



Chairman's bulletin

August 2016

Dear member

I am pleased to update you after our latest board of directors' meeting.

I hope you find this bulletin informative. If you have any comments about the format or content please contact the private office.

Sustainability and transformation plans (STP)

I wrote to you earlier this year when it was announced that chief executive Alan Foster would be leading the sustainability and transformation programme in the Durham, Darlington and Tees, Hambleton, Richmondshire and Whitby footprint. Following the board of directors last week I want to update you on this.

Things are moving forward quite quickly now and some good progress has been made since April. There is a real need for bringing sustainability and transformation plans together because there are areas which don't meet the clinical standards and we need to make sure that patients are getting the best experience possible when they come into hospital.

The work we're doing with the Better Health Programme will require some clinical changes to ensure that clinical standards are met.

As you know, demand for health services isn't slowing down and there will be many changes to make over the coming years. The emphasis is still on providing care as close to home as possible where it is safe to do so and people only coming into hospital when they need to. We need to get the right balance between the quality of services while addressing the financial challenges over the next five years.

Better Health Programme staff engagement events

We have been talking to our staff to get their views on the Better Health Programme.

The engagement meetings for phase 2 have now concluded and we've received some very good feedback from our staff across the trust, which has been passed onto the Better Health Programme team.

Everyone's feedback is important so they can play their part in shaping the future of health services and give their views.

More information on how the programme is progressing can be found at <https://nhsbetterhealth.org.uk/progress-so-far/>

The Better Health Programme is looking at how local hospitals achieve the standards which local people have a right to expect from their services, and how the NHS meets its aspirations to provide more care in the home and in community based settings.

It is being led by clinicians including senior hospital consultants and GPs from the clinical commissioning groups and the three foundation trusts operating across County Durham, Darlington and Tees.

Teeswide joint breast service

At the beginning of last month, a Tees-wide joint breast service, hosted by the trust became available on Choose and Book.

You will remember that last year, temporary changes were made to breast radiology services after staffing problems were identified at James Cook University Hospital and since then, patients from Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland have attended the University Hospital of North Tees, which already runs Teesside's breast screening service.

This new service means that all Teesside patients will be seen at the University Hospital of North Tees for their diagnostic tests, with clinics jointly provided by staff from both trusts.

Quality

Acting director of nursing, quality and patient safety Julie Lane updated the board on how we are improving quality for patients.

Mortality

The latest HSMR (hospital standardised mortality ratio), which measures the amount of people who actually die compared to the number who might be expected to die in our hospitals, is within the as expected range.

However, you may have seen in the media last month that we were reported as having one of the highest mortality figures in the country.

It is disappointing to see our SHMI (summary hospital-level mortality indicator) at 117.31. The SHMI represents the number of patients dying in hospital or up to 30 days of leaving hospital. The figure is arrived at by taking this number, adjusting it for various factors and dividing it by the number of emergency inpatients we see.

We are working hard to address the reasons behind this; to look at what we're doing so we can learn and see if there is anything we have missed. The SHMI looks at a period about 6 months behind the HSMR period, so we expect it to continue to reduce over the coming months.

Quality accounts

The latest quality accounts have been published and are available to download on the trust's website at www.nth.nhs.uk/about/trust/annual-reports-plans/

Preventing the spread of infection

In June there were four trust attributed cases of clostridium difficile infection. This exceeds the trajectory for the month and also means we have exceeded the trajectory for the first quarter of the year. The trajectory for this year is a very challenging 13 cases.

There were no cases of trust attributed MRSA bacteraemia in June.

The infection prevention and control team is targeting wards considered high risk on last year's cases and current cases, and is concentrating on the basics of good infection prevention practice such as hand hygiene and environmental cleanliness and use of standard precautions.

If you are in the hospitals or in other clinical areas across the trust, you can help by:

- making sure you wash or clean your hands appropriately
- following our bare below the elbows dress code

Our performance

Chief operating officer and deputy chief executive Julie Gillon updated the board on the trust's performance.

Key operational standards remain very challenging across the trust.

Accident and emergency attendances and admissions saw a 14% increase in comparison with the same period last year. Performance against the emergency care standard underachieved in the month of June reporting at 92.95% and for quarter 1 reporting at 93.32% against the national requirement of 95%. However, despite underachieving against the 95% standard the trust's performance has remained within or above the national average.

Cancer services

While the trust performed well against most of the cancer standards during April and May, increased pressures have had an impact on the trust's performance in June.

An area where the trust is reporting a significantly higher referral rate than other organisations in the local network is lung referrals. In the last quarter of 2015/16 the trust received 23.63% of the total lung referrals across the north east, nearly double the number received by the specialist centre in the same period.

Ultimately, due to additional pressures the trust underachieved against the 62 day referral to treatment standard with June reporting at 76.11% against the 85% target.

The trust is currently working with the commissioners to understand this significantly outlying position with an internal audit planned to look at the appropriateness of referrals.

Money

At the end of June we were £1.6m in deficit, just behind the planned deficit figure agreed with NHS Improvement.

As you are aware, the trust has a total cost improvement programme for 2016/17 of £7.9m. Work is ongoing within the directorates to identify the required savings.

We have done much to achieve the efficiencies required of us over the years, however the longer we are required to make these levels of savings the more challenging they become to achieve. However, we will work together across the organisation to make sure we can be as financially efficient as possible without compromising quality or patient care.

Recognition for our endoscopy units

Last month the endoscopy unit at the University Hospital of North Tees became the first trust in the northern region to run the national ERCP training course for endoscopists.

Endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP), which combines live cases, clinical discussion and hands-on training attracted professionals from across the country.

The course, which was led by consultant gastroenterologist Basant Chaudhury and the endoscopy team is a fantastic accolade for the trust.

Units praised by patients

Every year the endoscopy units at the trust carry out a survey to seek patients views on the care and treatment they receive.

This year a total of 500 surveys were sent to patients who attended either the University Hospital of North Tees or the University Hospital of Hartlepool for an endoscopy procedure between January and February 2016.

I was pleased to hear the overall the outcome was extremely positive. The comments and feedback we received will help to make further improvements in the future give better outcomes and deliver a better service to patients in the future.

The board papers

The board papers from the last board meeting are posted on our website when the minutes of the previous meeting are approved. If you would like to read the board papers please go to <http://www.nth.nhs.uk/about/board-meetings/>

Board meetings are held in public and you are welcome to attend. To confirm your attendance please contact the private office on 01642 624060.