

PCT and South Tees Trust Report to the Health Scrutiny Panel – Audiology Services

Following the Health Scrutiny Panel's review into Audiology services the PCT and South Tees Trust agreed to produce a report detailing the actions taken in response to the report recommendations.

- 1. People waiting outside 18 weeks for a hearing aid following GP referral**
The average patient journey (referral to fit) for hearing aids in the Specsaver Hearcare pilot is six weeks. South Tees Hospitals Audiology service achieved the Governments 18 week target from referral to having a hearing aid(s) fitted. Waiting times at South Tees have further reduced since the report was published from 27 weeks to 12 weeks. There were 4 patients who are outside of the 18 week target at the end of December 2008.
- 2. Deliver a more substantial town centre presence for Audiology services.**
Tees PCTs advertised in December to Tender an Adult Hearing Service from High Street locations in Middlesbrough, Redcar, Stockton and Hartlepool PCT areas. Bidder response from the Independent Sector was positive and the PCT are conducting bidder evaluation sessions and expect to award contract in early February. South Tees Audiology Service provides services in the Lifestore twice a week.
- 3. South Tees trust invest in hand held alert devices for use in reception**
South Tees has implemented, in the Audiology department, a coaster style patient paging system, for use by hearing impaired patients.
- 4. South Tees Trust improve the visibility and accessibility of information in the Audiology section around how to make complaints and raise concerns**
In addition to the information already provided to patients in STHT Audiology information leaflets, the signage in the Audiology reception area has been reviewed and will be strengthened.
- 5. South Tees Trust engage on a regular basis with Middlesbrough deaf Centre**
The Trust PALS team already has links with the Deaf Centre in Middlesbrough. They will be increasing the frequency of their meetings. Any new concerns raised by the Deaf Centre regarding Audiology services will be passed on to the Audiology Manager.