

North Yorkshire County Council

16 May 2012

Scrutiny of Health Committee

Statement by the Chairman

The Scrutiny of Health Committee continues to be involved in a wide range of developments across the County. The Committee's workload is steadily increasing as a result of the recommendations in the report on Healthcare Services in North Yorkshire and York produced by the independent commission led by Professor Hugo Mascie-Taylor and as a result of the reorganisation of the NHS.

Against this background the main service developments and issues arising out of our Committee meeting on 20 April are discussed below.

Children's and Maternity Services at the Friarage Hospital, Northallerton

The Hambleton, Richmondshire and Whitby Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) led by Dr Vicky Pleydell are now well into their engagement process on the future of children's and maternity services at the Friarage Hospital, Northallerton. They continue to keep the Scrutiny of Health Committee up to date on how the engagement is progressing. A key part of that engagement is a number of public events which I am chairing. At the events that have taken place to date there has been a good debate and the CCG has been able to get its message across of the difficulties being faced at the Friarage. At the same time it has been able to listen to the strength of feeling about how important the public feel that children's and maternity services at the Friarage should be retained.

Working with the CCG and the South Tees Hospitals Foundation Trust (STHFT) we are also looking at how other trusts have addressed similar problems to those at the Friarage. On 30 May County Councillor John Blackie and myself, together with representatives from the CCG and the STHFT will be visiting Horton Hospital in Banbury. We are also working closely with the CCG and the STHFT on a questionnaire to be circulated to a wider number of trusts across the country.

On 15 February 2012 County Council resolved that "this Council calls upon all those involved in considering the future of maternity and paediatric services at the Friarage Hospital to consult and engage with all the communities affected and to leave no stone unturned in an effort to retain the existing consultant led services at what the public rightly considers to be an excellent hospital". Consequently the approach which the Committee is taking is to ensure there is a thorough and inclusive engagement process and to work constructively with the NHS locally on the way forward.

National Review of Children's Cardiac Surgery

I continue to represent the Committee on the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Joint Scrutiny of Health Committee, which along with other regional scrutiny committees across the country was consulted formally on the proposals.

On 19 April 2012 three Court of Appeal Judges found the Joint Committee of Primary Care Trust's process for public consultation was fair, lawful and proper and dismissed all of the grounds raised by the Royal Brompton Hospital.

The Joint Committee of Primary Care Trusts (JCPCT) is working towards making a final decision on the future configuration of children's cardiac surgical centres on 4th July 2012.

The JCPCT has stated publicly that it is committed to considering other options, some of which will include Leeds and Newcastle. A number of concerns relating to transport and travel will be given further consideration by the JCPCT.

Mental Health: Hospital Services for Adults and Older People in Airedale, Bradford and Craven

NHS Airedale, Bradford and Leeds, NHS North Yorkshire and York and the Bradford District Care Trust are currently consulting on proposals to change how mental health services to adults and older people in the area are provided. The consultation document describes change as being necessary in order to increase bed occupancy (currently 52%), overcome problems of providing services in outdated buildings and also to separate patients suffering from functional and organic mental health conditions. The movement towards providing more services in the community closer to people's own homes is also a key factor discussed.

Whilst this sounds plausible and good news on paper at our meeting on 20 April, local Members and the public disputed statements in the consultation document that beds in the Heather and Fern wards at the Airedale Centre for Mental Health (in the grounds of Airedale Hospital) assigned to older people were actually empty. We heard claims that these beds were in fact being occupied by adults of working age. Against this background the views being expressed were that it is difficult to see how there will be any release of funding for reinvestment in new services. It is disappointing that the consultation document gives very little information on what new services will be put in place, both in terms of in-patient services and services in the community.

The proposals would include the Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) and the whole of the Dementia Care Unit (Ward 24) being moved from the Airedale Hospital site to Lynfield Mount in Bradford, some 11 miles further away for Craven residents. The PICU will be converted into a new ward for over 65 year old patients with functional mental health problems such as Schizophrenia and Bipolar Affective Disorder. Travelling to Airedale Hospital from Craven, particularly from the northern

part of the district is already a difficult journey. Travelling to Lynfield Mount would be even more difficult for patients and their carers relying on public transport. Unfortunately there is very little information in the consultation document on measures that will be put in place to ease the problems by, for instance, improved community transport.

We will submit our response to the consultation by 26 May 2012.

New Chief Executive – NHS North Yorkshire and York

Chris Long is the new Chief Executive of NHS North Yorkshire and York Cluster. Chris will also continue his role as Chief Executive of the Humber Cluster of Primary Care Trusts. Prior to his role in the Humber area Chris was Chief Executive of Hambleton and Richmondshire Primary Care Trust. It is worth remembering that PCTs cease to exist after 31 March 2013.

Inpatient Mental Health Services in the Harrogate area, taking into account interim plans in Ryedale and Knaresborough.

The Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Mental Health Trust is seeking to remodel all mental health services for older people against a background of increasing demand and the need to focus on integrated services delivered in the community.

Proposals include the long term future of the Alexander House in-patient service in Knaresborough. NHS North Yorkshire and York have indicated their support to progress with a formal consultation process although timescales are yet to be agreed.

In the meantime the Trust is planning a significant investment of £3.5 million in the Springwood facility in Malton. This will provide a 14 bedded North Yorkshire wide complex care needs unit providing specialist care for those with Dementia. This development is subject to planning approval. If approval is granted building work will start in October 2012 and be completed in October 2013. During the build period it is proposed to move patients using Springwood to Alexander House.

Alexander House currently has 16 beds but a typical occupancy level of six patients which means it can be used to temporarily accommodate patients from the Springwood Unit, without detriment to the current level of service provided.

Towards the end of 2013 there is likely to be a formal consultation on the future of services currently provided at Alexander House.

Service Developments: Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust

Senior representatives from the Trust briefed the Committee on their early thoughts on:

- Care Closer to Home
 - including discharge planning, reablement and support for patients with Dementia and for stroke survivors. The proposals include the closure of a ward at Harrogate District Hospital,
- Ripon Community Hospital
 - developing a clear long term vision for the hospital.
- GP Out of Hours Service (OoHS)
 - a possible pilot exercise being launched around the small OoHS centres (Selby, Skipton and Catterick) in which Yorkshire Ambulance Service (YAS) paramedics would provide the initial response rather than a GP.

The Trust gave an undertaking to work with the Committee on these developments. With regard to the OoHS, in particular, the Trust emphasised that no decisions have been made yet on the possible pilot and that it will ensure the Committee is briefed on any proposals in a timely manner.

Pontefract A&E

The Mid Yorkshire Health Trust has announced that the A&E Unit at Pontefract Hospital will reopen on 3 September 2012 under an arrangement with an external provider to supply GPs.

Scarborough Hospital

The merger of the Scarborough and North East Yorkshire Healthcare NHS Trust and York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust is to go ahead from 1 July 2012 - three months later than the original deadline of 1 April 2012. Seeking approval of the Co-operation and Competition Panel, Monitor and NHS North Yorkshire and York has taken slightly longer than was envisaged.

Quality Accounts – 2011/12

Quality Accounts (QAs) are annual reports to the public from providers of NHS healthcare services about the quality of services they provide.

We have now received almost all of the QAs for the trusts serving North Yorkshire. Our role is to review the information in their QA and provide a statement on what is reported. They are legally obliged to publish our comments (of less than 1000 words) as part of their QA.

County Councillor Jim Clark
Chairman: North Yorkshire County Council Scrutiny of Health Committee

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