

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Scrutiny of Health Committee

20 April 2012

Children's Services at the Friarage Hospital, Northallerton

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an opportunity :
 - a) for the Committee to be kept up to date on developments with regard to Children's Services at the Friarage Hospital, and
 - b) to reach a view on any additional information which the Committee would like to see brought forward by the Hambleton, Richmondshire and Whitby Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) as part of its engagement process.

Background

2. As the emerging leaders of the NHS, the Hambleton, Richmondshire and Whitby Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) want to ensure a vibrant and sustainable local hospital for patients. The CCG have been in discussions with clinicians and managers from South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust about the future of children's and maternity services for many months after senior doctors raised concerns about the long term sustainability of these services at the Friarage. These concerns have been backed by an independent report by the National Clinical Advisory Team (NCAT). The NCAT are part of the Department of Health and provide clinical experts to support, advise and guide the local NHS on service reconfiguration proposals to ensure safe, effective and accessible services for patients. They were invited to conduct this research and report on findings by the CCG.
3. The favoured option of the South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is for the provision of enhanced children's outpatient services (emergency as well as routine), increased specialist clinics and see and treat facility but with no inpatient paediatric service at the Friarage Hospital. The NCAT report highlights that "Whilst this would mean there would be no inpatient paediatric beds at FHN there is presently a plan for an arrangement to provide out of hours cover to the obstetric service and Special Care Bay Unit by trainees together with non-resident consultant support provision,. It is recognised that this is likely only to be a temporary arrangement and if this option is fully worked through it would lead to there being no on site paediatric cover outside the hours the paediatric assessment unit is open. The consequence of that would be the closure of the obstetric led maternity unit, with the option at that point of maintaining a midwife led birthing unit, or withdrawing the facility of births at FHN altogether (both these options recognise there would still be substantial maternity services provided at FHN other than birthing).

4. A public and clinical discussion regarding the future of children's and maternity services at the Friarage hospital in Northallerton is now underway. The objective of the discussion is to allow local people to gain a greater understanding of the current situation and of the proposals put forward by the NCAT and for the CCG to hear the issues that local people would like to see considered as part of the decision-making process. It is meant to be a real, open and honest discussion with the public, focusing especially on the views and concerns of young families across the locality who will be most affected by any change of service.
5. The discussions are being held in conjunction with clinical staff and managers from the South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust who, as providers of services, need to advise on what is clinically safe and operationally deliverable.
6. Any decisions which need to be taken will only be made after extensive public engagement and, ultimately, formal consultation. The final decision rests with the Board of NHS North Yorkshire and York which remains the statutory body with responsibility for determining service provision within North Yorkshire until April 2013.

Public Meetings

7. As part of public discussions, local residents are invited to attend a series of public meetings. The meetings will be hosted by leading GPs, hospital clinicians and senior NHS managers from the Hambleton, Richmondshire and Whitby Clinical Commissioning Group and South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.
8. All the public meetings will begin informally at 6.30pm, when attendees will have the opportunity to consider the latest information and background material, have informal discussions and submit questions for the formal session which will begin at 7.30pm. It is anticipated all meetings will end by 8.45pm.
9. The meetings are as follows:

| Town | Date | Venue |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|--|
| Thirsk (change of venue) | Thursday 19 April 2012 | The Foyer, Thirsk Farmers Auction Mart, Thirsk Rural Business Centre, Blakey Lane, Thirsk, YO7 3AB |
| Hawes | Thursday 26 April 2012 | Hawes Community Primary School, Town Head Hawes, DL8 3RQ |
| Catterick Garrison / Village | Tuesday 1 May 2012 | Colburn Leisure Centre, Catterick Road, Catterick Garrison, DL9 4QH (behind Inpipe) |
| Richmond (change of date and venue) | Thursday 3 May 2012 | Richmond School, Darlington Road, Richmond, DL10 7BQ |

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|---------------|--------------------------|---|
| Masham | Thursday 10 May 2012 | Town Hall, Little Market Place, Masham, HG4 4DY |
| Northallerton | Tuesday 15 May 2012 | Yorkshire Suite, Golden Lion 114 High Street Northallerton, DL7 8PP |
| Leyburn | Tuesday 22 May 2012 | Conference room, Tennants Auction House, Harmby Road, Leyburn, DL8 5SG |
| Stokesley | Wednesday 30 May 2012 | Town Hall, Stokesley, TS9 5DG |
| Bedale | Monday 18 June 2012 | Bedale Hall, North End, Bedale, DL8 1AA |

Engagement with the Scrutiny of Health Committee

10. In accordance with undertakings given at the last Committee meeting the Shadow Accountable Officer and the Director of Planning from the South Tees Hospital NHS Foundation Trust will be attending this meeting to update Members on the overall engagement process.
11. NHS colleagues have also given an undertaking to hold a specific event with this Committee towards the end of the overall engagement process. The Committee meeting on 1 June would fit in well with the timescale for that process. However, rather than hold that meeting as a conventional committee meeting it may be more appropriate to hold it in a similar style or format to the public meetings referred to above.

Developments in Other Parts of the Country

12. The NCAT report commented that maintaining sustainable small paediatric units is a national problem.
13. Working with scrutiny colleagues at Richmondshire District Council it has been confirmed that developments are indeed taking place across a range of trust/areas, including:
 - ❖ John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford and Horton Hospital, Banbury
 - ❖ Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals
 - ❖ NHS South of Tyne and Wear - children's inpatient services at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Gateshead, South Tyneside District Hospital, South Shields, and Sunderland Royal Hospital.
 - ❖ East Sussex Primary Care Trust – the Conquest Hospital and Eastbourne District General Hospital.
14. In the case of Oxford and Horton Hospitals where the original proposal was to close the unit at Horton Hospital a local solution was found under which the unit would not close. These developments took place in 2007/08. In terms of informing developments at the Friarage further research is now required to establish whether or not these developments at Horton Hospitals could point

the way forward for a solution at the Friarage. In the case of Doncaster and Bassetlaw which is currently on-going unconfirmed reports suggest that proposals to close the unit at Bassetlaw have been withdrawn. Similarly there may be lessons that could be learned from Doncaster and Bassetlaw.

15. Development at a range of other hospitals needs to be explored in further detail, particularly at Horton and Bassetlaw where the situation seems directly comparable to that of the Friarage.

Engagement with GPs and Clinicians

16. On the basis of information in the NCAT report GPs and clinicians in the acute trust have been involved in developing the suggested way forward.
17. With a view to finding out the views of GPs specifically in the Richmondshire area, scrutiny colleagues at Richmondshire District Council have issued a questionnaire to all GPs in the area of that Council. Information received to date will be reported orally to the Committee.

Recommendations

18. That the Committee:
 - a) notes the information on progress as provided by the Shadow Accountable Officer and by the Director of Planning;
 - b) calls on the CCG to consider whether or not a survey similar to that which has been piloted across Richmondshire GPs should be undertaken across all GPs whose patients might be affected by the possible changes;
 - c) calls on the CCG and the South Tees Hospitals FT to work with the Committee to identify a number of other trusts/areas which a delegation including Elected Members could visit with the aim of hearing first hand the problems they have encountered and what measures are being put in place towards securing a long term solution for small local paediatric units;
 - d) agrees to use the Committee meeting scheduled for 1 June 2012 as an engagement event specifically on the developments at the Friarage and agrees with NHS colleagues how that event could be managed in terms of format and content.

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County Hall, NORTHALLERTON

11 April 2012

Background Documents: None