

Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee

5 September 2006



South Moor Hospital: Response to the Public Consultation on the Closure of Holmside Ward and the Temporary Relocation of Other Services.

Report of the Head of Overview and Scrutiny

Purpose of Report

1. To report on the response to the consultation on the closure of Holmside ward and the temporary relocation of other services from South Moor Hospital.
2. To agree a Health Scrutiny response to the issues raised in the consultation document and consultation responses received.
3. To note the decision making process by the County Durham and Darlington Acute Hospitals NHS Trust and Derwentside Primary Care Trust.

Background

4. At its meeting in January 2006 the County Durham and Darlington Acute Hospitals NHS Trust Board agreed to public consultation on the permanent closure of inpatient beds at South Moor Hospital.
5. These beds, which were used for patients experiencing delayed discharge, have been closed since August 2005. The decision to do this was taken on a temporary basis so that the Trust could respond to demand if it experienced increased pressure, particularly during the winter months, and needed the additional capacity. This eventuality did not arise.
6. It was agreed that, if permanent closure was approved, a contingency plan was required for other services, based on offering patients appointments for outpatients and x-ray at alternative sites.
7. This was based on health and safety concerns about staff working alone in isolated areas of the hospital, and the poor condition of the estate. It would cost £0.5 million to bring South Moor up to date. This would not be a good use of resources, as the outpatient and x-ray services are due to transfer into the new Stanley Health Centre in 2008. This has already been subject to consultation.

Information

8. A report from County Durham and Darlington Acute Hospitals NHS Trust Board is attached for information.
9. The report provides information on the consultation process, response to consultation and key issues raised with a response from the NHS in relation to how they propose to manage these issues.
10. It is expected that County Durham and Darlington Acute Hospitals NHS Trust Board and Derwentside PCT will jointly decide on this issue sometime in September.
11. However with changes to PCT's in the County and a new County Durham PCT be formed from 1 October this may not be possible so County Durham and Darlington Acute Hospitals NHS Trust Board at their next meeting (mid September) intend to make the decision.

Recommendations

12. The Health Scrutiny Committee notes the response to the consultation and awaits the decision by County Durham and Darlington Acute Hospitals NHS Trust Board on the closure of Holmside ward and the temporary relocation of other services.
13. The Health Scrutiny Committees recognises arrangements in place to respond to patient needs in relation to outpatient and x-ray provision from alternative sites.
14. The Health Scrutiny Committee note the issues of capacity and the need to make best of resource to meet demand; including the fact that value for money would not be achieved by investing in South Moor Hospital.
15. The Health Scrutiny Committee will want to be directly involved in discussions about future use of the site. The Committee are of the view that this site should be used in the interests of local communities to promote social and economic well being.

Contact: Feisal Jassat Tel: 0191 383 3506
