

Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee



12th March 2009

NHS County Durham's strategy for community hospitals in County Durham and Darlington

Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive

Purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee of NHS County Durham's Community Hospitals Strategy for County Durham and Darlington which was agreed in December 2008, and advise of progress towards its implementation.

Background

2. The future of community hospitals has clearly been identified and reinforced in many policy documents including Lord Darzi's *High Quality Health for All: NHS Next Stage Review Final report* and *Our Vision for Primary and Community Care* (July 2008). The national strategic context for Community Hospitals is reinforced in the policy guidance, the White Paper *Our health, our care, our say* & *'Our health, our care, our community: investing in the future of community hospitals'* (2006), as well as the Department of Health (DH) announcement in July 2006 that £750m additional public capital would be available for investment in community hospitals in the NHS in England.

The approach is to provide people with high quality and responsive NHS services in the communities where they live with a focus on bringing services closer to people's homes and shifting care safely away from hospitals. Modern community hospitals are seen as being helpful in achieving shifts in care delivery from hospital to closer to home, where modern technology can support a range of procedures and interventions which would have been done in an acute setting, but can now take place in the community.

National policy guidance sets out 4 main goals:

- Better prevention and earlier intervention;
- More choice;
- Tackling inequalities and improving access to a wider range of community services;
- More support for people with long-term needs.

A Strategy for Community Hospitals in County Durham and Darlington

3. The Community Hospitals Strategy will support delivery of NHS County Durham's ambitions illustrated in its strategic plan - *Your Health, Your Choice, Your Care Our Commitment: A Five Year Strategic Plan for Improving Health And Healthcare in County Durham and Darlington*. It sets out a plan for the long-term future provision of community health services, and establishes a framework for development of community hospitals to meet the needs of the people of County Durham and Darlington.

NHS County Durham believes that community hospitals are integral to the provision of primary care services and will help expand primary care, improving intermediate care and reducing the growth in demand for secondary care services, especially in acute hospitals.

Debbie Edwards, Assistant Director of Strategies and Developments at NHS County Durham will outline the content of the strategy: *A Strategy for Community Hospitals in County Durham and Darlington* that is attached as Appendix 1, and outline the steps that being taken to deliver it.

Recommendations

4. This report recommends that the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee note and comment on the strategy and the approach to its implementation.

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Supporting papers:

- A Strategy for Community Hospitals in County Durham and Darlington, NHS County Durham, December 2008