
OVERVIEW OF HEALTH AND PARTNERSHIP SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Health and Partnership Scrutiny Committee has undertaken.

Special Meeting at the Gate

2. In line with our Community Safety responsibility, we recently held a Special Meeting at the Gate. Our meeting discussed substance misuse, Darlington's treatment journey, connected recovery pathway and performance information. We also received a very interesting and informative presentation from a service user who has trained to be a Recovery Coach. He explained his pathway of treatment and recovery. Our meeting was very successful and Members are satisfied that good work is being carried out and we feel we have grasped some very important issues. We acknowledge that difficult decisions will have to be made in relation to future funding of this service whilst appreciating the benefits it provides to service users.

Special Meeting with North East Ambulance Services

3. The Committee held a special meeting to meet with Officers from North East Ambulance Services (NEAS) to discuss issues around the changing role of the paramedic and stroke services pathway. Members also had the opportunity to comment on and challenge the Patient Transport Service (PTS) Strategy. The Strategy sets out the vision for PTS in the North East of England and the changes that will be implemented over the next five years to achieve the vision. We are pleased to note the delays in hospital handovers are being considered at a Clinical Summit with representation from all Acute Trusts and GP's across the North East. Members understand that a delay in handover places unnecessary pressure on the Accident and Emergency Department as well as the Ambulance service and hope that a solution can be agreed to reduce this occurring in the future.

Darlington Darzi Practice

4. As previously reported we have agreed to monitor the decommissioning process of Darlington Darzi Practice which is due to close on 31st March 2013 and we have recently met with an Officer from NHS County Durham and Darlington to receive an update. It was reported that with three weeks until the Practice is due for closure that there were around 640 patients still registered with the Darzi Practice and there had been no agreement as to whether the outreach services at the Gate would continue to be provided or whether wound dressings would continue during weekends at Dr Piper House.

5. We are extremely concerned about this. We feel that there needs to be better promotion and information to enable patients to register at other GP Practices in Darlington before the Practice closes and that decisions need to be made. We also have concerns about access to GP appointments in general and will address this at a future meeting. Given our concerns we have written to NHS County Durham and Darlington, Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group and Primary Care Services Agency seeking assurances that these issues will be resolved as soon as possible.

Quality Accounts

6. Members of this Committee have recently attended events in respect of the future priorities for Quality Accounts for County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust and Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust. Our input at these events is used to shape future priorities and also enable us to consider progress made about the previous year's priorities. All of this will assist us when we have to submit our commentaries to the Draft Quality Accounts for 2013/14 in May 2013.

County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust Clinical Strategy Task and Finish Groups

7. Following the work we have undertaken in respect of the Trust's Clinical Strategy and our Interim Report only two out of the five previously established Task and Finish Groups remain. Those being Long Term Conditions and Older People/End of Life Care. Both Groups are continuing their work with the aim of completing and presenting their Final Reports to our final Scrutiny Committee at the end of this municipal year. The Long Term Conditions Task and Finish Group has recently met with Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and is busy gathering primary evidence of the types of rehabilitation and programmes available for people with Long Term Conditions. Members of the Older People/End of Life Care Task and Finish Group have recently visited St Teresa's Hospice and met with this Council's Officers and representatives of GOLD. Both Groups final meetings will be with Officers from the Trust to seek assurances within their areas of interest, prior to drafting their recommendations.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Task and Finish Review Group

8. We have commenced a piece of work considering Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and its impact on Darlington residents. We have had the opportunity to visit Breathe Easy Exercise Class and Group to establish the support given to COPD patients and actively engage with those suffering from the disease.
9. We have also met with representatives from Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust to determine Psychological Therapies for patients suffering with COPD. We have been informed that the team has secured funding from the National Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Team to path find support for individuals with Long Term Conditions.

10. Work place promotion of COPD is not being actively tackled but there is work being undertaken in a prevention format by promoting none smoking initiatives in the work place. Recently Stoptober encouraged employees to give up smoking for 28 days, with talks to staff on services to support them to give up smoking.

Obesity Task and Finish Review Group

11. Members of the Obesity Task and Finish Review have begun looking at the pathway of Obesity leading to Bariatric Surgery. The Group has met with healthcare professionals to determine the services in place to tackle obesity.
12. We held a meeting which focused on childhood obesity and invited Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to attend. The meeting considered support available for Children within Schools and the community. We were informed of the Child Measurement Programme, sports in schools, swimming participation by schools at the Dolphin Centre and the vast array of activities available the community during School breaks. We have also discussed Health and Well Being in the workplace and the Sports and Physical Activity Strategy.

Update on Actions to Support Veterans

13. We have scrutinised the work for veterans at a Regional and local level following the work that was undertaken by the North East Regional Joint Health Scrutiny Committee. We considered the actions of this Council's delivery of the Darlington section of the North East Regional Joint Health Scrutiny Committee action plan ; Tees Valley activity and Darlington's input into this group to support the regional reviews of the health needs of the ex-service community; and the Darlington Armed Forces and Veterans Action Group.

Transition Arrangements

14. We have received assurances in respect of arrangements that need to be in place in line with the requirements of the Health and Social Care Act 2012. We received progress that ensures a safe transition for public health into the Local Authority. There are a number of work streams to ensure a smooth transition of public health responsibilities e.g. the public health transfer order is a vehicle through which the assets, liabilities and power to act on new public health responsibilities will be transferred to local authorities.
15. Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group outlined the application process required for authorisation and submission of quality evidence against 119 criteria for authorisation across the recognised six domains. We received information about the evidence that was submitted which included 22 key mandatory documents such as the Clear and Credible Plan, the CCG Constitution and the Communications and Engagement Plan.

16. With regards to Healthwatch we are pleased that the contract had been awarded to the Carers Federation and the Healthwatch function relating to NHS Complaints Advocacy has been awarded to Carers Federation. Work is on-going with Darlington LINK legacy and also the transition from LINK to local Healthwatch.
17. Health and Well Being Board has met in public for six board meetings since it commenced and has developed a Health and Well-being Strategy and a Health and Social Care Delivery Plan. We have been informed of the priorities collectively of the partners of the Board and the key areas the Board will progress between 2013-2016.

County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust Strategic Vision

18. The Chief Executive, County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (CDDFT) attended our recent meeting and outlined the Trust's Strategic Direction and provided an update on the 'have your say' events. We also received a presentation on the Trust's areas of focus for 2012/13 which has been discussed through a series of 'Have your Say' events that were organised as part of a programme of work to develop detailed actions to progress the strategic direction of the Trust for 2012 to 2015.
19. We are aware of the four 'touchstones' for the CDDFT to deliver best outcomes; best experience; best efficiency; and best employer and also the four areas of focus for 2012/13 being unscheduled care; integration and care closer to home; sustaining and developing women's and children's services; and developing specialist services and centres of excellence.

Darlington LINK Student Placement – Stroke Services Pathway

20. We have received a presentation from two students from Teesside University currently studying for a degree in Occupational Therapy. As part of the placement with Darlington LINK the students undertook a project which assessed the value of community based services for stroke patients. This work has been very valuable to our work in connection to stroke services and we hope to use their work as the beginning of the next stage of our scrutiny work.

Tees Valley Health Scrutiny Joint Committee

21. At our February meeting, Members were delighted to welcome the Area Team Director, Durham, Darlington and Tees NHS Commissioning Board and received an overview of the role of the Area Teams in England, the role and function of the Area Teams and the progress so far within the Durham, Darlington and Tees Team. We also had the opportunity to comment on and challenge the Patient Transport Service (PTS) Strategy that NEAS has recently launched.
22. At our March meeting we received feedback from all Tees Valley Local Authorities in respect of their winter preparedness after last years suggested that Local Authorities intensified efforts to ensure that as many frontline social care staff, directly employed or commissioned service providers, were immunised for

Seasonal Flu. The Joint Scrutiny Committee has again resolved to contact the Chief Executives of the Tees Valley Local Authorities on this matter to scrutinise whether the uptake figures have increased.

23. We have also received an update from each Local Authority in respect of the progress made in establishing their Health and Wellbeing Boards.

Work Programme 2012/13

24. We have given consideration to the Work Programme for this Committee for the Municipal Year 2012/13 and possible review topics and in doing so, we have taken into account the reduced resources available and ensured that, in recommending our work programme to Monitoring and Co-ordination Group, any work we undertake will have demonstrable outcomes and contribute to the work of the Council and its strategic aims and objectives.

Councillor Wendy Newall
Chair of the Health and Partnership Scrutiny Committee