

BRIEFING NOTE

For Elected Representatives

Status of the New Maternity Hospital



[Read our statement on the delay to the opening of the new Maternity Hospital here.](#)

Current Status

Pseudomonas aeruginosa (PSA) has been discovered within a significant number of outlets in the new Maternity Hospital.

Pseudomonas Aeruginosa is a common, naturally occurring bacteria that is present in water and ground soil. It often colonises in plumbing fixtures and presents a particular risk to clinically vulnerable patients, including newborns within the neo-natal unit. Belfast Trust takes steps to prevent *pseudomonas* colonising in its plumbing network to protect the vulnerable patients in its care, and that includes regularly testing its water system across sites.

The Maternity Hospital contains an augmented care area in its Neo-natal unit, with premature babies that are particularly vulnerable to infection. Routine water testing is also carried out in all augmented care areas throughout the Trust.

Impact

Belfast Trust is developing a remediation plan for the water systems which could significantly impact on timescales for the opening of the building.

Our staff continue to provide excellent care to women and babies in the Royal Jubilee Maternity Hospital and service delivery has not been impacted as a result of the delay.

Lessons learned

The issue currently delaying the opening of the new Maternity project is separate to those which were encountered on the Critical Care project. This current issue involves the detection of pseudomonas aeruginosa (PSA) within the domestic water systems.

The main issue which caused delay to the opening of the new Critical Care building was the discovery of pipework corrosion. This was caused by Microbial Induced Corrosion (MIC) within the closed loop water systems. The closed loop systems provide heating and cooling to a building.

Following the conclusion of the legal processes and the recommissioning of the Critical Care Building, the Trust undertook a “Lessons Learned” exercise to mitigate the risk of MIC occurring on subsequent projects. This exercise resulted in several changes moving forward, including alterations to the specification of pipework for acute hospital buildings and changes to commissioning protocols.

Learning has also been taken from a previous incident of pseudomonas aeruginosa (PSA) occurring within the existing Royal Jubilee Maternity Hospital in 2012. As a result of lessons learned from this incident and subsequent improvements within best practice in the industry, specification of water outlets has changed.

Next Steps

Belfast Trust is currently commissioning an independent review of the water systems. This review will be undertaken by industry leading experts.

In tandem with the independent review, and subject to its final outcome, Belfast Trust is currently developing remediation options for the water systems. These could significantly impact on timescales for occupation of the building.

The outcome of the independent review will also inform next steps for the Trust under the relevant design and construction contracts.

Contact:

Should you have any additional queries, please contact us using the details included below:

