



**York and Scarborough  
Teaching Hospitals**  
NHS Foundation Trust



Astra Zeneca and York and Scarborough Hospitals NHS F.T. have entered into a Joint working agreement for the “Implementation of a Primary Care led heart failure service in the Vale of York”. This project is commissioned for twelve months commencing 1st April 2022.

This project is based around the provision of a dedicated Heart Failure Specialist nurse delivering clinics and training in the Vale of York area.

This project will establish a clinical model incorporating primary care, community services and specialist services to not only improve the quality of life and outcomes for heart failure patients but also improve access to the services. It is anticipated the Project will deliver an additional 1,500 patient appointment over the duration of the project.

As heart failure management can be complex and time-intensive most patients are currently managed by specialist services. Historically this means clinics are either at a hospital base or a community site. Mobility is a challenge for heart failure patients so bringing the services closer to home will allow more patients to access necessary treatment.

In commissioning this Joint Working Agreement both parties will demonstrate a willingness to innovate that can demonstrate to all heart failure services nationally how we can successfully improve access to care and clinical management of this vulnerable patient group. Thus, ultimately improving health outcomes and quality of life.

## **Outcomes**

The project clearly demonstrated improved access to appropriate heart failure management in providing a dedicated clinic setting offering an increased number of patient contacts and medication changes.

The data from this project work demonstrates the importance of seamless services to minimise the impact of this long-term condition with high mortality and morbidity rates. In a patient centric health provision taking the knowledge and skills and placing it firmly within primary care has shown to be a positive and effective change for heart failure patients within the current clinic groups.

The HFSN is currently working with another GP practice in the early phase of setting up clinics and whilst the direction of long-term condition management is rightly heading to multiple condition clinics it is important that disease specific clinics at this stage can ‘level up’ the playing field to allow smooth transition to these future clinic systems. This baseline work will

allow teams to be confident that effective heart failure management in primary care can continue.

At the start of this project the national directive from BSHF was to re-frame heart failure as a LTC. This project demonstrates how a core group of teams are making a difference however there is more to do. No one model fits all. We need to look at flexibility of the model and develop one that meets each PCN population needs whilst proving a safe, effective overarching model. The HFSN is currently working with 4 other teams to provide targeted education following a desire to improve their heart failure reviews within their current service/resources.

The project teams include 3 of the largest practices now running regular heart failure clinics with patient lists up to 700+. This is no mean feat and within a very challenging time for NHS providers. The data demonstrates great success within all 6 teams and the variation of practitioners bringing their individual expertise allowing other teams within the Vale of York to explore what will work for them and their population.

### **Insights**

One of the primary care clinic sites have fed back that they are confident that their regular heart failure clinic has significantly reduced acute presentation of heart failure within the surgery. Whilst this may be anecdotal evidence it comes from an experienced GP and her colleagues. Agreeing how this data might be captured going forward could provide us with hard data to support this experienced feedback. The heart failure data group could be key in taking this forward

There are of course lots of challenges to this work, resources, covid, staff vacancies, IT systems to name a few, nothing new in NHS provision. What is important is we now have champions who are willing to take this forward and encourage their colleagues within the Vale of York to come on board and improve the care and management of heart failure patients

We are very proud of the work so far whilst acknowledging there is much more to do. The HFSN has often stated the first few years of this work will be the most challenging. Once the right systems and services are in place this workflow will run smoothly and be less daunting and time intensive. One of the comments within the service design questionnaire reiterated this point from one of the clinicians running the service. Recognition from trust colleagues, Pumping Marvellous, the national heart failure charity and NHSE are but a few awards and recognition that has been awarded to this work which has to be a sign that it must be continued?

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Embedding an educator role across the spectrum of services to ensure consistency and expertise supporting heart failure management.

