

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
24 July 2019

SCRUTINY OF HEALTH COMMITTEE – STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

This is my first statement as the Chairman of the Scrutiny of Health Committee. I would like to thank my predecessor, County Councillor Jim Clark, for all of the work that he did over the past 9 years to champion local health scrutiny. I have been fortunate to inherit a confident and experienced committee that will be able to articulate public expectations, and respond to the increasingly complex changes to the health system that serves the people of North Yorkshire.

The Scrutiny of Health Committee formally met on 21 June 2019. At that meeting the following changes to NHS services used by the people of North Yorkshire were scrutinised.

The Friarage hospital, Northallerton

The changes to critical care services provided at the Friarage Hospital in Northallerton came into effect on 27 March 2019. These changes were triggered by concerns about patient safety as a result of shortages in senior clinical and consultant cover, particularly in anaesthesia. At the June meeting, the committee reviewed performance and patient outcome data relating to the first three months of the operation of the new model. The results were positive and the committee is cautiously optimistic about the ongoing delivery of the new service model.

The proposed consultation on the options for the sustainable delivery of urgent treatment and critical care at the Friarage Hospital will be brought to the committee meeting on 13 September 2019. Thereafter, the early analysis of the findings from the consultation and proposed next steps will be brought to the committee meeting on 13 December 2019.

The committee, in monitoring very closely these developments, has benefitted from an ongoing dialogue with representatives and clinicians from the Friarage and South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. This has been appreciated.

Decommissioning of the minor injury service in GP practices in the Hambleton Richmondshire and Whitby CCG area

The Minor Injuries Local Enhanced Scheme in GP practices, commissioned by the Hambleton Richmondshire and Whitby CCG, was stopped on 1 April 2019. This was due to financial pressures, relatively low use of the service and duplicate commissioning of minor injuries services in primary and secondary care.

Since then, the service has been re-instated in two 'super-rural' surgeries in the Dales. Whilst the committee understood the rationale for the decision, concerns were raised about the uncoordinated commissioning arrangements in the area, the impact upon the more rural populations and not just those defined as 'super rural', and the apparent retrograde step that had been taken.

Currently, the focus of discussions within the NHS locally, regionally and nationally is upon delivery of as many health interventions and services as possible out of hospital and near to where people live. In this context, removing enhanced services

from GP practices that reduce the flow of people to hospital does not make sense. This point has been made powerfully to the CCG.

General surgery at Scarborough Hospital

Over the past 12 months, the provision of a 24 hour general surgery at Scarborough Hospital has been at risk due to workforce shortages. In response, York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust is seeking to introduce a Trust-wide rota, which should address the workforce issues on the coast and lead to a more sustainable model of delivery. The committee will continue to monitor the situation and also scrutinise the work that is being done as part of the Scarborough Acute Service Review. Scarborough Hospital and the range of emergency and non-emergency services that it provides are critical as the next nearest major hospital is 42 miles away.

North Yorkshire Clinical Commissioning Groups

The previous Chairman's Statement detailed the process for the merger of the three North Yorkshire Clinical Commissioning Groups: Hambleton, Richmondshire and Whitby; Harrogate and Rural District; and Scarborough and Ryedale. Since then, we have been informed of the proposed merger of the three Clinical Commissioning Groups that cover Bradford and Craven, as of 1 April 2020: Airedale, Wharfedale and Craven; Bradford City; and NHS Bradford Districts. Whilst there is a history of close working between the three CCGs, the impetus for the merger has been financial as NHS England has imposed funding cuts of 20% (approximately £2.5m) to running costs.

In summary, financial pressures and work force shortages continue to drive change in the NHS in North Yorkshire. Access to appointments and services remains a challenge and keeping people out of hospital a priority. The latter is dependent upon the NHS building a sustainable model for the delivery of services, which overcomes some of the issues associated with the commissioner / provider split. It is our job to monitor this evolution in the interests of the residents of North Yorkshire.

County Councillor John Ennis
Chairman, Scrutiny of Health Committee
5 July 2019