Theatre List Allocation

Theme | Planned Care

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Case Study Date | 04/07/2025

SaTH Improvement Hub

NHS The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust

REASON WHY?

Increasing the number of elective procedures that can be performed directly shortens the time patients wait for treatment. The Theatre List Allocation aims to improve theatre utilisation to 97% by aligning theatre sessions with the highest-volume waiting lists. This targeted scheduling ensures that available capacity is used where it's most needed.

SMART AIM

S SPECIFIC | M MEASUREABLE | A ACHIEVABLE | R RELEVANT | T TIME-BOUND

To improve the percentage of utilised theatre sessions to 97% by 31/07/2025.

PLAN

The team engaged in discussions to generate ideas on how to improve the process of theatre utilisation.

It was agreed that the team would trial implementation of a stable rolling theatre schedule.

Stable allocation allows teams to plan ahead with confidence. Theatre lists are predictable and booking teams can confirm patients earlier, reducing last minute changes and cancellations.

When lists are stable, patients can be scheduled earlier and with greater certainty. This reduces anxiety, improves pre-operative preparation, and minimises the risk of last-minute cancellations.

DO

A review was undertaken of the theatre list and sessions allocated based upon clinical demand and waiting list size.

A rolling two week rota was developed and the list allocation rules updated. The new theatre timetable has enabled all 15 elective theatres to open for the first time since the pandemic.

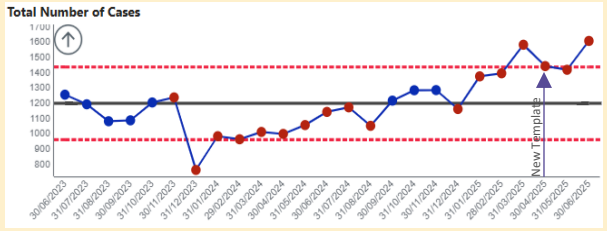
Speciality teams are now required to assign surgeon names by Week 6 rather than Week 4 as previously mandated. If a surgeon is not allocated then the session is offered out to another speciality.

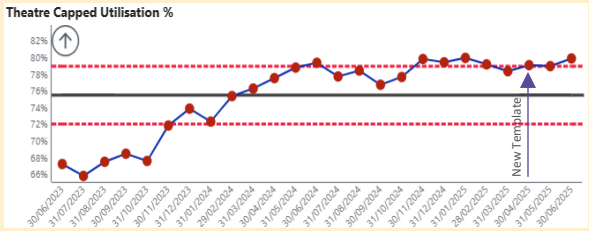
The list allocation began 31/03/2025 and has been utilised each week.

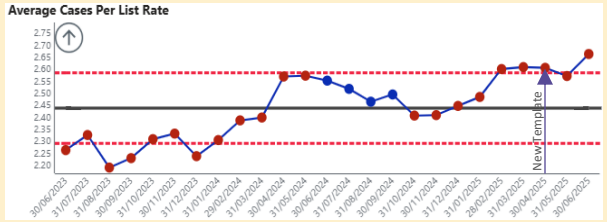
STUDY

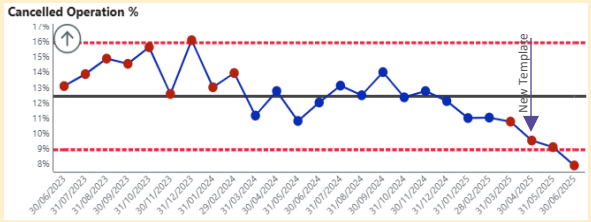
The theatre timetable has been in use for 3 months and has resulted in statistically significant improvement in the following metrics:

- Total number of cases (have increased above control limits)
- Total number of cases per list (Sustained improvement at and above control limit)
- Percentage of cancelled operations has demonstrated a significant reduction with 8% of patients being cancelled in June 2025.
- Theatre utilisation remains stable with further room for improvement.









ACT

The theatre list planner is going to be ADOPTED. Small changes will be made to speciality allocation in order to maximise the session utilisation in line with demand.

This process will continue to be monitored as part of the theatre task and finish group and updated as required.

Further review to take place in December 2025.

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