

County Durham LINK
Seizing the Future Sub Group Meeting
5th February 2010
Bowburn Community Centre

Present:

Mary Mitchell

Peter Irving

Mike English

In attendance:

Clare Sandford

Mary began the meeting by circulating 2 newspaper articles which highlighted variations in stroke services throughout the North East and the UK.

There was then a discussion about recent developments at Bishop Auckland, Darlington and Durham Hospitals. Marilyn Weerasinghe had informed the group that the acute stroke services at Darlington were to be moved to Durham. CS reported that a meeting with Carol Robinson, Head of Physiotherapy at Bishop Auckland Hospital, on 15th December 2009 had confirmed this to be the case. Carol Robinson also added that consultation with Commissioners, stroke consultants and NEAS had taken place.

This change in the Seizing the Future plan raised a number of concerns with the LINK group:

- Public consultation.

Why has there not been any consultation with the public? The Health and Social Care Act 2000 clearly states that if there is to be major changes to service delivery there must be a 12 week public consultation.

- Travel.

Travelling time to Durham is a major concern, particularly for those living in the rural west of the county. With strokes it is vital that stroke

patients are given thrombolysis ASAP. Will ambulances be able do this en route to hospital? It was also raised that it is general practice in the Dales for a paramedic on a motorcycle to be sent in the first instance to a patient, which could add in additional time.

- Stroke Consultants

Does Durham have enough stroke consultants to provide the required service?

There were additional concerns raised about the perceived tendency to change services because of staffing issues. Do the hospitals in Darlington and County Durham have adequate training schools to ensure future consultants/staff for the different services provided?

- Beds

Will the 8 beds at Darlington be provided at Durham in addition to the 20 already there or is Durham planning to absorb the extra beds.

There followed another discussion about community stroke services. David Gallagher has stated he will confirm the situation in County Durham with Dave Haw. The group felt once this reply is received there needs to clarification or further questions asked about how community services will link into the Intermediate Care Strategy and an overall plan for future provision.

Actions:

1. CS to draft a letter to Stephen Eames (NHS County Durham & Darlington), David Gallagher (County Durham & Darlington Foundation Trust) and Feisal Jassat (Overview & Scrutiny) to raise the issues about changes to acute stroke provision.
2. CS to raise the issues at the Seizing the Future Oversight Board meeting on 15th February 2010.
3. CS to chase up letter from David Gallagher with Dave Haw.
4. CS to circulate notes from the Seizing the Future Oversight Board meeting to the wider LINK membership to keep them informed of what is happening.

5. MM asked CS to check with other LINK's in the North East to see if they are looking at Stroke services and what is provided in their areas.

Date of next meeting: To be arranged once information has been gathered.