

NHS Ayrshire & Arran



Meeting:	Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board
Meeting date:	Monday 8 June 2026
Title:	Patient Experience: William's Story – BEAT to TREAT
Responsible Director:	Vicki Campbell, Director of Acute Services
Report Author:	Geraldine Jordan, Director of Clinical and Care Governance

1. Purpose

This is presented to the Board for:

- Discussion

This paper relates to:

- Government policy/directive
- Local policy

This aligns to the following NHS Scotland quality ambition(s):

- Safe
- Effective
- Person Centred

This supports the following Corporate Objectives:

- **Better Health** - Supporting you to live a healthier life
- **Better Care** - Improving your experience of care

2. Report summary

2.1 Situation

2.2

This story highlights the importance of timely and effective multidisciplinary team working across Primary and Acute Care and demonstrates how this can have a significant positive impact on a patient's journey. It captures William's reflections on his experience, illustrating how the BEAT to TREAT initiative enabled prompt treatment and led to a marked improvement in his quality of life.

2.3 Background

BEAT to TREAT is an initiative designed to accelerate the diagnosis and treatment of heart failure, with the ambition of initiating appropriate care within 60 minutes. The initiative uses the acronym BEAT - Breathlessness, Exhaustion, Ankle swelling, Time to tell your GP or Nurse—to support both patients and clinicians to recognise symptoms early and enable rapid access to assessment and treatment within the community.

The BEAT symptom awareness tool is a simple, memorable and relevant acronym that describes the key symptoms of heart failure and the action of informing your GP or nurse that they should maybe test for heart failure

Timely recognition and accurate diagnosis of new-onset heart failure (HF) remain a clinical challenge, particularly in patients presenting to GP practices with breathlessness attributable to a range of possible causes. Although up to 40% of patients experience symptoms that could prompt earlier assessment in primary care, approximately 80% of heart failure diagnoses are currently made following an emergency hospital admission, which is associated with poorer outcomes.

Patients diagnosed with heart failure during a hospital admission are twice as likely to die compared with those diagnosed in a community setting, largely due to delays in initiating treatment. Early diagnosis or exclusion of heart failure is therefore critical to improving patient outcomes and reducing avoidable hospital admissions.

The “BEAT to TREAT in 60 Minutes” model combines established diagnostic tools—such as blood tests and electrocardiography—with enhanced clinical pathways to facilitate rapid assessment and treatment initiation. The approach also provides patients with resources to support symptom management at home and improve quality of life.

The BEAT-HF campaign, developed by the heart failure charity Pumping Marvellous, is the first UK-wide disease awareness campaign for heart failure. It seeks to increase public and professional awareness through early recognition of common symptoms: Breathlessness, Exhaustion, Ankle swelling, Time to speak to a GP or Nurse.

2.4 Assessment

Over a period of several weeks, William attended his GP practice on multiple occasions due to worsening breathlessness and subsequently developed increasing lower-limb swelling, which began to significantly impact his daily life. Heart failure (HF) was not initially recognised, and his condition continued to deteriorate, resulting in an emergency ambulance call. Concerned by his ongoing decline, William’s wife advocated strongly for a cardiology referral. He was subsequently seen promptly at the Kilmarnock Community Hub, where a diagnosis of heart failure was confirmed and treatment was initiated without delay.

William was treated by the BEAT to TREAT service, which is available to patients within the North and East Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) areas whose GP practices would usually refer to University Hospital Crosshouse Cardiology Team for outpatient assessment. The initiative aims to shift care from hospital to community settings, enabling faster diagnosis and reducing hospitalisation.

This model supports a shift from hospital-based care to community-led services by utilising point-of-care NT-proBNP testing and validated AI-supported echocardiography. Early and timely diagnosis enables prompt treatment, reduces the likelihood of emergency hospital admissions, and supports a preventative approach to care.

2.3.1 Quality/patient care

William received timely care from healthcare professionals, leading to early initiation of treatment and a positive clinical outcome.

2.3.2 Workforce

This story highlights the importance of collaborative working and effective communication between healthcare professionals across Primary Care and Acute Services.

Sharing feedback with staff across the organisation demonstrates an open, honest, and transparent approach to improvement. This encourages teams and individuals to engage constructively with learning and to adopt similar approaches within their own improvement journeys.

2.3.3 Financial

No financial Impact

2.3.4 Risk assessment/management

No identified risk

2.3.5 Equality and diversity, including health inequalities

An impact assessment is not required as the individual sharing his story has given consent and any impact on others will be individual

2.3.6 Best value

This paper support Best Value across the following themes:

- Effective Partnerships – William’s story highlights care planned and delivered across Primary and Secondary Care Services resulting in timely diagnosis and treatment.
- Use of resources – BEAT to TREAT supports a shift from hospital-based care to community led services supporting early and timely diagnosis enabling prompt treatment and reducing the likelihood of emergency hospital admission.

2.3.7 Other Impacts

Delivering this service within a community setting helps to make healthcare more visible, accessible, and locally embedded, thereby strengthening patient engagement and trust in community-based models of care.

2.3.8 Communication, involvement, engagement and consultation

This patient story is presented to raise awareness and to recognise the innovative approach of the BEAT to TREAT initiative.

2.3.9 Route to the meeting

This story has not been heard at any other meetings but has been shared with the patient and the services involved.

2.5 Recommendations

Members are invited to listen to this patient story and note the life-changing benefits of timely identification and early commencement of treatment for patients with newly diagnosed heart failure.