm.partnership@nhs.net**

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