

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE BRIEFING ON TRINITY SQUARE RADIOLOGY EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT**

### **Background**

Trinity Primary Care Centre sits within property owned by Tesco PLC Ltd. The Health Care Centre is managed by NHS Property Services. Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust (GHNFT) supported diagnostic imaging at Trinity Primary Care Centre at the request of the Commissioners, the Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group (NGCCG) to support GP requests for plain imaging, from 2012 until August 2018.

In 2017 it was identified that this equipment, owned by GHNFT needed to be replaced as it was experiencing multiple problems and breakdowns and impacting on service delivery to patients. Unfortunately, replacement of the equipment was not possible at that time due to the legal complexities of the lease arrangements of the building. No action could be taken until there was a fully signed agreement between Tesco PLC and NHS Property Services.

Equipment performance issues escalated throughout 2018 until a decision was made by the Trust in August 2018 to cease imaging at Trinity because of concerns of patient safety. In order to continue the safe provision of a plain imaging service to patients within the locality GHNFT arranged to fit the new equipment (that had originally been purchased for Trinity PCC) into the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) Radiology Department. Throughout this period patients have continued to have their x-ray imaging at either QEH or Blaydon Primary Care Centre and the service is not aware of any complaints.

There has been lengthy dialogue between a number of parties including the Commissioners, QEF and NHS Property Services since 2017 and we are aware that a legal agreement is now in place between NHS Property Services and Tesco PLC.

Within this context, Commissioners and the Trust have given detailed consideration of the need to replace the equipment at Trinity PCC which would involve the relocation of the x-ray machine now currently sited at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. This has involved consideration of patient feedback captured in a patient survey which explored the possible locations for plain imaging for patients. The survey responses indicated that the preferred site to attend for any plain film imaging was the QEH, followed by Blaydon and Trinity PCC, the least.

The survey identified that a proportion of patients identified weekend and evening appointments to be available for appointments to fit in with their lifestyle. This offer of choice is not possible at Trinity PCC as the imaging service is linked with the Centre's opening times which are between core hours 9.00-5.00 pm. Evening and weekend

appointments are not feasible due to the facilities opening times and availability of resources.

The survey also indicated that having an imaging service closer to home was a key preference. It is acknowledged that QEH is only 2 miles away from Trinity Square and is therefore in a similar geographical boundary.

There have been no complaints received from patients in attending the QEH or Blaydon location as an alternative venue. The diagnostic facility supported the Diabetic service based in Trinity PCC for patients attending the diabetic clinic (approximately 2-8 per month) and views have also been received from providers of that service.

Patient attendances at the Trinity Square location had started to decline from an average of 160 patients per week in 2014/15 to 134 patients per week before the service moved 2018/19.

In addition to the service impact assessment and analysis of activity, work has been undertaken to identify the potential costs of relocating the newly installed equipment from Queen Elizabeth Hospital to Trinity PCC. This demonstrated that this could only be achieved at a prohibitive cost to the service, with the subsequent potential of having to redirect resources from other front line patient services.

After much consideration and deliberation, Gateshead Health and the NGCCG have together agreed to the proposal to continue the provision of plain imaging at QEH, in addition to Blaydon Primary Care Centre, rather than re-locate and re-install an x-ray facility into Trinity PCC. In summary this decision has been based upon:

- Patient feedback that assures the Trust and Commissioners of overall patient satisfaction
- No evidence of adverse experience with the existing service
- Assurance of patients' preference for services provided from Queen Elizabeth Hospital and Blaydon Primary Care Centre that offer increased flexibility of appointment times, with the offer to patients of evening and weekend appointments.
- The Diabetes service are aware of the rationale for retaining the x-ray equipment at the QEH and are supportive of this proposal, being confident that service improvement can be made using resources at QEH to improve the patient pathway.
- The need for NGCCG and GHNFT to ensure a safe and efficient diagnostic x-ray service that is sustainable going forwards, within an affordable envelope of public resource.

In Summary Gateshead Health and Commissioners would like to inform OSC of this decision and the underpinning rationale.

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