

HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL

A meeting of the Health Scrutiny Panel was held on 18 April 2011.

PRESENT: Councillor Dryden (Chair); Councillors Davison, Junier, Lancaster, Mrs H Pearson, Purvis and P Rogers.

OFFICERS: J Bennington and J Ord.

****PRESENT BY INVITATION:** The Mayor, Ray Mallon
Mr Krishna, Surgeon, North Tees and Hartlepool NHS
Foundation Trust.

**** APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were submitted on behalf of Councillors Carter and Cole.

**** DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made at this point of the meeting.

MANAGEMENT OF BACK PAIN – NORTH TEES PERSPECTIVE

The Scrutiny Support Officer submitted a report the purpose of which was to introduce Mr Krishna a surgeon from North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust and the Mayor of Middlesbrough, Ray Mallon to provide their perspective on the management of back pain.

The Chair referred to the meeting of the Panel held on 25 January 2011 when Professor Greenough from James Cook University Hospital together with a Specialist Nurse Practitioner had provided evidence on the current model of service to deal with back pain.

By way of introduction Mr Krishna gave an indication of the scale of the problem reporting that a third of the overall population would suffer back pain at some point in their life and seek primary care support. Research indicated that 3% to 5% of the population reported to being disabled as a result of back pain.

Spinal surgery and disorders had evolved much over the last ten years. It was considered that the overall population should be made aware of such developments and GP's made more aware of progress in new interventions. As previously indicated it was felt that there was scope for improvements to be made for the early triage for back pain and access to specialist care for non-specialised surgery.

It was considered that local authorities had an important role to play in reducing the scale of the problem by continuing to pursue and develop preventative measures such as raising awareness to simple exercises as a means of reducing the risks of back pain and ensuring that fitness instructors receive appropriate training.

The Panel received a detailed account of the personal circumstances of the Mayor and a number of Members regarding their back related problems from the first visit to their GP and through Primary Care and ultimately Secondary Care and the time frames involved during such periods.

Such evidence supported the claims that in order to improve the overall service there was an overriding need for the early triage for back pain and swift access to specialist care for non-specialised surgery.

The Panel had previously heard of the need for a seamless interface between primary and secondary care which included the creation of Triage and Treat Practitioners in Primary Care and a Functional Restoration Programme as reflected in the 2009 NICE guidelines.

AGREED as follows:-

1. That Mr Krishna and the Mayor be thanked for their attendance and information provided which would be incorporated into the overall review.
2. That based on the evidence received a draft final report be compiled and circulated to participants in the review.