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## Trust doubles up on trauma unit status

St Richard's and Worthing Hospitals have been confirmed as important parts of a new county-wide network set up to improve emergency care for the most seriously-injured patients.

The two Accident and Emergency (A&E) departments run by Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust are now both accredited Trauma Units after the Sussex Trauma Network approved the Worthing application on Friday. St Richard's status was awarded in April.

The new networks are designed around regional Major Trauma Centres, which specialise in treating people who have suffered potentially life-threatening major trauma, such as serious head or internal injuries sustained in a road traffic accident. The major centre in the Sussex network is the Royal Sussex County Hospital, in Brighton.

Trauma Units provide emergency care for all but the very most seriously-injured and have to be capable of treating these patients as well if it is not possible to get them to the Major Trauma Centre within 45 minutes or they need to be stabilised quickly. They also provide ongoing treatment and rehabilitation for patients once they have been discharged from the major centre, enabling them to access the services they need much closer to home.

To gain Trauma Unit status, the Trust had to demonstrate its hospitals' ability to handle these serious emergency cases, both in terms of the facilities and support services available and the expertise of their clinical staff.

Dr Amanda Wellesley, Western Sussex Hospitals' lead clinician for Accident and Emergency, said: "We have shown the network we can provide high-quality care across the Trust for patients who have sustained trauma. The patients who sustain the biggest trauma will go to the major centre and the next level down will be able to come to St Richard's or Worthing.

"Gaining this status is a great vote of confidence in the quality of care we provide and will mean more patients can be cared for closer to home."

Medical Director Dr Phillip Barnes added: “The most serious trauma cases are thankfully rare but require a huge amount of complex and specialist care. The new networks will aim to improve care for this small group of patients, and Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust will play a full part in delivering that ambition.

“The Trust Board has repeatedly stated its commitment to ensuring A&E, emergency surgery and consultant-led maternity services continue at Worthing and St Richard’s hospitals. Achieving Trauma Unit status for both is recognition of the need for these services at both sites and our ability to provide them.”

Notes:

The new system for caring for patients suffering the most major trauma involves regional Trauma Centres supported by a network of Trauma Units and A&E departments.

A major **Trauma Centre** is the central part of a major trauma network. It is a specialist hospital responsible for the care of the most severely-injured patients involved in major trauma. It provides 24/7 emergency access to consultant-delivered care for a wide range of specialist clinical services and expertise.

A **Trauma Unit** is a hospital that is part of the major trauma network and provides care for patients who have sustained trauma but do not need the services of the major centre. It also stabilises patients who require intervention en route to the major centre or in cases in which care has been prolonged or delayed on the scene. Once patients are discharged from a Trauma Centre, their ongoing treatment and rehabilitation is also provided by a designated Trauma Unit.

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