

## Final Project Report

A Collaborative Working Agreement between Sanofi and Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust (NUH) to review and improve the patient journey and experience within the Dermatology Biologics Service at Queen's Medical Centre (QMC).

### **1. Background**

NUH provides a comprehensive dermatology and biologics service for a geographically wide area. The dermatology Service had been under significant pressure for some time.

The project focused on understanding the current referral and treatment pathways, including Homecare and Transition. The aim was to identify inefficiencies, highlight areas for improvement, and explore opportunities to free up clinical capacity, enhance the patient journey and optimise resource utilisation.

### **2. Project Outcomes**

This project reviewed the end-to-end biologics patient pathway at Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust, mapping referral, treatment, homecare, and transition processes through interviews with clinical and administrative staff, with the aim of understanding patient experience, identifying gaps, issues and inefficiencies, and explored how to optimise clinical capacity.

The review found that the service is operating at critical capacity, with only 50% of required clinic slots available (1,656 available versus 3,320 required), biologic nursing resource was operating at 98% utilisation, and the number of patients on biologic treatment growing at 15% year-on-year. The growth in biologics is largely driven by increased biologic use in eczema, with further growth anticipated as new biologics emerge for additional dermatological conditions.

A retrospective audit of biologic initiation times revealed significant delays, particularly for new patients, where the average time from decision to prescribe to initiation of treatment was an average of 121 days (range: 24–325 days), with paperwork generation and sign-off identified as the primary bottleneck in the pathway.

The patient survey was undertaken during the project which showed that despite an overall patient satisfaction rate of 89.3%, key gaps were identified by patients around support between appointments (53.3% satisfaction) and flexibility on appointment scheduling (42.9% agreement).

Staff interviews highlighted systemic inefficiencies including manual prescribing processes and suggested including an integrated dashboard for prescription tracking to streamline the process.

The resignation of the Band 4 Biologics Coordinator in December 2025 presented a significant risk to service continuity, as this role serves as the central triage and co-ordination point for the entire service. It was considered that failure to replace this post would increase clinical administration burden, delay prescriptions, and increase pressure on already limited clinical capacity.

### **3. Timescales**

The project commenced in July 2025 and was completed in January 2026.

### **4. Recommendations**

**A report was produced for the Dermatology Management Team within Nottingham University Hospitals providing information on the findings of the review along with the following recommendations to address the service issues identified and improve patient experience:**

- Increase Biologics Nurse resource to provide sufficient capacity for the existing service and expected growth in patient numbers.
- Retain Band 4 Biologics Coordinator post and expand administrative resilience by providing administrator support during holidays/sickness.
- Implement referral criteria and reduce monitoring in line with BAD Guidance for stable patients.
- Introduce digital tools including e-prescribing, remote monitoring and NHS App integration.
- Implement transition planning for patients aged 17, six months ahead of planned date of transition
- Expand blood test accessibility via system collaboration with primary care.
- Consider group education sessions to reduce clinical burden.

### **6. Project Benefits**

**The project produced recommendations for the Dermatology Management Team within Nottingham University Hospitals. It is considered that subject to the**

**recommendations being implemented the project will have deliver the following recommendations:**

- ✓ **Patients:** reduced risk of treatment delays, clearer contact pathways, improved coordination.
- ✓ **NHS:** evidence-driven recommendations, identification of inefficiencies, improved alignment with Trust priorities.
- ✓ **Sanofi:** deeper insight into dermatology service challenges and strengthened partnership working.

## **6. Project Resource Utilisation**

Total project cost: £6,487 (NHS contribution £3,267; Sanofi contribution £3,220).

## **7. Customer Feedback**

*“In the ever-increasing pressure the NHS faces, I am humbled that Sanofi have given us such an opportunity to work together in this way. It has given the service a boost and professionally and personally I will be forever grateful for the work we have done together”.*

***Joanne Spicer, Advanced Nurse practitioner. NMP. MSc Clinical Dermatology***