

**Special Adults Wellbeing and Health
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

4 December 2018

Skerne Medical Group



Report of Corporate Management Team

Lorraine O'Donnell, Director of Transformation and Partnerships

Electoral division(s) affected:

Bishop Middleham and Cornforth; Sedgefield; Trimdon and Thornley

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To update the Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee in respect of the initial findings and feedback from the patient and stakeholder engagement undertaken by the Skerne Medical Group regarding future service provision across the practice locality.

Executive summary

- 2 At its meeting held on 15 November 2018 the Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive a report from representatives of the Skerne Medical Group detailing problems facing the group in respect of the recruitment, retention and current GP staffing capacity.
- 3 The Committee were advised that the practice had commenced a patient and stakeholder engagement process on 5 November 2018 and written to all patients advising them of the problems facing Skerne Medical Group and plans for a series of public meetings to enable patients to discuss these issues.
- 4 The Committee indicated that no option should be discounted within the proposed service review that the Skerne Group propose to undertake. To this end, the Committee recommended that the potential for continued GP provision within Trimdon Village should form a key part of the practice's proposed review and any option for future services developed as part of the review.

- 5 The Committee also asked the group to report back to the Committee with the initial findings from the engagement activity prior to any decision being made.

Recommendation

- 6 Members of the Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee are requested to receive this report and consider and comment on the report and the information gathered from the patient and stakeholder engagement activity.

Background

- 7 At its meeting held on 15 November 2018 the Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee during consideration of media relations items members noted recent press coverage of plans to reduce service provision across the Skerne Medical Group, specifically the potential reduction in the number of branch sites served by the practice.
- 8 The Committee receive a report from representatives of the Skerne Medical Group detailing problems facing the group in respect of the recruitment, retention and current GP staffing capacity.
- 9 The Committee were advised by Dr Hearman, one of the practice GPs, that despite the practice's best efforts in respect of the recruitment of GPs, it faces a reduction of 35% in GP manpower compared to October 2016 due to resignations, retirements and sickness which will reduce GP available appointment time by 40% in February 2019.
- 10 The practice commenced a patient and stakeholder engagement process on 5 November 2018 and have written to all patients advising them of the problems facing Skerne Medical Group and have held a series of public meetings to enable patients to discuss these issues.
- 11 The Committee heard representations from a number of local Councillors which expressed concerns at the public engagement process, especially the lack of detail in respect of the dates, times and locations of the public meetings in the letter sent to patients.
- 12 The practice has declared its intention to start a review of all four surgeries from which they currently provide services; Sedgfield, Fishburn, Trimdon Village and Trimdon Colliery, commencing with a review of whether Trimdon Village surgery and one additional site, to be determined after the engagement period, can remain open from 2019 on the current and projected staffing levels.

- 13 In view of this the Committee at its meeting on 15 November 2018 recommended that the potential for continued GP provision within Trimdon Village should form a key part of this proposed review and any option for future services developed as part of the review.

Considerations

- 14 Representatives of Skerne Group will report to the Committee upon the initial findings of the patient and stakeholder engagement activity.
- 15 A special meeting of the Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgfield Clinical Commissioning Group Primary Care Commissioning Committee is scheduled for 19 December 2018 to discuss the Skerne Group and the Committee may wish to submit representations to that meeting following today's meeting.

Main implications

Consultation

- 16 Skerne Medical Group has undertaken formal patient and stakeholder engagement and the practice will report the findings from that process.

Legal

- 17 This report has been produced in accordance with the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and wellbeing boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 as they relate to the National Health Service Act 2006 governing the local authority health scrutiny function.

Conclusion

- 18 The press articles published in the Northern Echo have raised considerable concerns amongst local residents and Durham County Councillors regarding the future of GP services across the Skerne Group locality and the threat of service reductions.
- 19 In view of the Committee's previous concerns detailed above Skerne Medical Group have been requested to attend the Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to report upon the initial findings from the engagement exercise.

Background papers

- None

Other useful documents

- Department of Health Local Authority Health Scrutiny Guidance
June 2014

Contact: Stephen Gwilym

Tel: 03000 268140

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

This report has been produced in accordance with the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and wellbeing boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 as they relate to the National Health Service Act 2006 governing the local authority health scrutiny function.

Finance

Not applicable

Consultation

Skerne Medical Group has undertaken patient and stakeholder engagement and the practice will report the results of that process.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Not applicable

Human Rights

Not applicable

Crime and Disorder

Not applicable

Staffing

Not applicable

Accommodation

Not applicable

Risk

Not applicable

Procurement

Not applicable

Appendix 2: Letter from Councillor John Robinson, Chair of the Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to Neil Bunney, Practice Manager, Skerne Medical Group

Contact: Cllr John Robinson
Direct Tel: 03000 268140
e-mail:
Your ref:
Our ref:



Neil Bunney,
Practice Manager,
Skerne Medical Group,
Harbinson House,
Sedgefield,
Stockton-on-Tees
TS21 3BN

21 November 2018

Dear Neil,

Future of Skerne Medical Group

I would like to thank Dr Hearman and yourself for attending the County Council's Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to advise members of the problems facing the Skerne Medical Group and your proposed public engagement activity regarding this issue and the potential future options for the group moving forward.

The Committee noted Dr Hearman's comments that despite the practice's best efforts in respect of the recruitment of GPs, it faces a reduction of 35% in GP manpower compared to October 2016 due to resignations, retirements and sickness which will reduce GP available appointment time by 40% in February 2019.

The Committee has been made aware of the national GP recruitment crisis to the extent that it is setting up a cross party review group to examine the issues of GP Services across County Durham in greater detail.

Whilst acknowledging the issues facing Skerne Group, the Committee feels strongly that no option should be discounted within the proposed service review that the Skerne Group plan to undertake. To this end, the Committee recommended that the potential for continued GP provision within Trimdon Village should form a key part of

your proposed review and any option for future services developed as part of the review.

The Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee would also request that you attend a special meeting scheduled for Tuesday 4 December 2018 at County Hall, Durham commencing at 9.30 a.m. to update members on the feedback received to date as part of the current consultation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'John Robinson', written over a faint horizontal line.

Cllr John Robinson

Chair of the Adults, Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Durham County Council

c.c.

Stewart Findlay, Chief Clinical Officer, Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgefield
CCG

Nicola Bailey, Chief Operating Officer, Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgefield
CCG