

Primary Care Heart Failure Diagnostic and Treatment Pathway

Publication – [Primary Care Heart Failure Pathway: NHS Sussex ICB](#)

Heart failure affects over a million people across the UK with 200,000 new diagnoses every year. It is a life-limiting condition that too often causes emergency hospital admissions, poor quality of life and ultimately early death. It is possible to live well with heart failure and our Heart Failure pathways have been standardised for use in Primary Care services to facilitate referrals to diagnostic and heart failure treatment services. Early diagnosis of people with heart failure with prompt access to integrated services and specialist care can help to cut emergency admissions, improve quality of life and give people the opportunity to live well and longer.

Purpose of the pathway

The [Primary Care Heart Failure Pathway: NHS Sussex ICB](#) for primary care clinicians has been developed to provide clear and simple guidance on how early diagnosis may be achieved using the diagnostic and treatment pathways and provide an additional resource to support patient management. This pathway was developed in 2020, in line with NICE guidance and was updated in July 2024 to take account of the recent advances in the pharmacological treatment of heart failure that have expanded the options for patients, the treatment pathways are in line with the ESC guidelines.

There is also a separate [Patient information: Heart Failure Advice and Guidance Pack](#), that can be easily printed or sent as a link to patient's by text or email.

The Sussex Primary Care Heart Failure Diagnostic and Treatment Pathway is available to Sussex GP Practice MDT Teams to access on the Sussex Intranet.

Development of the pathway

The Primary Care Heart Failure Pathway is a consolidation of the heart failure diagnostic and treatment pathways and has now been updated to reflect latest guidance. The pathway was first created and then adapted in 2020 by Prof. Ahmet Fuat, Dr Jim Moore, PCCS and Sussex ICB, and this updated version in July 2024, published October 2024, was led by Sussex Health & Care ICB – Dr Susan Ellery, Alison Warren, Sarah Young and the Heart Failure Steering Group, in collaboration with Health Innovation Kent Surrey Sussex, with an additional Frailty First section written by frailty experts on behalf of the Primary Care Cardiovascular Society. The pathway is endorsed by Primary Care Cardiovascular Society, Pumping Marvellous, British Heart Foundation, Arrhythmia Alliance and AF Association.

Supporting information

Available for spread and adoption to any organisation in the country:

The pathway is generic, the [Primary Care Heart Failure Pathway: National \(unbranded\) copy](#) version is free and available to download.

Options: we can add your organisation's logo to the top of the front cover,

Or we can share the design files, and your organisation will need Adobe InDesign to edit.

If you would like to adopt the pathway in full **or** adapt / edit for local use and would like support or more information, [please contact the Health Innovation KSS CVD team](#)

Use of these pathways, including adaptation to local need, is at the discretion of clinicians. Adoption of these pathways should follow routine local clinical governance processes.

Sussex Health and Care ICB: Heart Failure Diagnostic and Treatment Pathway

Pathway created November 2020. Updated May 2021, July and September 2024. Review 2026

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