



North Yorkshire County Council Executive

29 January 2019

Response by the Scrutiny of Health Committee to the Notice of Motion to County Council on 14 November 2018 on the NHS Patient Transport Service and community hospitals

Purpose of Report

This report provides Executive with the Scrutiny of Health Committee response to the Notice of Motion, which was put to County Council on 14 November 2018 by County Councillors John Blackie and Stuart Parsons, regarding changes to the eligibility criteria for the NHS Patient Transport Service and concerns about the long term sustainability of community hospitals.

Executive is asked to review and recommend the response by the Scrutiny of Health committee to the County Council meeting on 20 February 2019

Motion

The following Motion was put to County Council on 14 November 2018 by County Councillor John Blackie and this was seconded by County Councillor Stuart Parsons:

“North Yorkshire County Council calls upon the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) that commission NHS Services across the County:

- (i) to fund the necessary PTS services to transport those whose medical, personal and financial needs require these services to attend hospital clinics, and to recognise that any failure to provide the level of service that reflects the rural nature of North Yorkshire may lead to patients having no alternative but to miss their appointments to the detriment of their health,*
- (ii) to acknowledge their recent implementation of cutbacks in the PTS services without any consultation whatsoever has caused anxiety amongst those communities placed at distance from the hospitals that serve them, and calls upon the CCGs to review the impact of the cutbacks at Scrutiny Committees across the County no later than early March 2019,*
- (iii) to recognise the current network of Community Hospitals in North Yorkshire provide a range of essential NHS services, including in-patient beds for step-down, respite and palliative care that are highly valued by the communities they serve, and where CCGs are considering changes it should only be on the basis of improvements with no reduction in local accessibility of these services,*

and instructs Committee Services to send the outcome of the debate on this Notice of Motion to the District and Borough Councils and the MPs that serve the communities in North Yorkshire.”

The Chairman determined that the Motion should not be debated on the day, stating that a better venue for a more informed debate would be with the Scrutiny of Health Committee at their meeting on 14 December 2018.

Response to the Motion

The Motion has two distinct elements: 1) concerns about the application of the eligibility criteria and changes to the eligibility criteria for the Patient Transport Service; and 2) concerns about potential reductions to services provided by community hospitals.

1) Patient Transport Service

The first element, concerns about the application of the eligibility criteria and changes to the eligibility criteria for the Patient Transport Service, was considered by the Scrutiny of Health committee at its meeting of 14 December 2018.

John Darley (Head of Strategy, Urgent and Emergency Care), gave a presentation on behalf of the Clinical Commissioning Groups for Hambleton Richmondshire and Whitby, Harrogate and Rural District, Scarborough and Ryedale and Vale of York. A copy of the presentation is in Appendix 1.

The Scrutiny of Health Committee identified a number of concerns, including:

- There had not been sufficient consideration of the impact of rurality, distances travelled and the associated times taken, and the limited access to public transport
- The national guidance on the Patient Transport Service says that the commissioners have to reflect the locality for which they are developing the eligibility criteria. This does not appear to have been the case for North Yorkshire
- There had not been any meaningful engagement with the Scrutiny of Health Committee prior to the changes being made
- The changes to the Patient Transport Service could have been advertised more widely and more effectively
- The impact of the changes were significant, particularly for people on low or fixed incomes, living in rural areas. There was a risk that some people could be excluded from health care essential to their quality of life by virtue of their household income or where they live
- The existing appeals process could be made simpler and better advertised
- There are differences in the eligibility criteria between the Vale of York and the Scarborough and Ryedale CCGs and the Hambleton Richmondshire and Whitby and the Harrogate and Rural District CCGs
- The telephone based assessment process may not have been sophisticated enough to take into account the fact that people in need to transport often over-stated their mobility and independence, which would exclude them from a service.

There was some acknowledgement of the difficulties that were faced in providing health services across a large rural county like North Yorkshire and that the motivation behind the changes to the application of the eligibility criteria was to develop a more effective and targeted service.

The Scrutiny of Health Committee then made the following resolutions:

- 1) The Clinical Commissioning Groups and Yorkshire Ambulance Service to provide data on:
 - the number of appeals (successful and unsuccessful) as a percentage of the overall number of journeys
 - the financial impact of the changes to the application of the eligibility criteria
 - the number of 'Did Not Attends' for medical appointments that can be linked to the changes in the application of the eligibility criteria.
- 2) The Clinical Commissioning Groups and the Yorkshire Ambulance Service to consider amending the assessment criteria to explicitly include as considerations:
 - the impact of rurality
 - the level of access to public transport
 - the distances that have to be travelled.
- 3) The Vale of York CCG and Scarborough and Ryedale CCG to consider amending their criteria so that patients undergoing Chemotherapy, Radiotherapy, Renal and Other Oncology are automatically entitled to patient transport services and do not need an assessment.
- 4) The appeals process to be simplified and better publicised.
- 5) The Council's Scrutiny of Health Committee to liaise with the Council's Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee over changes to adult social care transport charging that are currently being consulted upon.
- 6) Daniel Harry to draft a report that outlines the Scrutiny of Health Committee response to the Notice of Motion, based upon the discussions today, and circulate to the members of the committee for comment.
- 7) That an update on the impact of the changes to the way in which the eligibility criteria for the Patient Transport Service are applied is provided to the Scrutiny of Health committee meeting on 21 June 2019.

The Scrutiny of Health Committee will follow up on the actions outlined above.

A copy of the draft minutes of the meeting on 14 December 2018 in Appendix 2.

2) Community hospitals

The second element, community hospitals will be reviewed by the Chair, Vice Chair and Group Spokespersons at a meeting of the committee Mid Cycle Briefing in January 2019. A decision will then be made about how best to scrutinise this issue and who would need to be involved.

The final report of the Scrutiny of Health committee on this element will be brought to Executive for consideration in the next 3 months, with a view to making recommendations to County Council on 15 May 2019.

Recommendation

That Executive:

1. Review and recommend the response by the Scrutiny of Health committee, to the Notice of Motion, to the County Council meeting on 20 February 2019.

Daniel Harry
Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager
North Yorkshire County Council
19 December 2018