

## **MEDIA BRIEFING**

### **North Cumbria health organisations to seek public's views about plan for healthier future**

Health organisations across North Cumbria have launched a major public engagement exercise to seek views from people living across Allerdale, Copeland, Carlisle and Eden to inform a far reaching five year NHS plan for a healthier future.

The plan, currently being drafted, will build on a range of developments already in place to provide better health services and will drive forward further improvements.

The aim is to make sure that the views of local people are taken into account to achieve the best possible long term plans. This means having the right services in place to help people to stay well and independent through better support in communities and in their own homes, therefore reducing avoidable hospital admissions and dependency on hospitals. Also, when they need hospital services, these will be safe and sustainable with the right levels of expertise to achieve the best possible outcomes.

However, in developing the five year plan, a number of serious challenges must be addressed. To do this health and care organisations have come together as the North Cumbria Programme Board, which is part of the Cumbria Health and Care Alliance. The work of the board is branded Together for a Healthier Future. The board includes lead doctors and senior managers from NHS Cumbria Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust, Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne & Wear Area Team, which is part of NHS England, Cumbria County Council (CCC) and Healthwatch Cumbria.

#### **What are the challenges?**

##### **Improving the quality of services**

Local organisations are already responding to the national policy requirements around quality and safety, including the greater integration of services, improved urgent and emergency care and seven day working.

In addition, North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust has been actively addressing concerns raised by Sir Bruce Keogh following a review of the quality and treatment provided by the trust, instigated because the trust was at that time an outlier on mortality indicators. Concerted efforts have taken place and the situation is now significantly improved with mortality figures now within expected levels.

And following Care Quality Commission reports, all organisations have been actively working towards better children's services.

There have also been concerted efforts around waiting times with significant improvements particularly for patients waiting in accident and emergency.

### **Recruitment/sustaining services**

NHS organisations within North Cumbria – similar to other public and some private sector organisations across the county – have had long standing recruitment difficulties which impacts on their ability to sustain some services.

Reasons for this include:

- national workforce challenges, which means there are shortages of consultants and other doctors, particularly in some specialties
- difficulties in recruiting to hospital services in rural areas, where clinicians often work in small teams with onerous on call responsibilities, sometimes feel professional isolation and are not able to develop the expertise in sub-specialties that they would in larger hospitals.

These recruitment difficulties mean that historically North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust has had to rely heavily on locums, particularly at West Cumberland Hospital, Whitehaven. Across the trust, they have already successfully recruited 20 consultants and will continue on their recruitment drive. However, there is currently a 25 per cent vacancy rate in consultant posts (this means 50 doctors).

Another challenge is in relation to new standards for anaesthetics cover which impacts on a number of services including those provided through maternity and accident and emergency.

As a result of some of these challenges, the trust has already had to make interim arrangements for daytime high risk surgery to be transferred from West Cumberland Hospital to the Cumberland Infirmary at Carlisle. Also, following the recent departure of a consultant gastroenterologist, the trust has put in place a new arrangement for dealing with the very small number of high risk severe upper gastrointestinal bleeds that occur out of hours, which means that such patients will now need to go to Cumberland Infirmary for emergency treatment. However, there is now a need to think about long term arrangements.

Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, which provides a wide range of community and mental health services across the county, also has long standing recruitment difficulties. The trust manages a range of community hospitals and other community facilities across North Cumbria, which means there are a large number of small teams, thinly spread which makes sustainability difficult.

While the trust has recruited successfully to roles in psychiatry, neurology and nursing there remain real challenges in making posts attractive and workable for future recruits and also to retain highly experienced clinicians.

## **Finance**

Across the NHS in England, if services continue to be delivered in the same way as now, there will be a funding gap that could grow to £30billion between 2013/14 to 2020/21. All NHS organisations must make savings to avoid this funding gap. In North Cumbria, these savings equate to £20m over the next five years.

This is in addition to the financial pressures currently being addressed by individual NHS organisations within North Cumbria which are currently in excess of £30m. The county council is facing similar challenges.

## **Meeting the health needs of the population**

There are increasing numbers of older people who are living longer and more people with long term conditions and lifestyle diseases, which is inevitably putting greater pressure on hospital and other health and care services.

As such, a substantial amount of work is already taking place across organisations to improve integration and to provide more support for older and vulnerable patients at home and in the community to avoid unnecessary hospital admissions (see examples later).

Also, positive discussions are taking place to improve urgent care services locally through closer working by GPs and other community healthcare professionals, which should result in fewer patients attending accident and emergency departments.

## **What engagement will take place?**

During April and May representatives from the NHS will be attending existing meetings of local councils and community groups and will be holding road shows in towns and villages across the area. There will be large events to engage the community and voluntary sector and independent research through a series of focus groups. Survey work will also take place with patients and carers to understand better their experience of travelling between home and hospital and between hospitals. All feedback received will be used to help inform the five year NHS plan.

Further information about the road shows, which are being organised in conjunction with Healthwatch Cumbria, will be shared in the coming weeks but so far, the following have been confirmed:

Wed 16 April – 10am to 2pm	Market, Pow Street Workington
Thurs 17 April – 10 am to 2pm	Market, Criffle Street, Silloth
Sat 26 April – 10am to 1.30pm	Farmers' Market, Market Place, Brampton
Fri 2 May – 10am to 2pm	Farmers' Market, English Street, Carlisle
Thurs 15 May 10am	Moot Hall Area Market, Keswick

to 2pm	
Sat 17 May – 10am to 2pm	Market Place, Whitehaven
Tues 20 May – 10am to 2pm	Farmers’ Market, Clock Tower, Penrith
Mon 26 May 10am to 2pm	Bank Holiday Plant Market, Wilkinson Car Park, Cockermouth

Events are still to be arranged at Maryport and Wigton.

As part of this, there will be discussions about the challenges around ensuring long term safe and sustainable hospital services, including emergency, maternity and paediatric services. These discussions will include consideration on the one hand of delivering care closer to home and on the other of making sure that when specialist care is needed this is provided in the safest place, where the right levels of expertise and back-up services are available.

It is hoped that the engagement exercise will help the organisations to understand better what more can be done to help people to stay well and when they do become ill, to reduce dependence on hospital services by providing more care closer to where they live. The organisations also want to understand better how to make the best possible use of community hospitals and other local health facilities.

The organisations are stressing that no permanent changes can be made to services without formal public consultation.

## **Comments from representatives of the organisations involved in the North Cumbria Programme Board**

### **NHS Cumbria Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)**

Dr Hugh Reeve, clinical chair, NHS Cumbria CCG, said: “Health and care organisations across North Cumbria are working together to ensure a healthier future for the people we serve. We are determined to provide our population with the best possible health system, one that is integrated with social care, helps people be more independent and is safe, sustainable and affordable.

“We are already seeing some real improvements across health services which are resulting in benefits for patients. During the engagement exercise over the next couple of months we want to hear more from local people about what is most important to them to help them to stay well and when they need to access health services.”

Nigel Maguire, chief officer of NHS Cumbria CCG: “Over the next two months we hope to have honest discussions with local people about the very real national and local challenges we are working with.

“We need to be clear that these challenges cannot be avoided and that if we want to provide services that are truly focused on the needs of individuals and communities and which are safe and sustainable, some changes will be needed. However, such change will provide opportunities to move towards more responsive care for local people. By reducing dependency on hospitals and healthcare buildings we can free up resources to support more people to stay well and when they do become ill, to receive more care in their own homes and in the local community. We also need to make sure that for services provided in hospitals we have the right balance between those that can be provided safely close to where people live and those that are more specialised and require the right level of expertise and back-up services.”

#### **Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust**

Claire Molloy, chief executive of Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust said: “Improving patient care is our top priority – we know that patients want to be able to receive care in their communities and homes rather than in hospital and our community health and social care services are already supporting more people to do this than ever before.

“However, it is clear that we need to do much more and we can only do this by working together in a more joined up way with our partners. We now need to listen to the public to ensure that we use our resources wisely and that we are providing the best quality, safe services for our patients.”

#### **North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust**

Ann Farrar, chief executive of North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust said: “It is important for everyone living in North Cumbria to have access to safe and sustainable health services. This is an ambition that we cannot, and will not, compromise on.

“The challenges our hospitals have faced and continue to face as we strive to achieve this ambition of ensuring safe, caring and responsive services have been well documented. There is no doubt that significant improvements have been made to the care provided to patients across our hospitals – and it is our patients who have told us so. It is also important to recognise the fantastic commitment made from all of our staff in delivering these improvements.

“However, we still have many challenges to overcome, some of which are reliant on our ability to recruit permanently to our vacant nursing and consultant posts.

“Ultimately, to truly transform the experiences for our patients, we must work in partnership with other health and social care organisations in North Cumbria and develop longer-term plans, which will support better health outcomes for all patients.

“In the meantime, we are launching a national and international recruitment drive which we hope will improve the very challenging situation we are facing in a number of specialties.”

### **Cumbria County Council**

Councillor Beth Furneaux, cabinet member for health and care at Cumbria County Council, said: “The NHS belongs to everyone and it’s important for everyone to have an opportunity to help shape the future of health services in their area.

“As a county council, our focus is on how social care can continue to work closely with the NHS to help more people to live independently.”

### **Healthwatch Cumbria**

David Blacklock, chief executive of Healthwatch Cumbria, said: “Clearly the way that health services are delivered in Cumbria is incredibly important to all of us. We all want the very best treatment for ourselves, our friends and our family. It is very important that the public are fully engaged during the next few months, so that their views and opinions can be taken into account. Services have to change in the near future and now is the time for the public to have their say.

“Healthwatch Cumbria is committed to ensuring that robust public engagement and consultation takes place and will work with the CCG to ensure that this happens. Now is the time to have your say.”

## **Some of the developments already taking place to improve health and healthcare**

Developments that have already taken place to improve health and care services in North Cumbria include:

- Organisations are working together to reduce avoidable hospital admissions for older and vulnerable people by providing the right levels of support at home or in the community to help them remain independent. This includes the development of a new coordination hub, based at Cumberland Infirmary and managed by Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust which brings together for the first time all the agencies which support urgent admission and complex discharge from the hospitals.

There is also an older people’s assessment team now on the medical admissions unit at Cumberland Infirmary, Carlisle. This is a rapid response team which identifies frail older people, to see whether it is possible to provide them with a package of rehabilitation and care so that they can go home rather than have to stay in hospital.

The Mrs Carlisle Hospital at Home scheme is another multi-agency initiative to help patients to stay at home instead of going into hospital by providing them with the health care they need in their own homes. It involves intensive health and social care from a special team of nurses and other health professionals and colleagues from adult social care.

Also, health and social care bodies are looking at ways to integrate rehabilitation and re-ablement services so that these are more coordinated to give people the best possible chance of improving their independence.

- North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust has recently recruited 100 additional nurses and 50 additional healthcare assistants.
- Work is continuing on the redevelopment of the West Cumberland Hospital which means local people will be treated in first class facilities from early 2015.
- Following identification of North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust as an outlier on mortality indicators, there have been concerted efforts resulting in significant improvements and mortality levels at the trust are now within expected levels.
- North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust has launched a new patient experience programme which is showing increased satisfaction levels, with 91% of inpatients rating the care they received as excellent, very good or good. Ratings were 94% for both outpatients and day case patients.
- Cumbria Health on Call (which provides out of hours GP services) is now providing a daytime visiting service in residential and nursing care homes. This is relieving some of the pressure on GP practices to improve access for patients.
- Patients requiring urgent care services will soon be able to benefit from NHS 111 which streamlines access to the right services. This will involve close working with urgent care services including the Cumbria Health on Call (the GP out of hours service).
- There has already been significant progress in co-locating local health service in more modern, fit for purpose premises across the county. The brand new Cockermouth Community Hospital and Health Centre opened in January 2014 with all local community health services provided from one building including GPs, clinics such as physiotherapy and an 11 bedded inpatient unit. Recent refurbishments have also taken place at Keswick Hospital (jointly funded by Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, CCG and League of Friends). A health centre in Cleator Moor has recently been officially opened and another at Stanwix, Carlisle, which will provide GP and community clinics, is due to open soon.

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