

Shotley Bridge Community Hospital Services
Project Update and Future Conversations
July 2020

Everyone at NHS County Durham Clinical Commissioning Group (the CCG) hopes that you have been keeping safe and well during the recent weeks and months.

We wanted to share an update on a particular project that so many local people helped contribute to last year, as well as let you know about what will be happening moving forward.

Developments since May 2019

Since the last period of public engagement finished in May 2019, the CCG have taken on board comments that people made. We have applied particular focus to considering a broader range of services that could be provided in the future, such as low level Mental Health and a broader range of wellbeing services.

There has also been continuing dialogue with clinical colleagues and service managers from County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (CDDFT) who provide services such as Chemotherapy, Inpatient based care, Urgent care, various therapy services (such as Physiotherapy and Podiatry) and more. This work continues to provide key elements, around which future plans are framed.

Our local GPs and other primary and community care staff have also played a central role in conversations considering what arrangements (around Hospital based services) they feel help support care and treatment for their patients across North West Durham.

Alongside all of this, our 'Reference Group' which involves local Councillors and MPs - and is chaired by the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board - has regularly met to feed into the discussions.

Impacts of COVID-19

Understandably, this work has been disrupted over the past few months. Staff from CDDFT have been prioritising the frontline patient care that is required, as well as supporting their teams. Staff within the CCG were also deployed to support primary care services during the peak of the pandemic locally where needed.

This has meant that the work is now slightly behind our original schedule. But all of the partners involved remain committed and determined to keep moving forward together.

The health and care system across County Durham responded quickly and appropriately to the COVID-19 pandemic. Services were changed at pace to ensure

that primary care, hospitals and social care were prepared to manage COVID-19 and then to be able to care and treat patients in the safest way.

COVID-19 has not gone away. The challenge for the health and social care system is now to continue safely managing services and care for COVID-19 patients while restarting and recovering those services which had to be paused, to ensure there is safe, quality care available for all of our communities. This means that some of the changes introduced as part of the response to the Pandemic need to remain in place to provide this protection to both those accessing healthcare and the health and social care workforces.

There needs to be a period of reflection and learning to understand the impact of the Pandemic on the shape of care and services in the future. Therefore, it is felt that the clinical model which was developed pre-COVID should be reviewed and further considered to take into account the changes which have taken place. This is part of the local response as well as adhering to continuing national guidance on the safe delivery of services and safe working. We also want to more fully understand what these changes mean for patients and staff alike, and how we can be assured that the communities of County Durham have access to the safest and highest quality services in the future.

Future Conversations

As a result, the CCG and other local partners are planning to undertake a further programme of engagement during the autumn of 2020.

This engagement will be focussed on the views of local people, helping us to re-visit the review of the clinical model and inform future services and their delivery.

We recognise that the current situation, with social distancing in place, will impact on the ability for us to reach out into the community as we previously did in sports and community centres in the short term. However, we also recognise the pressing need to progress with the plans for future service delivery as swiftly as possible, and so are exploring alternative communication channels to get your feedback and input.

For the time being, the majority of information and opportunities to engage will be based online, by email, over the telephone or through the post to ensure we are adhering to national guidance on social distancing. Should the situation develop during the period of engagement, we will consider what else is again possible and appropriate.

We will be providing further information based on clinical opinion about future services and their provision as well as how to contribute to this phase of engagement soon. We will also provide a plan on when the subsequent public consultation will start and how you can get involved in the conversation.

So please keep a look out for the information when it comes out and where possible we are always grateful for your help and support in sharing this with friends, family

and colleagues. If you are able to help connect us with specific local groups who may be interested and who can help in developing the plans based on their knowledge and experience of health and care services that is very much appreciated too. A useful point of contact going forward will be the same email address that was used as part of the previous public engagement – my.view@nhs.net

This work and the feedback captured will all help move us forward towards the formal public consultation that will follow in summer 2021.

Thank you for your time and continued support.