



LINK Event Report

**An audience with Northumbria
Healthcare – working together to
deliver world class care in
North Tyneside and Northumbria**



**November
2010**

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1. Introduction

Background

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust has held a series of engagement events around North Tyneside and Northumberland to gather views from the public on the development of services at North Tyneside General Hospital and their experiences of patient pathways that could be improved.

North Tyneside LINK was approached to help facilitate a meeting with LINK members. By advertising in the LINK newsletter, e-bulletin and a short article in the News Guardian and poster in community settings LINK recruited over 25 LINK members, reps and members of the public. In attendance from Northumbria Healthcare was Maureen Harwood (Head of Community Engagement), Birju Rana (Deputy Director for Surgery and Elective Care) and Brian Flood (Chair).

2. What we did

On 23 November 2010 LINK invited members to attend the consultation event. Birju Rana, presented information on the vision for Northumbria Healthcare over the next 5 years under the following three headings:

- The future: specialist emergency care for you.
- More joined up health services by aligning hospital and community services.
- The wider package of improvements for other hospitals in Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

The full presentation is on the LINK website www.linknorthtyneside.org.uk

The second part of the workshop gave attendees the opportunity to discuss issues that they felt were important to them under the three headings. The group split into three subgroups with a facilitator and staff member from Northumbria Healthcare.

3. What you said

Although each group approached the task in a slightly different way, common themes emerged:

Staff and staffing

Members felt that some staff had a tendency not to be friendly and this was having a negative impact on some of the wards. Staff were often busy and did not take the time to listen to patients or carers. It was raised that attitudes on the ward and quality of care often seemed to be dependent on the ward sister.

Facilities

Attendees said that a mix of bays and single rooms worked well however patients with dementia or challenging behaviour may benefit from more person centred delivery of care.

More toilets were requested for both patients and visitors with a better level of cleanliness.

Discharge

More support around discharge was requested with carers or volunteers being more involved to support elderly patients around medication. The concept of a key worker who could be allocated to a patient was suggested as well as better use of a discharge lounge.

Transport

Disabled parking facilities are often abused at North Tyneside General Hospital. Accessibility to the hospital on bus, foot or bicycle was not satisfactory with those not arriving by car having to walk through smokers in bus shelters.

With reference to the proposed Emergency Care Hospital, members expressed concerns about the improvements to the A19 being cancelled and said it was essential that all vehicles had easy access to the hospital.

The role of the volunteer

All groups expressed the need for support from volunteers in the hospital, whether this was a buddy system for elderly patients after discharge, visiting on the wards or 'meeter and greeters' to relieve reception staff.

The proposed Emergency Care Hospital

Many members felt that the proposed Emergency Care Hospital may not happen in the current economic climate. They felt that the public were not being informed of developments and things had 'gone quiet' after the initial consultation. The public perception was deemed to be that the hospital was just for emergencies like car crashes and this needs to change.

4. What happens next?

This report will be fed into Northumbria Healthcare's research on the development of services at North Tyneside General Hospital and their experiences of patient pathways. The Trust are keen to meet again with LINK members to ensure their involvement in future developments, we hope to organise meetings for 2011 which will be advertised in our newsletter and on our website.

5. Evaluation

25 LINK members and members of the public attended the event. The majority of attendees said that the meeting had been 'very useful' and they had been able to contribute.

When asked what was beneficial about the event comments included: "Lots of information and a better understanding of the future". However it was also felt that individual rooms for the group discussions could have been used due to the poor acoustics in the hall.

6. Thank yous

LINK would like to thank Birju Rana for her presentation and taking time to answer LINK member's questions. Thanks also go to Maureen Harwood and Brian Flood for taking such an active part in the group discussions.

LINK would also like to thank its members for attending this meeting and sharing their views in the discussions.

Appendix A

Questions and answers from the event on 23 November

- Accessibility?

Northumbria Healthcare is working with the local authority and ambulance services. Bus routes are to be tailored to Emergency Care Hospital from North Tyneside General Hospital and Wansbeck and Cramlington. We could improve routes for cyclists and pedestrians at NTGH.

- What is happening about maternity services?

There will be consultants at the Emergency Care Hospital. There are currently midwifery-led units at North Tyneside General Hospital and Hexham, no decision has been made about their future as yet.

- What planning authority?

Northumberland County Council for the Emergency Care Hospital.

- What is happening about the Information Centre at North Tyneside General Hospital?

Not finalised but it will contain information relating to conditions and health. The one-stop shop will also be broadened out to contain information for patients and professionals, like the Oncology Day Unit. Better information for patients on discharge

- Will the hospital support the Mencap Getting It Right charter?

Yes but will talk further with Barbara Taylor from Mencap and working with The Alzheimer's Society on 'This is me' principles. The principles should relate to all patients.

- Could we have a Changing Places toilet?

A Changing Places toilet is on the agenda for the Emergency Care Hospital.

- How will staff manage the change to the Emergency Care Hospital with the right skills mix?

Northumbria Healthcare has sought Monitor approval (with the imminent disappearance of the Strategic Health Authority). There is a high amount of staff in the 40 to 45 age range (particularly nursing staff) and thus need to recruit younger members of staff. They have spoken with the universities and Deanery – the profile of doctors has changed and Northumbria Healthcare need to look at all types of doctors being trained.

The workforce will move between North Tyneside General Hospital and Emergency Care Hospital as these are not new services.

- There needs to be more publicity about the Emergency Care Hospital. The public don't think it is going to happen because of the cuts.

Yes, Northumbria Healthcare must continually publicise. No planning approval yet. The Emergency Care Hospital is on the 2013-14 timescale and GPs very committed. The Emergency Care Hospital is necessary in the current climate due to changes in the European working time directive. They need to change the rotas at North Tyneside General Hospital and Wansbeck but don't have the staff for two sites but they will have sufficient medical cover at Emergency Care Hospital. Patients will be able to see a specialist at the right time and earlier in treatment.

It has to be made clear the Emergency Care Hospital is not just for accidents.



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