

Tees Valley Health Scrutiny Committee Briefing

South Tees – Urgent Care Update

On 1 April, 2017 the CCG implemented a new model of urgent care alongside a focussed communications campaign 'Making Health Simple' which promoted utilisation of self-care, primary care and NHS111. The new model included:

- Replacing the two walk-in centres at North Ormesby and Eston with the introduction of four extended hours GP centres located across South Tees open 6.30pm-9.30pm weekdays and 8am-9.30pm weekends and bank holidays with full access to GP notes delivered by ELM Alliance.
- An out of hours (OOH) service open from 9.30pm - 8am 7 days a week with a focus on home visits; no patient should be admitted (unless an emergency) without carrying out a face to face assessment first delivered by ELM Alliance.
- Changes to the existing Redcar Minor Injuries Unit (MIU), promoting this as a service which sees minor injuries only and not minor ailments and increasing x-ray capacity to mirror new primary care in-hours opening – 8am - 9.30pm 7 days a week. The service is delivered by South Tees Foundation Trust (STFT).
- Introduction of nurse navigators assessing and signposting patients who don't need to be in Accident & Emergency (A&E) or MIU to appropriate services including the ability to directly electronically book appointments into local GP practices and GP extended hours centres.
- Changes to some local pharmacy opening hours to mirror those of the extended GP hubs in order to improve convenience for patients prescribed medications.

The CCG as part of our planning, prepared for a potential (worst case scenario) increase of 13,000 additional attendances to A&E per year as a result of closing walk in centres. However, this has not materialised, with activity remaining fairly static until February to May this year when, as in line with other A&E Departments across the region, there was an approximate 3% increase in activity for that quarter compared to the previous year. South Tees NHS Foundation Trust also continue to be compliant against the target of seeing 95% of patients within four hours achieving 96.4% year to date. We have also noted a significant increase in patients accessing NHS 111 suggesting that our communication campaign has been successful.

Unfortunately as a response to health and safety issues, ELM (STAR), our extended hours provider, had to recently change the venue of one of the hubs in Middlesbrough to Bluebell Surgery in Acklam. A recent report undertaken by Healthwatch in April, 2018 whilst recommending further awareness raising of textended hours services, did conclude that 'Patients who have had the opportunity to use the STAR Scheme find it an extremely positive experience and are very satisfied with their care and treatment.' In addition results of a STAR survey carried out between January to May, 2018 reported a weighted average total satisfaction rate of 9.5 out of 10.

GP numbers /recruitment

South Tees CCG practices submit a quarterly workforce return to Health Education England using the Primary Care Workforce Tool.

GP Numbers

The Q4 2017/18 workforce report highlights the following:

- The average number of patients per full time equivalent GP (FTE) in South Tees is 2,254. The north east average is 1,449
- The average number of patients per actual GP in South Tees is 1,569. The north east average is 1,449

Recruitment and Retention

There is significant work underway nationally, regionally and locally across Teesside on GP recruitment to address the known shortfall, and to increase capacity in the GP workforce.

Schemes include International GP Recruitment working collaboratively with other CCGs in the North East which is scheduled to bring around 60 GPs to Teesside and Darlington by 2020. Recruitment will initially focus on European countries.

In addition, CCGs in Teesside and Darlington have recently been successful in being awarded funding from NHS England to deliver a retention project aimed at encouraging GPs reaching the end of their career to join a local locum pool and remain a little longer in general practice. The GPs will provide patient care; however, importantly they will also share valuable knowledge and experience with peers and local practices offering mentorship.

South Tees CCG has also established a local Career Start scheme part funded by Health Education England to attract newly qualified GPs to the area with the opportunity for funded, protected time each week for their first 12 months in post for professional development and to pursue areas of special interest.

Vacancies

Whilst vacancies are continually changing, at the time of writing there are 11 vacancies for GPs advertised for South Tees on the Cleveland Local Medical Committee website. In addition, a further 5 practices are participating in the Career Start scheme to attract newly qualified GPs to the area.

NHS Funding

- The government has recently announced that an additional £20 billion in real terms will be made available for the NHS in England by 2023/24, though it's unclear how much money will be spent on health overall.
- The £20 billion of additional funding for the NHS in England will be spread out over the five years to 2023/24. This means an average increase on the NHS's budget of around 3.4% a year, taking inflation into account.

However it is important to note that although this represents a larger increase in funding for the NHS than we have seen in the last 8 years, it remains below historical average growth in UK health spending.

- The CCGs have not yet received any indication from NHS England as to how the new NHS funding will be distributed across the NHS system.
- We are also unclear until further announcements if there is any expectation of additional commitments to be delivered from the allocation.
- Once the CCGs have received clarity planning will be undertaken in line with our annual planning cycle as is reported to Health and Wellbeing Boards.