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## Heath Scrutiny Panel

### South Tees Acute Hospitals Trust Response

In relation to points indicated:-

#### 6.1

**The panel recommends that the local NHS works towards ensuring that people are more empowered to choose their method of transport to and from hospital. The panel considers it at odds with patients having increased choice over where they access services, that the same element of choice is not available in transport.**

Commissioners recognise that transport requirements for patients need to be more widely considered as part of the package of care. In line with the National Guidance that PCTS are now reviewing the commissioning process.

#### 6.2

**The panel recommends that urgent action be taken to address transport difficulties faced by regular patients, such as renal patients accessing dialysis. The panel finds it bizarre that this cohort can be planned for, yet it would seem they actually receive the worst service as far as patient transport is concerned. The panel would like to know the outcome of this process.**

Planning on the whole works well with existing block contracts however many renal patients journeys are required outside the ambulance contract, resulting in the Trust use of taxis. Future development of ambulance services needs to consider patient requirements as transport that is required Out of hours and Out of Area are sometimes more problematic because of the alternative transport arrangements currently supplied by NEAS.

South Tees Hospitals NHS trust has initiated a number of initiatives to improve transport for renal patients including:-

- Development of an action plan for the renal unit to review renal services including transport. This work has been started by the Renal business manager and a number of options have been considered amongst them was the trial of community transport services in conjunction with NEAS. The Trust conducted an initial trial and the initial result was poor, the scheme is now in its final month and the audit will be repeated and results compared.
- Best Practise requirements as described in the Cheshire and Merseyside Renal Action Learning Set Report September 2006 would be: - to be in a position where our patients are being transported to and from the individual units under a standard scheme and one provider, we need further information

from the commissioning team before we can progress any further discussions.

- A DH audit of renal services to include transport of renal patients has been undertaken though the results have yet to be published.
- Work with taxi companies and individual renal patients to improve the service patients receive in respect of allocation of transport to use the same drivers for the same patients.

### 6.3

**The panel would like to see the local NHS taking active steps to stimulate the local third sector and encourage their involvement in the provision of patient transports services, to and from hospital. The panel would like to know the outcome of this process.**

South Tees Hospitals NHS trust has identified the need to form close links with transport links in the community and as a result has now:-

- Joined The Tees Valley community Transport group to identify commissioning opportunities to support patients attending hospital appointments.
- Representation on The Tees Health and transport partnership to look at common issues in relation to patient transport.
- Forged partnerships with other charity organisations to engage with the Links network to establish a transport group.
- Worked with the East Durham travel response Scheme to support out of hour area access to hospital appointments.

### 6.5

**The panel recommends that there be one single contact number for patients or staff to book patient transport. The panel finds it confusing and unhelpful that there are presently a number of telephone numbers that can be called to arrange the service. To have one single point of contact would be in the best interest of the patient.**

South Tees Hospitals NHS trust supported the need to provide a single contact number for patients and staff to use when booking transport in Teesside. This service needs to be further developed to ensure it is utilised effectively.

### 6.6

**The panel recommends that the 0700hrs-1900hrs service currently provided North Of Tees be implemented South of Tees as soon as possible. The panel would like to be kept informed as to when this happens.**

South Tees hospitals support the delivery of extended ambulance service 0700-1900 which will better fit the current hospital service times.

### 7.

**The panel recommends that urgent action be taken to address transport difficulties faced by regular patients, such as renal patients accessing dialysis. The panel feels it bizarre that this cohort be planned for, yet it would seem they actually receive the worst service as far as patient transport is concerned. The panel would like to know the outcome of this process.**

The current service level agreement with North East ambulance service (NEAS) as vehicle provision does not enable all renal patients to be provided for, as many arrive outside normal operating hours .

The Renal unit have undertaken a patient satisfaction audit in December as identified in section 6.2 above and further opportunities to improve this service will be discussed with NEAS in line with future comments.

8.

**The panel would like it noted that this is an interim report, and the panel requests a report on the updated position in January 2009, following the service reviews of Patient Transport currently ongoing.**

South Tees acute hospitals Trust are looking at all available options in relation to patient transport and have recently attended Tees Valley community Transport group and will attend further meetings with the Tees health transport partnerships.