

# National Services Division submission of 24 May 2022

## PE1723/U: Essential tremor treatment in Scotland

Thank-you for your recent correspondence in relation to the petition which seeks to raise awareness of Essential Tremor in Scotland and support the introduction and use of MRI guided focused ultrasound for treatment (MRgFUS).

It may be beneficial to your committee to offer some context as to current service provision and some oversight as to the role of the National Specialist Services Committee (NSSC) and National Services Division (NSD).

As the committee will be aware from their written evidence from relevant stakeholders, the University of Dundee and NHS Tayside have been collaborating to develop and establish a service to treat patients using MRgFUS for Essential Tremor.

The academic team have been working towards the goal of being able to offer participation to patients in clinical research into other conditions where this treatment modality may have the potential to benefit patients (for example Parkinson's Disease) as well as the treatment of tremor.

This locally developed service has now been up and running for over 1 year and has assessed and treated a number of patients with the governance and operational delivery of the service being the responsibility of the University of Dundee and NHS Tayside rather than that of NHS National Services Scotland, National Services Division (NSD).

NSD act as the commissioners on behalf of NHS Scotland for National Specialist Healthcare Services. The governance for their commissioning work sits under the auspices of the National Specialist Services Committee who have delegated decision making responsibilities from the Board Chief Executives.

### Designation of National Services

In order for a service to be considered for designation there is a formal application process which allows for the consideration of the needs of the population, specific service needs and delivery model for service,

evidence base for the proposed service, financial and human resource considerations and operational implementation.

NSD work closely with applicants to ensure that the information considered by NSSC is proportionate, factually accurate and allows for reasoned decision making. Historically this has been a 3 stage process with consultation with the relevant stakeholders from the various boards as well as patients, the public and professionals via the National Patient, Public and Professional Reference Group (NPPPRG). Over the last year or so the processes of application and designation have been undergoing some redesign with a view to improvement in quality and efficiency however the overall aim of the process remains the same.

In response to your specific queries and points which the committee have raised:

1. At the time of writing there has been no formal application for a national MRgFUS service by NHS Tayside. However members of the Specialist Healthcare Commissioning team within NSD have met regularly with the team in Dundee to support them in their preparation of an application. Their most recent meeting was on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2022 with further meetings anticipated to take place to discuss this further.
2. Until a formal submission is made to the National Specialist Services Committee, NSD cannot confirm the actual date when the committee will consider the application for this service. The current anticipated dates for the next meetings of the committee are on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2022 and the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2022.
3. In their application, the applicant is required to demonstrate the current evidence for the treatment in relation to safety, efficacy and patient outcomes. In addition, where there are key Health Technology Appraisals by organizations such as the Scottish Health Technology Group (SHTG) or National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) these will be referenced or discussed as will relevant NHS England Service Specifications or Commissioning Policies.
4. Should the committee recommend the designation of the service, prioritization along with other service developments take place towards the end of the year with a view to developing the financial business case for all of the National Services for which NSD act as commissioners and for whom finance is

requested from the Board Chief Executives of NHS Scotland. The aim of such consideration is to provide an assurance of resource to deliver the service from the beginning of the next financial year or in line with the phased implementation plan.

5. At the current time the treatment is available in Dundee for those whom the specialist neurology and neurosurgical staff deem it to be clinically appropriate albeit without the designation as a nationally commissioned service. In addition, NHS Boards in Scotland can access the service being commissioned by NHS England via existing relationships and cross-border funding mechanisms in place. At the current time it is most likely that any national commissioning arrangements would not be in place until April 2023 at the very earliest however this could be later due to the systemic pressures as a result of the ongoing issues related to the pandemic.

6. In line with accepted practice, should the treatment centre be commissioned nationally, it would be the service themselves who would promote the service via their clinical stakeholders and patient advocacy groups. On their internet pages, NSD list all national services with short biographical pieces detailing the nature of services and contact details. In addition, the clinical team in Dundee have been exploring working with the National Deep Brain Stimulation Service in Glasgow to support shared decision making and the sharing of clinical experience and knowledge between the teams.

I hope this information meets the requirements and needs of your committee however should you have further queries please do not hesitate to contact us.