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Dr. Stewart Findlay,
Chief Clinical Officer,
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19 January 2016

Dear Stewart,

**Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgefield Clinical Commissioning Group –
Review of Urgent Care Services**

At a meeting of Durham County Council's Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19 January 2016, members considered a report and presentation providing early information in advance of a proposed consultation exercise in respect of the development of options for the future provision of Urgent Care Services across the Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgefield CCG locality.

The Committee welcome the opportunity to participate in early discussions around this issue and have previously indicated, when considering the development of the County Durham and Darlington Urgent Care Strategy, the importance of early engagement in respect of the development of future options for Urgent Care service provision and associated consultation and engagement activity and plans.

The Committee would wish to highlight the following comments from the Committee in response to the report and associated presentation provided to the Committee:-

- The key principle within the development of a model for future Urgent Care Services appears to be focussed upon patients own GP practices where possible on an in-hours basis with provision between 6.00 p.m. and 8.00 p.m. weekdays to be sourced through a GP Practice hub based model. Furthermore, weekend provision would be provided via Primary care extended opening via a hub model. In view of this, members have

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concerns about the ability of GP practices to meet the anticipated demand of such arrangements, given that GP capacity and access is an issue of concern nationally, regionally and locally.

- The Committee are keen to ascertain what steps GPs have taken to promote the availability of appointments within the current model of urgent care, given the assertion within the report presented to Committee that 70% of patients at walk in centres could have been seen within primary care. Furthermore, GPs need to demonstrate that they are examining why patients are bypassing their GP practices to attend an Urgent Care Centre/Walk-in Centre or Minor Injuries Unit when there are appointments available.
- There will undoubtedly be significant financial considerations arising from the remodelling of Urgent Care Services, with the potential redistribution of resources from existing providers to GP practices. What steps will be taken and how can the Adults Wellbeing and Health OSC and patients generally be assured that high quality, accessible and equitable services are being provided.
- A number of members relayed concerns around patients having to “get past” GP practice receptionists acting as gatekeepers to GPs and the importance of patient confidentiality being maintained at GP reception areas when often sensitive and personal information is requested in such publicly accessible areas.
- The Committee would like to be provided with an assessment of exactly where the 70% appointments available were located and whether these were available in the GP practices of the patients choosing.
- There will be potentially 2 periods of election purdah within the potential consultation period identified within the indicative timeframe, one for the Police and Crime Commissioner election on 5 May 2016 and in respect of a National Referendum on EU membership (potentially identified for June/July 2016). The Committee would wish to see the consultation period reflect these important periods of purdah.

Finally, the Committee welcome the DDES CCG's desire to return to the Adults Wellbeing and Health OSC meeting scheduled for 1 March 2016 to update members further on the proposed service models to be consulted upon and the associated consultation and engagement plans.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'John Robinson', written in a cursive style.

Cllr John Robinson
Chair of the Adults, Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Durham County Council