

**HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL**

**9 NOVEMBER 2011**

**NEUROLOGICAL SERVICES – EVIDENCE FROM THE NORTH  
EAST SPECIALISED COMMISSIONING GROUP**

**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1. To introduce representatives from the North East Specialised Commissioning Group (NESCAG), in attendance at the meeting to provide their perspective on the planning and commissioning on Neurological Services.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

2. That the Panel notes the information presented by the NESCAG.
3. That the Panel considers the evidence submitted today in the context of the overall review into Neurological Conditions.

**CONSIDERATION OF REPORT**

4. The Panel will recall that in its investigation into Neurological Services, it has so far received evidence from North East Neurosciences Network, South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Whickham Villa. So far, a lot of the evidence received by the panel has been from the perspective of a service provider. To ensure that the Panel considers the matter from a number of perspectives, it is important that it also gathers the views of those organisations that plan and fund Neurological Services.
5. As such, representatives of the NESCAG will be in attendance to provide information of their role regarding Neurological Services and where the regional specialised commissioning function feels that Neurological Services need to develop.
6. The following information is taken from the NESCAG's website. It provides some background on the role and status of the NESCAG.

- 6.1 *Specialised services are those services provided for relatively rare conditions in relatively few specialist centres to populations of more than one million people.*
- 6.2 *Specialised services are either commissioned regionally, by the 10 Specialised Commissioning Groups (SCGs) - one SCG per SHA - or nationally by the National Commissioning Group (NCG). Specialised commissioning is defined nationally.*
- 6.3 *The North East Specialised Commissioning Group (NESCG) has delegated responsibility for commissioning a range of specialised services on behalf of primary care organisations (PCOs) across the North East. The NESCG membership comprises all the chief executives from the PCOs across the North East together with directors from the SHA*
- 6.4 *The NESCG plans specialised health services for a population of approximately 2.8m (2.5m North East Strategic Health Authority (NESHA), and 0.3m North Cumbria).*

#### **North East Specialised Commissioning Team**

- 6.5 *The NESCG is supported by the North East Specialised Commissioning Team (NESCT), an integrated management team hosted by NHS North of Tyne. NESCT is responsible for leading the day to day commissioning of most specialised services in the North East and also commissioning services on behalf of North Cumbria residents at the request of the North West SCG. It is responsible for planning, procurement, performance monitoring and performance management of specialised services. NESCT informs and supports the Specialised Services Directors Group (SSDG), a sub-group of the NESCG, chaired by the director of commissioning of the North of Tyne PCOs.*
- 6.6 *The SSDG is responsible for driving the detailed work of specialised commissioning. It comprises the directors of commissioning of the PCOs, a director of public health, director of finance, a SHA representative, the mental health commissioning lead for the North East and a representative from the North West SCG. As the SSDG is a sub-group of the NESCG, it refers matters that require a higher level of debate as well as binding collective decision making issues to the NESCG.*
- 6.7 *A specific consequence of the local restructuring of specialised commissioning is that specialised mental health and learning disability services and rarer cancer services commissioning are now supported separately from NESCT. Specifically in relation to specialised mental health and learning disability services, a new team was established in the North East called the North East Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Commissioning Team.*

- 6.8 *This team formally took over commissioning responsibilities for all specialised mental health and learning disability services, as well as mental health services at other levels, including forensic services, from NESCT on 1 July 2007. Similarly, the North of England Cancer Network took on responsibility for rarer cancers to ensure seamless co-ordination for all cancer services commissioning. Both of these teams remain directly accountable to the NESCG in relation to the specialised services element of their remit<sup>1</sup>.*
7. The NESCG will be at the meeting today specifically to speak about the areas of neurological services that are commissioned through the NESCG route. As a starting point, the following questions (7.1-7.7) have been put to NESCG, with the request that NESCG's addresses them in a paper. That paper is attached at Appendix 1.
- 7.1 What aspects of Neurological services for the people of Middlesbrough are commissioned by the NESCG?
- 7.2 What level of resource is the NESCG responsible for relating to neurological services in Middlesbrough and the North East? Where is that money spent?
- 7.3 From the perspective of a regional specialist commissioner, where are the service gaps in Neurological Services in Middlesbrough?
- 7.4 What level of intelligence does the regional specialist commissioning function have about the level and type of neurological need in Middlesbrough?
- 7.5 How is it decided which parts of Neurological Services should be commissioned locally and which should be commissioned regionally?
- 7.6 The Panel has heard a view that patients from Middlesbrough are placed at a disadvantage when compared to Tyneside based patients. Whilst Neurosurgery is available in the Newcastle & Middlesbrough, it would seem that there is only one neuro rehab unit is commissioned through the higher tariff specialised commissioning route, which is in Newcastle. Is this a position that the specialised commissioning function recognises?
- 7.7 In the view of the specialised commissioning function, where does the commissioning or provision of neurological services in Middlesbrough need to develop?
8. It is anticipated that representatives of the NESCG will initially speak to the attached paper, ahead of dealing with questions from the Panel. The Panel is asked to pursue any lines of enquiry felt relevant and incorporate the evidence gathered into the overall review.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nescg.nhs.uk/about-us>

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

9. Please see Appendix 1 – Please see attached briefing paper from North East Specialised Commissioning Group.

### **Contact Officer:**

Jon Ord - Scrutiny Support Officer

Telephone: 01642 729706 (direct line)

Email: [jon\\_ord@middlesbrough.gov.uk](mailto:jon_ord@middlesbrough.gov.uk)