

Councillor Eddie Dryden
Chair, Middlesbrough Council's Health Scrutiny panel
C/o Town Hall
Middlesbrough
TS1 9FT

Nicola Bailey / Craig Blair
Chief Officer STCCG / Director of Strategic Planning and Performance

18 April 2019

Dear Nicola / Craig,

BREAST RADIOLOGY DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES IN SOUTH TEES: INFORMATION REQUEST

You will be aware of the work that Middlesbrough Health Scrutiny Panel has undertaken in respect of the Breast Radiology Diagnostic Services. As part of that work members met with a local breast cancer support group. The account of women who are fighting breast cancer was amazing and we were able to gain valuable insight into the care received by those women.

During the meeting a number of issues were highlighted that went beyond the scope of the current scrutiny topic of Breast Radiology Diagnostic Services. On 9th April 2019 the panel agreed to consider the following additional areas of concern:-

Collection of data of recurrent and secondary cancer

The panel was informed that data of recurrent and secondary breast cancer patients is not being recorded locally. Recording this data would improve understanding of when cancer recurs, to whom, after which cancer treatment pathway, and how it can be best detected. This information could be crucial in improving secondary prevention.

Given the apparent consensus around the need to collect this data the panel is keen to understand why it is not being recorded locally.

Clinical nurse specialists (CNSs) for secondary breast cancer

The experience of people who receive treatment for breast cancer is enhanced by the work of clinical nurse specialists (CNSs). It is apparent that their work is greatly valued, their knowledge, experience and care helps patients through a traumatic period from diagnosis to surgery and treatment.

It is particularly important that all patients with recurrent or metastatic breast cancer have access to a CNS with specialist knowledge of secondary disease. They should

be available to give information and psychological support to patients and their families. The panel wishes to establish why there are currently no CNSs for patients with a secondary diagnosis in South Tees and whether there are any plans in place to recruit or train them.

Post mastectomy care

The group expressed the view that it is inappropriate to place patients in a general surgery ward following mastectomy. The surgery is traumatic and being placed on general surgery wards with patients receiving lots of visitors is not conducive to aiding both physical and psychological recovery. It is at best intrusive and degrading, and at worst damaging.

Is there any possibility that an appropriate ward could be created that affords the level of dignity and decorum needed by women who have undergone a mastectomy?

I would be grateful if you could please provide a response to the above questions in advance of the panel's inaugural meeting of 2019/20, which will be scheduled for mid to late June.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eddie Dryden". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Councillor Eddie Dryden
Chair of Middlesbrough Council's Health Scrutiny Panel