



North Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group

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12 December 2016

Tim Wall
'Save North Tyneside NHS'

Dear Mr Wall,

I'm writing with regard to the article about the proposed changes to urgent care services in North Tyneside which appeared in the News Guardian newspaper recently. The article contained a number of factually inaccurate statements by the 'Save North Tyneside NHS' campaign group which have subsequently been repeated on social media.

It is a matter of public interest that the facts should be accurately reported in relation to these changes and I hope that this letter can help in this regard.

On 25 October, the CCG's Governing Body took the decision to replace the existing urgent care centres at Battle Hill, Rake Lane and Shiremoor with a single, integrated service based within North Tyneside, with effect from 1 October 2017. This followed a year-long consultation process in which over 700 local people considered the evidence and shared their views.

The overwhelming theme of patients' feedback was that many people find the current system confusing and difficult to navigate, with too many overlapping services within a relatively small geographic area. The current system is therefore clearly not meeting patients' expectations and is simply not an efficient use of NHS resources.

I would like to reassure patients and members of 'Save North Tyneside NHS' that:

- The current walk-in centres will be replaced by a new Urgent Care Centre from 1 October 2017. This service will provide comprehensive access to urgent care services including all the same functions as the existing service, under one roof. For the first time, this will be a 24-hour service.



- The new service will be based in North Tyneside and there will be absolutely no requirement for patients to travel outside the borough to seek treatment for an urgent care need.
- The suggestion that the proposed change will 'endanger lives' is completely incorrect. The new Urgent Care Centre will continue to provide services within the borough, and urgent care services do not deal with life-threatening emergencies.
- It has been suggested that this change is related to the Sustainability and Transformation Plan for Northumberland, Tyne & Wear and North Durham, but the CCG's urgent care review predates the existence of this plan by more than a year. Reform of local urgent care provision was initiated by discussions between clinicians responsible for the delivery and commissioning of urgent care services locally.

Your campaign has also suggested that the consultation process was inadequate and poorly advertised. I would like to reaffirm our commitment to listening to residents, as well as explaining the need for these changes and how they will lead to an improved local urgent care service that is fit for the future.

768 people took part in the consultation between October and January, through a launch event, four drop-in sessions, a survey, several focus groups, and roadshows in three local shopping centres. Promotion of these included articles in all three local papers, a 2-page supplement in the News Guardian plus an online article that was viewed over 10,000 times, and a feature in the Council's magazine, as well as promotion online and through social media.

Full details of the process and the feedback we received are publicly available on our website. This followed an earlier listening phase in mid-2015, which also included a survey, a four-page News Guardian supplement and 22 meetings with local community groups, in addition to many of the other steps set out above.

I hope this letter helps to address your concerns. If you have any outstanding issues or questions, I would be more than happy to invite you to meet with me at the CCG's offices to discuss them in person.

Yours sincerely



Dr John Matthews

Local GP and Chair of NHS North Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group