

HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL

28 NOVEMBER 2011

**THE FUTURE OF NEUROLOGICAL SERVICES IN
MIDDLESBROUGH**

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To introduce a number of senior representatives of various organisations, in attendance today to take part in a roundtable debate about the future of neurological services in Middlesbrough.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. That the Panel notes the evidence gathered today and incorporates it into the overall review into neurological services.
3. That the Health Scrutiny Panel considers whether it has gathered sufficient evidence on neurological services and would wish to instruct supporting officers to prepare a final report for its consideration.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORT

4. The Panel will recall that during its review of neurological services, it has considered a number of different perspectives on the topic and gathered a great deal of evidence. It has also heard a number of opinions about how neurological services could (and should) develop, to meet local need.
5. As a probable last step in the evidence gathering process, the Panel was keen to host a roundtable debate, with a number of interested organisations in attendance. The Panel has identified a number of key themes from the evidence thus far, that it would like to explore in a roundtable debate, before it finalises its body of evidence. Taking part in the debate today will be senior representatives of the North East Neurosciences Network, Whickham Villa, North East Specialised Commissioning Group, NHS Tees and South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

6. The themes outlined below are intended to be the basis of discussion at the meeting today. It is anticipated that the Panel will seek the views of those around the table on each of the themes below, as the debate progresses. It is not necessarily suggested that the Panel rigidly adheres to the following themes. Nonetheless, they should provide the Panel with a guide, to focus the discussion on the most significant issues that it has come across, relating to neurological services.
- 6.1 *The Panel has heard from a number of separate sources that community based neuro-rehabilitation services in Middlesbrough are particularly poor. This, the Panel has heard, is a significant factor in Middlesbrough having high readmission rates for neuro conditions. Is this a picture that those around the table recognise? If so, where do we go from here to improve the reality?*
- 6.2 *Connected to the above, does Community Services becoming part of the South Tees Hospitals Foundation Trust represent an opportunity to do improve things? If so, what should happen? Should this include the development of primary/community services to allow the effective management of more neurological patients, thereby allowing hospital based expertise to be reserved for the most appropriate cases?*
- 6.3 *The Panel has heard from a number of sources that there are concerns over the ease of access to rehabilitative services based at Walkergate in Newcastle, for people based in Teesside. The Panel has heard that these difficulties include the ability (or not) of people to travel to Tyneside on a regular basis, as well as a concern over the equity of access to these services for people from Teesside. Is this a concern that those around the table share? Why? What should be done about it?*
- 6.4 *The Panel has heard the view expressed, on more than one occasion, that there are people with neurological conditions placed inappropriately in generalist facilities, or in the community without appropriate support packages, who have very little chance of ever making any significant rehabilitative progress. What are the views of those around the table as to why that happens? How do should it be tackled?*
- 6.5 *The Panel has been exposed to an ongoing debate around the nature of neuro-rehab services that are currently provided at James Cook University Hospital and their status. The Foundation Trust has asserted that it provides Level 1 neuro-rehab services and should be designated as such, with the benefits that flow from that. The North East Specialised Commissioning Group has informed the Panel it would like to see evidence of the relevant activity undertaken at JCUH. Do those around the table feel that neurological services in the Tees area, and the patients accessing those services, would benefit from having a level 1 rehabilitation centre locally?*

6.6 *Are there any other important aspects of Neurological Services that those around the table would like to raise with the Panel?*

7. Those organisations attending the meeting today have been advised that the Panel prefers such roundtable debates to be on a conversational footing, as opposed to a rigid and structured debate. Those attending have received sight of the themes outlined above that the Panel would like to focus upon. Following the debate today, the Panel is asked to consider whether it feels it has gathered a sufficient body of evidence to instruct supporting officers to prepare a final report for it to consider. If so, a report will be prepared for the Panel's consideration as a matter of urgency. If not, the Panel is asked to outline other evidence sources it would like to pursue and supporting officers will enact the Panel's wishes.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

8. No background papers were used in the preparation of this paper.

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