

July 31st 2017

First round of consultation events for major NHS public consultation completed

A major public consultation to gather public and staff views around the different ways some aspects of hospital services could be arranged in South Tyneside and Sunderland has just completed its first round of public events.

Called 'The Path to Excellence', the public consultation was launched on Wednesday 5 July and will run for 14-and-a-half weeks until Sunday 15 October. The Path to Excellence focuses on some areas of hospital care which are delivered at South Tyneside District Hospital and Sunderland Royal Hospital, including:

- Stroke care services
- Maternity (obstetrics) and women's healthcare services (inpatient gynaecology)
- Urgent and emergency paediatric services

Public events will start again in September, with additional events being planned which will be announced soon.

Nine events have been hosted across South Tyneside and Sunderland during the consultation so far, which have resulted in:

- 329 people attending the events
- Over 1000 comments received
- 3836 visits to the consultation website
- 142 survey responses received to date

The options under consideration were developed by small design teams made up of representatives from the consultant, senior nurse, midwife and therapy staff groups (where appropriate) as well as managers working in the three service areas in both hospitals.

Together, these clinical teams have led the development of the proposed options which have passed key tests and are now being consulted upon with the public and the wider NHS workforce.

Dr Shaz Wahid, Medical Director for South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust, said he was very grateful to local people and NHS staff who had given up their time so far to get involved and have given their views on these important proposals to improve the quality of these key vulnerable services.

Dr Wahid said: "The options being presented are ideas that could help solve some of the problems these services are facing and the public consultation period is the

opportunity to share these proposals, for people to feedback their views, and to give alternative suggestions if they feel there are other valuable ideas to consider.

“We’ve already had a number of very helpful comments and suggestions on how these proposals might be improved upon and we would very much welcome further public and staff involvement in the next phase of the consultation process.”

Dr Wahid continued: “Staff working in both hospitals are being encouraged to share their views and to submit any further ideas they might have as to how services could be best delivered in the future.”

Whilst some members of staff have attended public consultation events, further service specific clinician-led engagement events are being held across both hospitals in September for staff.

Public consultation events have been organised in a way to allow people the opportunity to hear directly from NHS clinical leaders about the key issues under consideration and so they can give their views in a way that allows them to be captured, analysed and reported so that they can influence the outcome of the consultation.

Dr Matthew Walmsley, a local GP and Chair of NHS South Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), said it was very important to ensure all feedback was captured in a meaningful way.

Dr Walmsley said: “We have been very clear at the public events that this is the opportunity for staff and the public to influence these proposals and that no decision has been made. All comments will be included in the independent analysis of consultation feedback and any ideas arising from these will be assessed in line with the key tests around delivering safe care, sustainable, deliverable for the future and affordable. Following this the commissioning groups can actively consider the issues that are important to the public when making the final decisions.”

He said: “We want people to understand that we have clinical issues driving these proposals and any future changes to the way services are organised would only be made in order to improve the quality and safety of those services for the future.

Ian Martin, Medical Director for City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust, said people’s feedback to date was already very helpful.

He said: “It’s extremely positive that local people are taking the opportunity to listen to the issues and think about the challenges we face and are telling us how these potential changes may affect them as well as putting forward suggestions as to how the proposals could be improved.

“We would like more people to engage with us over the next 10 weeks and take different opportunities to get involved to ensure their comments and views are captured in a way that can help influence the final decisions by the clinical commissioning groups.”

Dr Ian Pattison, a local GP and Chair of NHS Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group, said: “It’s clear that people care passionately about our NHS and want to ensure we have the best care possible and we all have that in common. During this public consultation process, which includes NHS staff, we are discussing these often complex issues together so we can make improvements that will have a real and lasting positive impact on people’s health and quality of life.”

Additional events are being arranged for September and October, including a dedicated event to consider the issue of travel and transport which we know is extremely important to members of the public.

To ensure you don’t miss out on information about these additional events sign up to My NHS via the www.pathtoexcellence.org.uk or contact the Path to Excellence programme.

The public consultation is being led by the commissioners of local health services - NHS South Tyneside CCG and NHS Sunderland CCG – who are responsible for planning and buying healthcare services on behalf of patients.

Working in partnership with South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust and City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust, who formed a strategic alliance in March 2016 known as ‘South Tyneside and Sunderland Healthcare Group’, all four NHS organisations are committed to delivering the best possible NHS services for the future through the Path to Excellence programme.

How to get involved

- Attend a public event – visit www.pathtoexcellence.org.uk for details with more being planned
- Attend a staff session – check out trust intranet for details
- Complete a survey – available online ([click here](#)) or contact us for a paper copy
- Offer to hold a focus group or event – please contact the programme if you are interested
- Provide an individual or organisational response or submission via email or post (contact details below)

How to contact the Path to Excellence Programme

- **Email:** nhs.excellence@nhs.net
- **Facebook: Search:** **nhsexcellence**
- **Twitter:** **@NHSexcellence**
- **Call on:** 0191 217 2670
- **Write to:**
The Path to Excellence

Freepost RTUS–LYHZ–BRLE
North of England Commissioning Support
Riverside House
Goldcrest Way
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
NE15 8NY

Next steps

People have until midnight on 15th October to return a survey or to provide a submission.

All feedback will be collated and analysed by an independent organisation (not the NHS) and a draft feedback report published in December. Further public events will be organised to share this feedback, and the next steps will be shared in detail at the point.

The final decision will be made the two clinical commissioning groups at their governing bodies held in public in early 2018, dates to be advised.

ENDS

Notes to editors

This public consultation is the first step in a five year programme of clinical service review which is in line with the ambitions described in the [Path to Excellence issues document](#)

Through reviewing our services the NHS wants to deliver long-term effective solutions to secure improved health outcomes across our area by focussing on five key areas. These are:

- provide a wide range of safe, high-quality and accessible healthcare services
- make the best use of our senior medical staff at all times
- provide value for money
- further investment in services that are of most benefit to patients
- sharing resources and services in areas where patient numbers are low.

The table below summarises the key tests to develop new service options that will deliver long-term effective solutions to secure improved health outcomes need for South Tyneside and Sunderland.

key criteria	Sub-criteria questions
Supports sustainability/service resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does this option support service sustainability from a clinical workforce perspective? • Does this option support service sustainability from a population and activity perspective?
Will deliver high quality, safe care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does this option deliver improved quality than that delivered in the current service configuration? • Does this option deliver applicable quality/safety/experience standards and regulatory requirements for service?
Is affordable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this option deliverable without any significant additional cost impact to commissioners and the wider healthcare system?
Is deliverable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this option deliverable within the next 1-2 years?

Only options that satisfied the key criteria outlined in the previous table were developed further. Options were then further evaluated to fully assess the clinical quality, accessibility and choice, deliverability and affordability implications of the proposals and to inform any decisions around options which could be subject to formal, public consultation.