

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
20 February 2019

SCRUTINY OF HEALTH COMMITTEE – STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

Since my last statement to Council, the Scrutiny of Health Committee formally met on 14 December 2018 and held a Mid Cycle Briefing on 1 February 2019.

Notice of Motion

A Notice of Motion was put to Council on 14 November 2018 by Councillor John Blackie seconded by Councillor Stuart Parsons. The first element, the changes to the way in which the eligibility criteria for the Patient Transport Service are applied, was reviewed at the Scrutiny of Health Committee meeting on 14 December 2018. The second element, the long term sustainability of small and community hospitals in the county, was reviewed at the committee Mid Cycle Briefing on 1 February 2019.

Patient Transport Service

At the Scrutiny of Health Committee meeting on 14 December 2018, further detail was provided on the changes to the way in which the eligibility criteria for the Patient Transport Service were being applied. Members of the committee raised a number of concerns relating to: the impact of rurality, distances travelled and the limited access to public transport; the impact on people on low or fixed incomes, living in rural areas; the complexity of the existing appeals process; and the differences in the eligibility criteria between the Vale of York and the Scarborough and Ryedale CCGs and the Hambleton Richmondshire and Whitby and the Harrogate and Rural District CCGs.

The Scrutiny of Health Committee made a number of resolutions for the CCGs to respond to, as summarised below:

1. The Clinical Commissioning Groups and Yorkshire Ambulance Service to provide data on:
 - the number of appeals (successful and unsuccessful) as a percentage of the overall number of journeys
 - the financial impact of the changes to the application of the eligibility criteria
 - the number of 'Did Not Attends' for medical appointments that can be linked to the changes in the application of the eligibility criteria.
2. The Clinical Commissioning Groups and the Yorkshire Ambulance Service to consider amending the assessment criteria to explicitly include as considerations:
 - the impact of rurality
 - the level of access to public transport
 - the distances that have to be travelled.
3. The Vale of York CCG and Scarborough and Ryedale CCG to consider amending their criteria so that patients undergoing Chemotherapy, Radiotherapy, Renal and Other Oncology are automatically entitled to patient transport services and do not need an assessment.
4. The appeals process to be simplified and better publicised.
5. The Council's Scrutiny of Health Committee to liaise with the Council's Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee over changes to adult social care transport charging that are currently being consulted upon.

6. Daniel Harry to draft a report that outlines the Scrutiny of Health Committee response to the Notice of Motion, based upon the discussions today, and circulate to the members of the committee for comment.
7. That an update on the impact of the changes to the way in which the eligibility criteria for the Patient Transport Service are applied is provided to the Scrutiny of Health committee meeting on 21 June 2019.

These were considered by the Executive on 29 January 2019. In addition to the above, Executive also made the following recommendations for Council to consider, that:

- All CCGs operate a consistent approach to the commissioning and operation of Patient Transport Services
- The fourth resolution should be strengthened to say 'The entire appeals policy and process should be simplified, made clearer and more transparent, and better publicised'.

Long term vision for small and community hospitals

At the Scrutiny of Health Committee Mid Cycle Briefing on 1 February 2019, local NHS commissioners and providers started a discussion about what the long term vision could be for small and community hospitals. There was general agreement that the current model of a large number of small units with in-patient beds is outdated and does not meet patient needs. Instead, new ways of working and planning health and social care services could be adopted that result in better outcomes for patients. This could include:

- Some outpatient appointments and reviews being conducted remotely through the use of telemedicine at the local GP surgery or another community venue
- Increased use of step up-step down units with linked community teams and supported housing
- Researching how the 'dementia village' model that is used in the Netherlands could be applied locally
- Community hubs, based upon defined localities, which combine GP surgeries, rehabilitation services, social care and some step up and step down beds.

These have been early discussions that will develop over time. It was reassuring to see that all present recognised that the existing health system needed to evolve to meet the changing needs of our population and to provide care as close to home as possible and only in a hospital setting when clinically needed.

Integrated Care Systems

The Integrated Care Systems for the North East and Cumbria and West Yorkshire and Harrogate are becoming more established and progressing their work to develop co-ordinated commissioning and service provision in their areas. Progress in the Humber Coast and Vale system appears not to be as far forward, as the other two areas. There remain concerns as to how these systems, which cover huge geographic areas and populations, can be made to work for North Yorkshire. I am hopeful, however, that we will be able to embed a North Yorkshire geography at the centre of these 3 systems.

Whitby Hospital

The Full Business Case for the development of services at the Whitby hospital site has been approved by the Hambleton, Richmondshire and Whitby CCG Governing Body. The Humber Teaching NHS Foundation Trust and NHS Property Services are now due to approve proposals at their respective Board meetings.

NHS East Coast Review

There is a review underway of the services that are provided at Scarborough Hospital. I have asked the Area Constituency Committees to engage in this process and a joint meeting of the Scarborough and Whitby and the Thirsk and Malton Area Constituency Committees will be held on 20 March 2019 in Whitby. They will report back any issues or immediate concern to the Scrutiny of Health Committee.

Friarage Hospital, Northallerton

A public consultation on proposals for changes to the way in which Emergency Medicine and Anaesthesia will be delivered at the Friarage Hospital in Northallerton is expected to take place after the local government elections in May 2019. There are concerns, however, that the ongoing shortages of key staff at the hospital and elsewhere in the Foundation Trust may mean that changes to services are required on patient safety grounds ahead of May.

Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

A one-off meeting of a Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny committee to look at changes to mental health services in the greater Harrogate area has been convened to meet on 15 February 2019 by North Yorkshire County Council, City of York Council and Leeds City Council. This follows on from scrutiny of proposals at the Council's Scrutiny of Health committee meeting on 14 December 2018. Concerns raised then included:

- How the transition will be made between running down in-patient beds and building up community resources
- What the impact will be upon the Yorkshire Ambulance Service of longer journey times
- What the impact will be upon patients from Wetherby
- What the impact will be upon carers and loved ones who have to travel greater distances to visit people in in-patient care.

The outcome of the meeting will be referred back to the Scrutiny of Health Committee.

Scrutiny of Health Committee

The meeting of the committee on 15 March 2019 will be my last as Chairman. I will continue to be a member of the committee and I will also continue to follow developments in NHS services locally. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with committee members, commissioners and providers over the past 8 years and wish my successor every good fortune as they scrutinise the increasingly complex health situation in the county and region.

County Councillor Jim Clark
Chairman, Scrutiny of Health Committee
4 February 2019