

MEDIA RELEASE

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‘The Path to Excellence’ public consultation: how we create the best possible improvements for health care in South Tyneside and Sunderland

A consultation to gather public views around the different ways some aspects of NHS hospital services could be arranged in South Tyneside and Sunderland will start in July 2017.

Called ‘The Path to Excellence’, the public consultation will run for 14-and-a-half weeks from Wednesday 5 July until Sunday 15 October, and will focus particularly on areas of hospital care which are delivered at South Tyneside District Hospital and Sunderland Royal Hospital including:

- Stroke services, specifically hospital (acute) care and hospital-based rehabilitation services
- Maternity services (obstetrics), covering hospital-based birthing facilities i.e. where you would give birth to your baby and special care baby units
- Women’s services (gynaecology), covering inpatient surgery where you would need an overnight hospital stay
- Children and young people’s (paediatrics, urgent and emergency) services

This period of consultation will include a series of public events and a range of ways for local people to get involved, find out more about the issues under consideration and to give their views.

Dr Shaz Wahid, Medical Director for South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust, said this was an exciting time for the NHS in South Tyneside and Sunderland as the consultation provides the opportunity to make big improvements to hospital services and patient care.

Dr Wahid said: “We want to explain the current challenges we have around how these services are being delivered at the moment, and present some proposals on the different ways our clinical teams think some services could be delivered in the future.

“We will share the information we’ve used to come up with our proposals, for example, the best practice clinical evidence from the Royal Colleges, feedback from patient experiences and engagement, to name but a few.”

Dr Matthew Walmsey, a local GP and Chair of NHS South Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), said the consultation had been planned to allow local people lots of opportunities to get involved in the discussions.

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.

“Any changes need to make the best use of our most important resource - our clinical staff - so we can meet the healthcare needs of our patients both now and in the future.”

There will be a number of ways local people can get involved including public question and answer session, discussion events and opportunities to look at particular service proposals in detail, as well as a paper and online survey.

Information will be published on the Path to Excellence programme website, including an independent travel impact review, current hospital service quality indicators and information about resources and finances.

Ian Martin, Medical Director for City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust, said he understood that local people might be concerned when they hear of the need to make some changes to the way some local services are provided, and urged people to find out more before forming an opinion.

He said: “We really hope that local people will take the opportunity to listen to the issues and think about the challenges we face locally and tell us how these potential changes may affect them or if they have ideas on how the proposals could be improved.”

Dr Ian Pattison, a local GP and Chair of NHS Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group, said: “This is a very important opportunity for local people to hear directly from their own local doctors, nurses and therapists who are working in these services and understand the problems we face due to the way these particular services are currently arranged and how we think we can improve them.

“People care passionately about our NHS and we all have that in common. I hope that we can discuss these often complex issues together so we can make improvements that will have a real and lasting positive impact on people’s health outcomes.”

The proposals will be published on the programme website on Wednesday 5 July - the first day of the public consultation - and local clinical leaders will present them at a series of planned public events.

Feedback from the public will be analysed into themes and publicly reported to ensure it influences the final decisions, which will be made by the two CCGs later in the year.

The Path to Excellence programme is led by a partnership of local NHS organisations including NHS South Tyneside CCG, NHS Sunderland CCG, South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust and City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust – working together as the South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Partnership.

Between them, they are responsible for commissioning (planning, choosing and buying) and delivering many of the major healthcare services across the area, including the healthcare services we talk about improving in these public consultation proposals.

How to get involved:

There are a number of ways you can get involved to ensure your views are heard. All information about the different ways to be involved is available at www.pathtoexcellence.org.uk

Attend a public event

Different types of events are planned across both South Tyneside and Sunderland areas over the 14-and-a-half week period at different times, days of the week and locations.

These include consultation launch events on 5 July, where the options for consultation will be presented for the first time and people can hear from clinical leaders and ask questions.

There will also be a launch event in Murton, County Durham, so that people living in the Seaham and Easington areas who use services provided by City Hospitals Sunderland are able to understand and consider the proposals.

There will be further discussion-style events which allow people to consider all the options being proposed.

There will also be service-specific focused events designed to give the opportunity to consider in more detail the areas of care under consideration.

People are asked to register for the events in advance to ensure they are well staffed and managed in order to get the very best out of them.

Further information about these different events is included in this briefing and there will be publicity to promote them and all the different ways in which people can give their views.

Complete a survey – online or on paper

A survey will go live on 5 July. This can be found on the programme website, with paper copies are also available. Paper copies will include a Freepost address. The final deadline for survey returns is midnight, Sunday 15 October 2017.

Provide an individual or organisational response or submission

Responses are welcomed from individuals or organisations. Please ensure these are submitted before the end of the consultation period at midnight, Sunday 15 October.

Offer to hold a focus group or event

We are keen to hear from groups or organisations who work with people who may face barriers to taking part in this consultation and, in particular, represent people in

society who may be more impacted by any potential changes. We can offer support and a small payment.

If you would be interested in holding a group then please contact the programme.

- **Email us:** nhs.excellence@nhs.net
- **Facebook:** [nhsexcellence](https://www.facebook.com/nhsexcellence)
- **Twitter:** [@NHSexcellence](https://twitter.com/NHSexcellence)
- **Call us on:** 0191 217 2670
- **Write to us at:**
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 Freepost RTUS–LYHZ–BRLE
 North of England Commissioning Support
 Riverside House
 Goldcrest Way
 Newcastle upon Tyne
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Public consultation events

Date	Time	Event Type	Location	Venue	Registration
Wednesday 5 th July	1-3pm	Launch event	South Tyneside	Jarrow Community Centre, Cambrian Street, Jarrow, NE32 3QN	Visit www.pathtoexcellence.org.uk for registration details
Wednesday, 5 th July	6-8pm	Launch event	Sunderland	Hope Street Xchange, 1-3 Hind Street, Sunderland, SR1 3QD	Visit www.pathtoexcellence.org.uk for registration details
Thursday 6 th July	6-8pm	Launch event	Durham	Glebe Centre, Durham Place, Murton, Seaham, SR7 9BX	Visit www.pathtoexcellence.org.uk for registration details
Tuesday 11 th July	6-8pm	Focused event on maternity, women's and children's services	Sunderland	Hope Street Xchange, 1-3 Hind Street, Sunderland, SR1 3QD	Visit www.pathtoexcellence.org.uk for registration details
Wednesday 12 th July	6-8pm	Consultation discussion event	South Tyneside	Customs House, Mill Dam, South Shields, NE33 1ES	Visit www.pathtoexcellence.org.uk for registration details
Saturday 15 th July	10am- 12 noon	Focused event on maternity, women's and children's services	South Tyneside	The Clervaux Exchange, Clervaux Place, Jarrow, NE32 5UP	Visit www.pathtoexcellence.org.uk for registration details

Date	Time	Event Type	Location	Venue	Registration
Tuesday 18 th July	6-8pm	Focused event on stroke services	Sunderland	Sunderland Bangladeshi International Centre, 30 Tatham Street, Sunderland, SR1 2QD	Visit www.pathtoexcellence.org.uk for registration details
Wednesday 19 th July	6-8pm	Focused event on stroke services	South Tyneside	Living Waters Church, St. Jude's Terrace, Laygate, South Shields, NE33 5PB	Visit www.pathtoexcellence.org.uk for registration details
Wednesday 26 th July	1-3pm	Consultation discussion event	Sunderland	Sunderland Software Centre, Tavistock Place, Sunderland, SR1 1PB	Visit www.pathtoexcellence.org.uk for registration details
Wednesday 13 th September	1-3pm	Consultation discussion event	South Tyneside	Customs House, Mill Dam, South Shields, NE33 1ES	Visit www.pathtoexcellence.org.uk for registration details
Saturday 16 th September	10am-12 noon	Consultation discussion event	Sunderland	The Hetton Centre, Welfare Road, Hetton-le-Hole, Houghton le Spring, DH5 9NE	Visit www.pathtoexcellence.org.uk for registration details

ENDS

Notes to editors:

The quality of care that people receive in the North East is generally very good but can vary across the region; preventable illness is common, and the growing demand for healthcare services is putting greater pressure on NHS resources, staff and finances than ever before.

We want to see a future where people are only admitted to hospital when this absolutely cannot be avoided. At the same time, we face a number of challenges:

- the needs and expectations of the public are changing
- new treatment options are emerging while life expectancy is increasing
- in many cases, those extra years are spent in poor health and more complex care is required
- the NHS is required to move towards a greater number of services being delivered seven days a week
- the NHS is experiencing increasing workforce pressures. This is particularly true for senior medical staff, but also includes nursing, therapy and junior medical staff, and this means that we need to think differently around how we deliver services

- the shortage of consultants to provide 'out of hours' cover and the need to ensure nurse staffing levels meet national standards
- the need to improve quality and performance nationally as evidence suggests that better clinical outcomes and quality come with seeing a sufficient number of patients for doctors to maintain specialist skills
- modernising and reforming services in line with local and national strategies and the needs of individuals and communities

There are particular challenges facing stroke, maternity, women's services (gynaecology) and children and young people's urgent and emergency hospital services. These include:

- not enough medical staff at the right levels, which means services rely on expensive locum doctors
- recruitment challenges due to current service arrangements often being viewed as unattractive by potential new staff
- an inability to improve long-term clinical quality and hit key clinical standards due to smaller patient numbers, not enough staff and the reliance on temporary staff
- difficulties in implementing improvements set out in national stroke, maternity and urgent and emergency care strategies.

This doesn't mean doing less for patients or reducing the quality of care. It means more focus on preventative care, finding new ways of working together to meet people's needs and identifying more efficient ways to run NHS services.

Across South Tyneside and Sunderland, we have a proud history of extremely good care delivered by exceptionally dedicated staff working in our hospitals, in the community, in clinics and in GP practices, with valued support from the community and voluntary sector.

The Path to Excellence builds on this history as we work together to develop plans for better quality care and meet key quality standards, while at the same time, recognising the need to be as efficient as possible.

South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS clinical leaders have been looking at a programme of service reviews in which they have a key role in developing better ways to organise health and care services to help solve some of the challenges. To inform this work, we have undertaken a programme of patient engagement to understand current experiences of services and the information gathered has been considered as a key part of developing new proposals for consultation.

As set out in the NHS Constitution, health care is a right of everyone in the UK and we are very clear that local people will continue to access a range of health services in both South Tyneside and Sunderland and they will have access to a comprehensive, free national health service arranged in the best way locally in order to meet their needs.

Despite the challenges facing our NHS, we strongly believe the people of South Tyneside and Sunderland should be able to have better health than they currently experience.

Through reviewing our services we want to deliver long-term effective solutions to secure improved health outcomes across our area by focusing on five key areas. These are:

- providing a wide range of safe, high-quality and accessible healthcare services
- making the best use of our senior medical staff at all times
- providing 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

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