**New Pathway at Royal Devon – Eastern Services – Heart Valve Disease Pathway**

A new rapid access clinic is being piloted in Royal Devon – Eastern Services from January 2025 for patients with heart valve disease. The pilot aims to significantly reduce wait times for patients

Patients with severe heart valve disease diagnosed for the first time will be referred into the rapid access clinic by the physiologist performing the GP requested direct access echocardiogram. Following triage, the patient may then be offered a clinic appointment with a clinical scientist with support from a consultant cardiologist.

The rapid access valve clinic aims to provide a clinical assessment within 2 weeks of the echocardiogram and allow rapid referral for onward investigation and surgery if appropriate.

Over the next 12 months the pilot will also aim to introduce the following:

* Physiologist led valve surveillance for those patients with mild and moderate valve disease for whom intervention may be considered in the future.
* A clinical scientist delivered exercise stress echocardiography and transoesophageal echocardiography for enhanced valve assessment.
* Heart Valve disease awareness and education sessions in the community.

For suspected heart valve disease (new murmur) the direct access echocardiogram criteria have not changed, and GP’s can request as normal. Referrals cannot be made directly into the heart valve disease pathway, the physiologist will refer to the pathway if severe valve disease is identified at the time of the echocardiogram.

Results of the echocardiogram will be returned to the referrer directly as usual. Findings other than severe valve disease will still need to be acted on as usual.

**When discussing the referral for echocardiography with patients, please let them know that they may be referred directly on to the clinic depending on the results of the test.**

For more information on the service or if you have any queries please contact rduh.heartvalveclinic@nhs.net